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business as well. Many's the time, many's the minutes I spent at it. My mother ahead of me, making the sheaves. And as soon as the sheaf was put on it, I was twisting it and tying it up and putting it one side. Great. It was a special way of twisting it together that it would hold. It wasn't a special knot, I would say, but you just twisted it around, just turned it in a way that the end would be in when you put the sheaf on it. Therefore it would hold together. (What was a sheaf?) Just bundles. And you made a strap of so many stalks of the grain. You twisted it that it would stay together. And you put that around the bundle, the sheaf. Until you'd have, oh, I'd say 12 or 14 sheaves. Made so many and stacked it up for the grain to dry. You know, sticking the lower part, what was cut, down, kind of in the ground, and the tops would come like this together. (The sheaves leaning against each other?) Yes, that's right. And they'd stand up very well. Even with high wind, they'd stand after that, and dry as dry as anything. It would be oats or barley or wheat or whatever they had planted. And then, that would be put in the barn. It would be put away over the crown beam in the barn, the whole thing, and it would be there until winter, you know. It would be in the winter they would be thrashing it. It would be kind of sticky, I figure, if you took it in from the field and tried to thrash it, the seed wouldn't break off it. It wouldn't be dry enough, you know. So it was put up in the barn, and in the fall, and coming on winter, it would be thrashed, you know, with a thrasher. You don't know what that is. Well now, this is funny. It was made at home, two sticks, possibly this long. I would say a yard, or maybe a little better than a yard, or whatever. Two sticks, and they weren't big sticks--they'd be about this much around. (An inch and a half.) Yes. And they would be both tied together by a kind of a longer string or rope, I suppose, or maybe a wire, the two sticks. And they were thrashing: just swing it over your shoulder and hit the grain on the barn floor, and knock the oats or the barley, or whatever it was, off it. (Oh, it was like a whip, but a hard whip.) Yes, that's right. You'd just break the grain off the straw. (Would it be a special day for this?) Dear me, it would be days and days, but there was no special day. They'd do it any day that there was nothing else going on particular. (And would the children have a role in this?) No, not much. (And would the women have a role?) No. That was men's work. As far as I remember, I never saw a woman thrashing. There could be a man here and there, you know, at both ends. But most always it would be one person. (And they'd strike the sheaf.) They sure did. (Was there a special place you would want to strike it?) Oh yes, you would like to hit it near where the grain was on it. (So the seed would be knocked off. Now, what did they do with the straw?) Feed it to the animals, if they would eat it, and if not, give it for bedding. Some animals used to love to eat it. But there was not much foodstuff in the straw. (Would they use straw for bedding for people?) No, I don't think they used straw much for that. But I'll tell you what they used to get a lot for bedding was the leaves in the woods. Many's the time we'd pick leaves. Bags and bags and bags of them, after they had fallen from the trees. A lot of people used to make mattresses of them. I remember sleeping on one. But I don't



remember of them being noisy. Maybe there was another mattress on top of it. You know, we used to have so many poultry and geese and ducks, and there was so much feathers. And that's what I remember mostly, the kind of mattresses we used to sleep on, was feather mattresses. I remember very well, picking the leaves and taking them in, but I think most of the time, we had feather mattresses on top. Just a bolster, like we said, bolster. Now, I'm going to tell you something else. We used to have geese. And do you know what they did with them? They used to pluck their feathers alive. Did you ever hear tell of that? Many's the one I plucked. To get their feathers. Because they were going to lose their feathers any-

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