

INTERVIEW WITH ALVAH MATTHEWS  
BIG STONE COUNTY REMINISCENCES  
DATE ?  
PLACE?

I don't know if it'll be enough, I'll try to.

Q: Okay, what is your name?

Alvah Matthews

Q: Okay, when were you born?

1883, September the 22nd.

Q: Alright. September the 22nd. Where were you born?

I was born...up the lake here, about 12 miles, and then one mile north. (Okay)  
On my, on my...well, it's a piece of land that my folks got, and...

Q: So you were living on a farm at the time then, when you were born?

Yes, it was on a farm, yes.

Q: Did you have any doctors at the time? Or who delivered you?

Oh, I couldn't tell you. (Laughter)

Q: Your mother didn't tell you when you were older, huh?

No

Q: What were your parents' names? Both of them?

Well, my father's name was Hen...William Henry, W. H. Matthews. (Mm hmm) And mother's name was Letta, Lettie, Letta, Lettie--L-e-t-t-a, I think it...Letta Matthews.

Q: Now, what were your brothers' and sisters' names, did you have any brothers and sisters?

Yes. I had...I've got three brothers--Arthur Matthews was a Ford dealer here for many years, he's dead now. And I have a brother Charles Matthews, that lives in California, at Los Angeles, California. And I have another brother that lives on the other side of the nation, Glen Matthews, lives in Rochester, New York. (Oh) And I'm here in the middle.

Q: Yes. Alright what do you remember about your early childhood? Like what school did you attend, and what was the history of that school, the location and things like that?

We had to walk  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to go to school and, or just ride a horse. We didn't have any cars in those days. (Mm hm) and, so mother thought that what we should

do is to come to Ortonville and so when I was 10, coming 11 years old, why we came to Ortonville. (Okay...) And I've been here most of the time since.

Q: Uh huh. What was the name of the school that you first attended?

Oh, just a country, country school, I guess you'd call it.

Q: Okay. It didn't have a special name at that time then. Okay. And then you went to Ortonville school, then once you got here?

Yes. I came here when I was 10 years old. I graduated from high school here in 1904.

Q: What was the length of the school year? Was it all, you know, like it is now, or did you have breaks?

It was 9 ye...9 months, you know.

Q: Okay. Because I know in some areas, in years back, they, they had 3 months only, particularly in the country schools, where they had 3 months in the fall and 3 months in the spring.

I remember it, we had 9 months, you know.

Q: Mm hm. How, now where did you live when you were in town here then?

Here in Ortonville?

Q: Yes. Where did, where did you live when you first, your parents first came here?

Well, we lived up on the south-east corner of town. (Mm hm) I don't know if I can tell you the streets and so forth, though.

Q: Alright. What was your first job and who did you work for, and then, what other jobs have you had?

Well, I went into business with my older brother and he was in the, sold Ford cars and I was in the business with him for 2 or 3 years. And, and then his wife figured out that I owed him a thousand dollars and I know I didn't owe a thousand dollars and so I got my, my father, or my son, or my brother-in-law to--he was an accountant to figure it out and whatever he said was alright with me. Well, it was my brogher that owed this, my brother Arthur owed, was the one that owed, owed the thousand dollars to me. (Laughter) So, then I went into business for myself.

Q: Okay, and what did you go into business...

Well, I had the appliance business for years -- Frigidaire, Maytag, \_\_\_\_\_, and Monarch line.

Q: Okay. What, what was the name of your business, then?

Well, it was just Alvah Matthews Appliance Store.

Q: Okay. Where was it located on, on Main Street?

Next door to where Lazaby's Li...are now.

Q: Alright.

(56 -- 5 min.)

End of the Interview