

Lancaster County Historical Society  
Oral History Project

Interviewee: May Faustnacht  
Interviewer: Ann Stauffer  
Date Recorded: March 31, 1976  
Transcriber: Ariel Kornhauser  
Date Transcribed: July 27, 2006

S: This is March 31, 1976, and it's an interview with Miss. May Faustnacht of Terre Hill, who will talk about life in the village of Terre Hill. And she's the narrator, I'm Ann Stauffer, and I'm the interviewer.

May, you have some interesting things to tell about the main kind of work the people in Terre Hill did back when you were a girl. Will you tell us something about that industry and what it was, and how it was accomplished here?

F: Well, as I was growing up, I recall my parents worked in a cigar factory. And most of the people in Terry Hill were really implicated somewhere or other in cigar making. Now, there were factories all over town, and my parents both worked in one right close by. And I know as children we would help to strip the tobacco, and it was weighed when we got it, and when it was returned. And then we were paid according to the weight of the tobacco that we stripped. And my parents both worked as cigar makers, they were called, like, rolling and filling the tobacco. And then the wrappers that were put around the tobacco were done right there in the factory, and they were a very special kind of wrapper. I guess they were called Havanas, and had to be kept nice and moist because they had to be pliable in rolling the cigar in this wrapper. And of course when we were children, we were not allowed to handle those. But, as we grew older, why, we were allowed to help strip the wrappers.

Now, the mold that the tobacco's put in always fascinated me, because it was about ten cigars went into that mold. And then the cigar was laid in that wooden thing, and this wooden mold, and a clamp was put on that. And that was clamped down for, I guess, a certain amount of time, because when the mold was taken apart again, the top was lifted off, it was shaped exactly like the cigar but then it had no wrapper on. Then that had to be put on next, which took expert care in rolling the cigar into that wrapper.

And I know that a lot of people in Terre Hill of course worked at this, and many of them were transit workers, who came into town maybe just on the streetcar looking for a place to work and a place to stay, and they stayed in the, like boarding houses in Terry Hill. Many of these homes took in boarders, many for a living. And, of course, some of these workers would stay for quite a while because it was a lovely place to be, you know, the town itself was very nice, and many of the folks would stay sometimes for a year or two! They were called transits, and yet they would stay for that period of time. And we were friendly with one or two people who would come to visit sometimes, that my parents got acquainted with in the cigar factory, who had just boarded here in Terre Hill. And I guess when we were children we stripped at home stripped tobacco at home, and many times it did get a little tiresome in the summer, because (*laughs*) we would have rather done something else! And my brother Harry one time (he was a little older than I),

he said, (*chuckling*) “Let’s go and bury the rest of this tobacco, because I’m tired of it! Let’s bury it.” And we often laughed about it afterward. We weren’t allowed to do it, but it was a happy thought, anyway...

S: Yes. In the summer.

F: (*Laughs*) ... to get rid of the tobacco. So I don’t know, that’s about all I can remember, that most everybody was somehow or other affiliated with cigar factories. Many people in town worked at it, and that’s about all the industry we had when we were growing up, until probably about high school [a days/daze?]. And then, of course, they had a [silt/silk?] mill, I think it was called Sidle’s Hosiery Mill, Sidle’s Hosiery Mill here in Terre Hill. And then a lot of the young people left cigar making and went into this hosiery mill, and that had to do with the men’s hose [SP], and the boarding of it. They not only knitted them in this factory, but they also had what they called a “steaming plant”. And then the hose were put on, like, a shaped ... you know...

S: Yes.

F: ... form, like the stocking would look like after it was done, and this was called “boarding” it, too, and then ready for packaging, and sent away.

So those are the industries that I remember, but the most vivid one was the cigar making.

S: Cigar making. How did they pay for that? By the....?

F: Hundred. So many hundred you made. So many hundred cigars...

S: Cigars. By the cigars?

