

**Life in Princeton, Illinois from 1904**  
*an Oral History*

Mary Anderson, Interviewee  
Of Princeton, Illinois

Interview Date: July 29, 1975

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NARRATOR: Mrs. Mary Anderson  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: July 29, 1975, July 30, 1975  
TAPE #: 1  
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 23 S. Pleasant ,Princeton, Ill.  
INTERVIEWER: Debbie Anderson  
FOR: Starved Rock Library System

I: This is Debbie Anderson; and I'm talking to Mrs. A.E. Anderson at 23 South Pleasant in Princeton, Illinois. Mrs. Anderson, what was it really like when you came over here?

N: Well, there were no sidewalks--mostly wooden sidewalks and Main Street was not paved and there was hitching posts all over-- all over-- all along the street.

I: When you came over, were did you do farming, or were you in a business-type, or--

N: No, I worked in the housework.

I: Housework?

N: Uh huh.

I: Did your husband-- was he a farmer?

N: Yes, he was a farmer.

I: What kind of farming machinery did they have?

N: They had binders, and horses to pull their plows.

I: What-- what year did you come over here?

N: Nineteen--four the fourth of September.

I: How old were you when you came over?

N: Fourteen.

I: Fourteen?

N: Fourteen years.

I: When you came over, did you come directly to Princeton, and if you did, what was Princeton like then?

N: Well...you want to say the same thing over again?

I: Alright. Did you come directly to Princeton..?

N: You had to go th Chicago down to Princeton--of course, we had to go through New York to Princeton.

I: What kind of transportation did you come on?

N: Train.

I; What kind of transportation did they have around this area?

N: Horses and wagons...and buggies.

I: Did you see the streetcar?

N: Yeah, the streetcar from Bureau to Princeton.

I: How far did that streetcar go?

N: Down to the north end and back to Bureau.

I: What kind of businesses did they have around Princeton?

N: Well, they had, they had stores like \_\_\_\_\_ and Peterson's—dry goods stores. They had a library up at the south end; they didn't have a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ you settled on the east side of Princeton. And they had horses and buggies and wagons, farm wagons and of course they had surreys with the fringe on top(laughs).

I: When the high school was burning did you see a lot of it..?

N: Well, I could see it from here, yes. I lived here then.

N: \_\_\_\_\_ on south Main street across from the Christian church and my \_\_\_\_\_ worked there.

I: Oh, What kind of grocery stores did they have? Were they like modern styles or..

N; No, they were no modern, they were just common markets, and they had everything \_\_\_\_\_ because you could buy things more reasonable in those days.

I: Was their food expensive?

N: No it wasn't; it was just, uh nice really.

I: Was the town big, or little or..

N: It was smaller than it is now.

I: A lot smaller?

N: No, not lots smaller, not so many people.

I: Did they have two separate business districts like they have now?

N: Yes, north end and the south end.

I: What kinds of tools and stuff like that did you use on the farm?

N: Well in the house we had the old fashioned cook stove where it could burn wood or coal.

I: What did you use around the kitchen, like to wash your clothes, or to..

N: Washboard.

I: What kind of pans and stuff?

N: Well we had..

I: Cast iron, or just..

N: We had this enamelled cookware, you know like---we had iron frying pans and all kinds of things.

I: What kind of transportation did you use to get from the farm to town and back?

N: Horse and buggy until my husband bought a car and we drove. The first car we had was a Rambler and they were---and that was a good one (laughs).

In 1913 we quit farming and moved to town where my husband had an agency for the Rambler automobile.

I: How long did he have that agency?

N: For, uh, forty-eight years, I think it was. And my husband built the first car he drove in, the first car in Bureau county.

Q: This is Debbie Anderson; I'm talking to Mrs. A.E. Anderson at 23 South Pleasant in Princeton, Illinois, and Mrs. Anderson, what was it really like when you came over here?

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Q: Housework?

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PLACE 23 South 7th

Pleasant

DATE July 1945

Mrs A. E. Anderson

(INTERVIEWEE)

Debbie Anderson

(for Starved Rock Library)

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PLACE 23 South  
Pleasant  
DATE July, 1975

(Interviewee)

Dobbe Anderson  
(for Starved Rock Library)