Marty E. Strickler interview for a Wright State University History Course

Andrea J. Spence

Marty E. Strickler

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Annie Spence
Oral History Project
Narrated by:
Marty Strickler

Smith Family, 1956
Marty Strickler does not really remember much about her childhood. What she does remember isn't all that pleasant. She tells a tragic story of her father’s death when she was nine years old. That event changed Marty’s family life forever, as would be expected.

Before her father’s death, Marty, along with her thirteen siblings, she had a pleasant life. She remembers their garden they had with green beans and strawberries. She also remembers picking preaches and watching her mother can summertime foods. Her father built a house for the family in Beavercreek that they all enjoyed.

After Marty’s father died, their family experienced many difficulties. Her mother did not have a job and was left with seven children in the home; three of them were mentally challenged. Marty tells a story of a mother who would never let her or her siblings out of the yard. They had to take care of the handicap children. They bathed them, babysat them, and got them ready in the mornings. She said at the age of nine and on it was like she was raising her own children. Marty was surprisingly honest about the way she felt toward the handicap children. She said, “The burden of watching those kids, it was terrible. It was, you know, a time [when] you were ashamed of them and it wasn’t known. People just didn’t talk about that kind of stuff back then.” The siblings and Marty were never allowed to do anything or have friends over because of the family situation, which furthered her resentment toward the disabled children. “We weren’t allowed to do a lot of things because we had to watch them. So my mother was very strict on us, letting us go places and she would never let us…we weren’t allowed out of the yard.” She also resented her older siblings who contributed little in aiding her mother and the remaining children within the home. When asked about Christmas and birthdays, Marty doesn’t have much to say. She never had a birthday party and only remembers one Christmas when she got an Easy-Bake Oven. “I don’t remember having much of a childhood. I don’t remember being happy. I remember all the negative things I guess. So now that I look back I think I was sad only because I only knew sadness. I only knew the dysfunctional, nothing was happy.” One of the few good times she does remember was Easter. “Easter, it was a big deal. We use to have Easter egg hunts and that was a good memory. The family would always get
together on Easter and there would be dozens of eggs, dyed. I can remember Easter was a big deal to us.” Marty contributed her unhappiness and sadness as a child to her mother. Upon Marty growing up and starting her own family she found a new appreciation for her mother and the life that she led. “Everybody in my family as they got older appreciated the fact that she did the best she knew how.”

Looking back at her childhood she can now understand just how difficult life was for her mother. “Since I had kids I remember talking about ‘how’d you do it’ and ‘I don’t know how you put up with all of us.’ So I came to appreciate that and I think I told her several times that I was grateful that she could do that and not be insane.” Marty, who disliked children and family in her youth now finds them to be the most important aspect of her life. She loves to gather with them on holidays and other family occasions. “We have a great time as a family. And all the nieces and nephews say how great it is to be with all the aunts and uncles, which is my generation. How neat it is to have all of us get together. Yes, we do talk about the old times and everybody has stories. It’s a good time now that I’m older.” On every occasion possible she gives her children what she did not have. When asked about Christmas she said, “We go overboard for them because we’re the only ones that buy for them.” Marty’s children and family are the center of her life. It is not difficult to tell how she feels about them when speak of them; you can see it in her face.
Annie Spence

Oral History Project

Interview with Marty Strickler
February 8 & 25 2003

Smith/Strickler Family Oral History

Smith Family, 1954
Marty Strickler does not really remember much about her childhood. What she does remember isn’t all that pleasant. She tells a tragic story of her father’s death when she was nine years old. That event changed Marty’s family life forever, as would be expected. Before her father’s death Marty, along with her thirteen siblings, had a pleasant life. She remembers their garden they had with green beans and strawberries. She also remembers picking peaches and watching her mother can summertime foods. Her father built a house for the family in Beavercreek that they all enjoyed. Upon her father’s death Marty’s whole family’s lives changed. Her mother did not have a job and was left with seven children in the home; four of which were mentally challenged.