F: Yes. Yeah. And the stripping was paid by the pound.

S: I see.

F: You know, so many pounds we would strip, and then you were paid. It wasn’t a lot, but it was something to keep you occupied...

S: Yes.

F: ...over the summer anyway, for a few hours every day. Unless it got too hot and too tiresome (*chuckles*)

S: And in the wintertime did you do this....?

F: No. My parents worked, we didn’t. But in the winter, once school began, then we no longer stripped. It was more like a summertime activity. And all the children did it. I

think most every home they stripped tobacco to keep the children occupied. And also, it was a little source of spending money for the children.

S/F?: You would call it [“\_\_\_\_\_ Industry”], because everybody brought some of the work home...

F/S?: Yes, that’s right.

S/F?: ...and everybody in the family pitched in and did their share.

F/S?: Yes, that’s right. That’s right. And it was a source of livelihood, actually!

S: For certain. The whole family could do it.

F: Yes.

S: Well, that’s very interesting.

Now, let’s talk about family life, and what family life was like. For example, conveniences were certainly lacking at that time of life, I would think. I know at the turn of the century, and right after that, the living was entirely different. Can you tell us something about what home life, and what life was like in the family, without conveniences? What was your home like?

F: Well now, in our kitchen we had a big kitchen stove, and that was used for heating, as well as cooking, purposes, and it also heated the room above, too. There was a register in the ceiling and the heat, of course as you know, would rise and that was the warmest bedroom, because the kitchen stove gave off a lot of heat.

Now, in the living room, we had what was called “the living room stove” or a “heater,” it was called a heater. I know that we didn’t have that going full force all the time, because coal was costly. And, now, in the evenings when we were all home from school, then that fire would be what we called “drawn up” and heated. But we were mostly, I think, living in the kitchen. And we had no bathroom in those days, we had outside plumbing of course, and we had a pump, we had to pump the water, and for washing we had a washing machine, which was done by hand. It was not an electrical washer; the boys had to turn it for my mother. And the washer had to be filled with buckets. We had no hot water except what we would pump and bring in on the kitchen stove. And sometimes on a Sunday evening the house would be pretty cold, because they’d be going in and out with buckets to put it on the stove for washing on Monday morning. And I know that many times we washed out on this enclosed porch, right next- and it was really a cold job. Oh what a contrast it is today, when you have the automatics and in a few minutes, almost, you can have it all done and away. But in those days it took a long time to wash.

And the same way with running water; we had no running water in the sink. We had a sink where we washed our dishes and did all our kitchen work like that, but we had to bring it in in buckets.

S: Called a “dry sink.”

F: Yes. And there we brought the water in and stood it in buckets here so it would be handy to the stove and the sink. But it all had to be pumped! And in the winter, the coldest winter weather, many times the pump would freeze up outdoors, and then they’d have to go, maybe, to a neighbor and get a bucket of water, heat it, and in heating the water would pour it down inside of the wooden pump that would maybe start melting that performance of the pump inside. But, I know that in the coldest winter weather, that water was really icy.

S: I believe that. Now, how about refrigeration? Did you have ice refrigera...?

F: ...Only in the summer! We had an ice chest out in the enclosed porch, and then a nice man would come around every so often in the summer and put a chunk of ice in there. But in the winter my mother had a, like a closed cupboard out there, and she called that the “pie cupboard.” And she would often put things out there to keep cool and so forth because there was no refrigeration. In the winter. We never thought anything of it because the weather was cold and therefore we could have our things cold that we needed.

S: It kept things cold for you.

Now, I was going to say, do you- I remember that you were a teacher for years, and could you tell us something about the differing attitudes of children towards adults, and teachers, as a child? Have you noticed any change in the attitude of children towards authority?

F: Well, when I first started to teach, it was back in the country near [Bowens Ville], I was there, taught in that district for ten years. And I think teachers were held in very high esteem. I know I was often invited to the children’s home for a meal, maybe like a supper, and what the teacher said was... well, you were really respected. And the children in the family, I think, felt that you were just about the most wonderful guest they had. Because, well, you were informative, and you, you know, were an interesting person and I think they just loved entertaining you. And I so think that the last years that I taught, compared to the first years, the children were just a little harder, maybe, to discipline and to interest. Because, the children in... well, most of them were farm children when I first began to teach in the little town, and I think the children were just a little different than you were later on, because I think they were just a little harder to discipline, maybe, and to interest.

S: Yeah.

Now certainly you had different kinds of relaxation. What was the popular thing to do? I thought, or, I’ve always heard that baseball was a great sport, that it was really the...

F: Yes. Now that’s very true. I know my brothers all played baseball. And I think a lot of the people entered into it because it was really, well, a wonderful sport, and it’s about the

only sport that they had! And the town itself became involved, because we had a Terre Hill team, and I think we played – competitively – with other towns, and I think most everybody entered into it because we had to have socials and, we had to have old carnivals to make a little money to invest in their outfits. In those days, I don't know, I guess everybody wore a suit to play baseball, and I think those all had to be paid for by your own little town or community. And I know that we would help to have a festival in the evening to help pay for these “costumes” that they wore- or “baseball outfits!” And equipment was expensive! Balls and bats and all kinds of things, and then to transport the team from one place to another, you see. And they played with Adamstown, and they played... Even some reading players came out, I think, to help one summer. And also, we would go up as far as Mount Gretna, you know, competitive plays they had. Ball games, and, let's see, oh way up even around Lebanon, and... a league. Terre Hill entered a league, and then, of course, the town itself seemed to back them up and show their interest by accompanying them were they went to play. And I know a couple of my brothers played, and my brother-in-law.

S: Now, the children. What did they do as children to play? I mean, how what were the things that you did for amusement?

In the winter evenings, children now look at TV...

F: ... Well, yes. I think we read more in those days than the children do now. And even, I can remember, that my father would read to us. We had a set of books, I know they were green and red in color, and I know he would read many cute little stories and poems, and I know one of the favorites was called [*My Little Jacob Strauss*-?]. When we were little, he read it and tried to put dialect in it to it, you know... And we thought that was real entertainment, in the evening when we'd sit around the kitchen table or the living room stove and my dad would read from these big books, you know, we thought that was a lot of fun.

And then too, we played games. We had a big board that could be used for checkers, and for dominos, and things like that, and we really amused ourselves. And we had a game called “Flint,” I think. That was a card game. And the whole family would become involved, you know.

S: Mother and Dad...

F: ... Yeah

S: and all the children...

F: And then, too, we had a [victrola – SP?] in our day. We had a victrola in our home. Lots of records. And we'd often invite the neighbors in, and we'd have just a nice time, we'd have just a nice time with records, listening to the records. So, I think that's mostly what we did.

S: Now, in the summertime the children, you said, worked. Did they go swimming, or was there [...]?

F: Yes. Now that's one thing we did. We would get the tobacco stripping done if we had that to do (pardon) in the morning. Then in the afternoon it was mostly going swimming, or the boys, maybe, would practice baseball in the evening they would, we'd go for walks sometimes, picnics. We had a streetcar. And I know that these downtown girls, that you know too, that lived right around here, we'd often take the streetcar and go down to Eli Martin's Mill. And there we'd have lots of picnic supper, and go in that stream right by that mill, and have a wonderful time, and come home maybe close to 6:30, 7:00 on that evening streetcar.

And then a lot of times on Saturdays, there were what we called "town picnics." [Bowensville] would have one, you know, in the summer on a Saturday. Terre Hill would have picnics. These would be band concerts and so forth. And it seemed to be we had plenty of things to do, because the whole community would be involved.

And then we went to festivals lot of times at Mary Wise's, a teacher friend of mine. She'd invite me along. They had a car. And we went to festivals, and, well, I don't know, there was a lot of fun.