Marty tells a story of a mother who would never let her or her siblings out of the yard. They had to take care of the handicap children. They bathed them, babysat them, and got them ready in the mornings. She said at the age of nine and on it was like she was raising her own children. Marty was surprisingly honest about the way she felt toward the handicap children. She said, “The burden of watching those kids, it was terrible. It was, you know, a time when you were ashamed of them and it wasn’t known. People just didn’t talk about that kind of stuff back then.” The siblings and Marty were never allowed to do anything or have friends over because of the family situation, which furthered her resentment toward the disabled children. “We weren’t allowed to do a lot of things because we had to watch them. So my mother was very strict on us, letting us go places and she would never let us…we weren’t allowed out of the yard.” She also resented her older siblings who contributed little in aiding her mother and the remaining children within the home. When asked about Christmas and birthdays Marty doesn’t have much to say. She never had a birthday party and only remembers one Christmas when she got an Easy-Bake Oven. “I don’t remember having much of a childhood. I don’t remember being happy. I remember all the negative things I guess. So now that I look back I think I was sad only because I only knew sadness. I only knew the dysfunctional, nothing was happy.” One of the few good times she does remember was Easter.

“Easter was a big deal. We used to have Easter egg hunts and that was a good memory. The family would always get together on Easter and there would be dozens of eggs, dyed. She does remember was Easter: “Easter, it was a big deal. We used to have Easter egg hunts and that was a good memory. The family would always get together on Easter and there would be dozens of eggs, dyed. But can remember Easter was a big deal to us.” Marty contributed her unhappiness and sadness as a child to her mother. Upon Marty growing up and starting her own family she found a...
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She does remember was Easter. "Easter, it was a big deal. We use to have Easter egg hunts and that was a good memory. The family would always get together on Easter and there would be dozens of eggs, dyed. But can remember Easter was a big deal to us." Marty contributed her unhappiness and sadness as a child to her mother. Upon Marty growing up and starting her own family she found a new appreciation for her mother and the life that she lead. "Everybody in my family as they got older appreciated the fact that she did the best she knew how." Looking back at her childhood she can now understand just how difficult life was for her mother. "Since I had kids I remember talking about how’d you do it and I don’t know how you put up with all of us. So I came to appreciate that and I think I told her several times that I was grateful that she could do that and not be insane." Marty, who disliked children and family in her youth now finds them to be the most important aspect of her life. She loves to gather with them on holidays and other family occasions. "We have a great time as a family. And all the nieces and nephews say how great it is to be with all the aunts and uncles, which is my generations. How neat it is to have all of us get together. Yes, we do talk about the old times and everybody has stories. It’s a good time now that I’m older." On every occasion possible she gives her children what she did not have. When asked about Christmas she said, "We go overboard for them because we’re the only ones that buy for them." Marty’s children and family are the center of her life. It is not difficult to tell how she feels about them when she speaks of them; you can see it in her face.
Tell me a little bit about… just a quick bio. Where you where born.

Okay, I was born in Dayton, Ohio in Good Samaritan Hospital in June, on June 30th, 1955. We lived on Thirty One Potomac Street, which is on the east side of Dayton and it is considered Queen Ann location now. When I was four we moved to Beavercreek, Ohio in 1959. My father built the house and he moved all of us children there. I’m from a family of fourteen children. Eight girls six boys. My parents where from, my dad was from Cleveland, Tennessee born in 1908. My mother was born in Chickamauga Georgia in 1915.

Okay, I understand that you are from a big family, tell me what that was like growing up with so many siblings.

Well, I don’t really remember the days that we lived in the east side of Dayton, the days that I do remember was the time that we moved to Beavercreek and it was very difficult for us. I have brother and sister that were old enough to be my parents at the time and my one sister was pregnant at the same time my mother was pregnant, so I have nieces and nephews that are around my age or even older. So it was mass confusion growing up because there [were] so many kids. Plus we had handicap children in my family too, so it was very difficult. There was three children that were mentally challenged and they were around my sister Bernadette and my age, but when we moved to Beavercreek there were only seven of us left. All the rest of them had married and moved on to their lives, but there were seven children left when I, when we moved to Beavercreek.
Spence

How was that for your family having handicap children?

Strickler

It was very terrible, terrible.