S: And there were a lot of church activities, weren't there?

F: That's right. Terre Hill always had three churches and there were a lot of picnics. Each church would have their own picnic, and everybody was invited, but they would be like the donors to have the band, and they would organize it, each church, and everybody else was invited. So that was a source of entertainment for us, to attend these summer picnics... And festivals were a big thing in those days, which you don't have now. And fire companies would have things, you know, to raise money. And I think there just seemed to be more activity then for whole communities, than what they have now.

Now since this bicentennial's coming up, you read more and more how communities are celebrating. But it seemed in those days when I was growing up, that's what they did all the time. Every summer you could look forward to activity like that. And then, too, I think there was Bible School. You know, we'd go to Bible School, and was a teacher then later on in life, but there was Bible School. Two weeks especially in the summer. And, well, I don't know...

S: ...It was just a lot going on all the time.

F: Yeah.

S: I can see that it would be much more activity for children...

F: ...That's right.

S: ...than there is now. Now in Terre Hill the playground is there, but the children often fight, and can get into trouble down there, which wouldn't happen when the mothers and fathers were available and at home...

F: ...That's right.

S: ...and the children would play right around home, instead of going to the community park.

F: And I can remember, too, on a Sunday afternoon, after our Sunday dinner was over (we'd have it maybe like at 12:00 or 12:30), after our Sunday dinner was over we'd take long walks. The whole family would take long walks, all around here; not only us, but other families, too. That was the thing to do on a Sunday afternoon! Take your family outdoors, and we'd go down back toward the black creek, and back in that area, and it was really a lovely walk. Maybe out toward [West Main] of Terre Hill, out that direction, out by those pretty farms, and maybe sit on the bank out on the grass for awhile, and then start home again.

Now these were things that we did as a family, which I think they don't do quite like this any more.

S: And you and I were talking about the life on the front porch. How the front porch was such an important...

F: (*chuckles.*) Well, it was a focal point for not only your family but for the whole neighborhood! Sometimes the people next door would come over and join you and sit on the porch, you know. There wasn't too much activity, I guess, on the street, except cars occasionally. But it was just a nice way to pass an evening. Sitting on the front porch rocking, and maybe in hot weather you'd make a pitcher of lemonade or ice tea. But it was just such a nice thing to remember, because I think it was such a sociable thing to do. People next door would come over and sit with you, or maybe another time you'd go and sit with them, but it was something to do to sit on your porch!

And I think to me a porch is a reminiscent of many good times, because, well that's what we did and we...

S: ...People were real neighborly.

F: You had more *time* to be neighborly, I think, than you have now, because well, when the work was done in the house, that's what you did. You went out and sat on your front porch.

S: And you didn't have wheels...

F: ... And we had no cars. That's right, that's the whole thing.

But I do remember when we were growing up, my father used to engage a big four-poster, like a two-seated affair, from Rusty Weaver. He rented these out. And we would go to visit relatives in this big four-poster. We'd all be in this one wagon, and I know we were all thrilled when we got the one with the fringe around. He had one that was a [suri] and this had long fringe, and we really felt very important going places. Two horses would be hitched to it, and we would go in this big wagon. And it probably had another name; I can't tell you what it was called. But we were thrilled when we would be going away in that. And Dad's people lived, still live around Lititz and Farmersville and so forth, and we went in that and visited a lot of times for a whole day! This would be a

whole day affair. They'd unhitch the horses when we'd get there, and then we'd stay the whole day. And that to me was really a treat.

S: Now May, someone told me there was a stage in Terre Hill.

F: That's right, there was. A stage, yes. There was a stage that went to Reading, and he would take people with him, as well as freight, you know. He went in a big farm wagon, a big farm wagon he drove. And then if you would engage him, he would make room for you, and I know my mother and I went to Reading to visit her people; her people were from down Reading way. And I know that we went, one time we went over as far as Adamstown with him, and then went on the Adamstown streetcar to go the rest of the way into Reading, because, well, I don't think we wanted to get out of a farm wagon right in the streets of Reading, you know. And so we only went with him as far as Adamstown and there we took the streetcar and went into Reading. But I know a lot of people traveled by stagecoach, and that's how they sent freight, I think, because we didn't have a freight car right near Terre Hill in those days when I was growing up. So that's how they sent a lot of grain and, I guess, produce, too, to the markets and whatnot went by this stagecoach.

S: Nearly everyone had his own garden, didn't they?

F: Yes, we had a nice big garden where our lawn is now. We raised a lot of potatoes and string beans and vegetables, and as children we sometimes would have to take a turn and hoeing or pulling weeds in the garden. And we never thought it was too much of a chore, you know. It was fun to be outdoors, because a lot of people were working in the evening. Like early evening, maybe we'd spend a little time in the garden before other activities would begin.

S: Until it got dark.

F: Yes.

S: Now, what about shopping? How much shopping would you have to do, and where would you go to shop?

F: Well now, when we were small [H.Z.] had the nicest little department store uptown, where I think- Up close to where the snack bar is now. That was a store in there. And that's where we went for most all our things, like the boys suits could be bought there. And well, all things that you would need: tablecloths and whatever, you know, things that you needed in your home, he had. It was really called, like a little department store. [H. Zale?] And then, I know this so well yet. Then, sometimes, when we would go and buy, in the fall, early fall, the boys all would get new suits for the winter, and then use their former suits for school. And I know that when Dad would go and pay the bill, he would get a cute little tray out that had rings in it. And these were stuck into velvet. And I *loved* this time of the shopping when he'd get this tray out, and I could pick a little ring from this tray, because Dad paid his bill there, you know. And this to me, I can still see that,



and I talk about it to other people, too. And they said, yes, they remember that tray with little rings. [??], yes, that was just something to make to feel real happy about.

S: Now, we had a lot of fun, I think, reminiscing here, and it just sounds delightful. But I'm sure that it wasn't all just so beautiful. Now, were there things about it, you think, that you are glad now that era's past?

F: Yes. I wouldn't want to go through it again, when I think it was really a hardship. But you didn't realize it at the time. Now, when you compare life as it is lived now with the way it was in those days, then you realize that life was kind of a chore to even get things done. Your ironing, your irons had to be heated on a stove, and in the summer, before we had electric, in the summer, that stove would really be hot. And we would have to sit there and wait for the iron to get hot. And then iron our clothing, and many times the iron would be that hot, that it would maybe scorch. Put a scorch mark on the clothing, because it had to be just right.

S: Now, in what areas do you think that there has not been an improvement? Would you say that life was better then in what areas? You have said that in the technological areas, in the work areas, you never want to go back because life was hard.

F: The only thing that I think now, with all the improvements that we have, all the conveniences and so forth, it makes life easier in one respect. But there are just more complications, I think, in, well, seeing that everything is in running order, you know. And it's much more *costly*, I think. Electric compared to the way we lit our homes. Heating, electric also, oil, the way we heated our homes. And it just seems much more costly, but at the same time, it's just much more convenient and more handy for us, I think. And, well, more appreciable in all areas now.

S: Now, people, and their attitudes, do you think that life was better, interrelationships were better then, or do you think it's the same?

F: Well. I don't know. I just can't answer how I do think about that in ... I think sometimes I have mixed emotions about it, because a lot of times I think families were closer to together then they are now, because there are so many different diversions for people. And many times they don't all sit down at the table at the same time to eat, because they have different things that they're doing. And, I don't know, I think sometimes family life is not as close now as it was when we lived it in those days.

S: Well, that was a very interesting interview. I enjoyed it immensely and thank you very much ...

F: ... And I enjoyed *talking* with you.