Spence:

Did you participate a lot in taking care of them or how did your family manage that lifestyle for them.

Strickler:

Well at first it was funded by the government, as far as, they got funding...there was schools available for those kids. And when they were younger they got to go to the school. But when my dad died, which he died in 1965, I was nine years old and there was still seven of us left, three that my mother had, of course were handicap, so it was very very difficult. The burden of watching those kids, it was terrible. It was you know, a time where you were ashamed of them and it wasn't know. People just didn't talk about that kind of stuff back then. And they use to go to Happy Time School, which is in Xenia, and after my dad died they did not, they were not able to go there because of the funding and stuff.

Spence

Did you directly take part in a lot care for them? Or was it more on your mother. I mean as a family was it a whole family effort.

Strickler

It had to be a family effort. My sister Bernadette who was a twin to one of the handicap children Bernard, and then Virginia who was older and then Jimmy who was younger than me, we took care of them. Yes. We weren't allowed to do a lot of things because we had to watch them. So my mother was very strict on us letting us go places and she would never let us...we weren't allowed out of the yard. And we did have to take care of them, plus we had to take care of my bothers and sisters that had kids so my mom would baby-sit them so I was surrounded by children. All throughout. And my nieces and nephews, I mean it was weird, because like, my one handicap brother he would put a cat in the drier and then the drier...you'd open up the drier and it would come out after you. He'd put it in the mailbox and the mailman would come up there and it was very challenging. They would run off and go to other peoples house and they were very
severe. Plus being on medication and they would have seizures and until my mom finally had to put them into a home. When she couldn’t take care of them anymore.

Spence

How was that on your family, I mean how did you feel whenever they left?

Strickler

Well, first of all she put them in Orient Institute, which is in Columbus, so my sister Bernadette and I left and we didn’t want to go. We had to go every Sunday to go visit them. You know in fact we really didn’t like them. I mean it...And I hate to say that know and I feel bad about that now that I’m older, but we were ashamed of them ‘cause we couldn’t have people come over to much. The only interaction we had were if my mother would let us go out to other people’s places or if the family came. So once those kids…it was a big transition once those kids were put in and my mom was severely depressed. Cause she had three of them that had to go. I mean they were her responsibility and she felt really terrible about having to do that, but they were, there was no control. We couldn’t control three of them anymore.

Spence

When you were at that age and having such family stress... stress on you as an individual, what then did you want to be. Did you have an escape what was the good life to you, what did you want for yourself when you were your mothers age?

Strickler

I always knew I wouldn’t treat my kids the way that she, cause she didn’t know any better. My mom didn’t know. I mean she was stressed the time she had kids. I knew I wouldn’t, I wasn’t’ going to have all those kids. I knew once I was old enough to go out of the house I was moving out and going on my own. I was going to find a job. School was not a big ..a big thing to do back in the 70’s. Cause I graduated in 73. A lot of kids went to high school...I mean college, but it wasn’t something that I wanted to do. I knew that I wanted a better life and I’m saying this because we didn’t have a lot of money because once those kids went to Orient Institute there was not money left. We had to give the money to them so we were... we would live on nothing. And I’m not trying to feel sorry for myself but those were days were we would eat fried potatoes or we had nothing. It was just my sister and my mom and I . My sister worked and she paid for graduation stuff for me and she helped my mom out some but it was really difficult and I knew I wanted a better life. I knew I had to do something to have a better life. And like I said I feel bad now that I felt so ashamed of those kids and now adays it’s talked about more and but it was very very difficult. I don’t remember a lot of my childhood because I think... I remember singing in bed because all of us, we all were in one room. Shared a room with the girls and the boys were in another room but I remember singing you know
just for enjoyment or we would go to the local store or we would play outside most of the time because there was no video games or anything like that so we had to make up a lot of those games when we were younger. We... my mom would... we weren't allowed out of the yard so my mom would ..and plus we had to take care of the kids we had to watch them so they didn't go out of the yard and so it was more of a stressful. It was stressful growing up. And now that my brothers and sisters are older. They weren'tmuch help the ones that were older, and they regret that, they remember that now.

Spence

How did that make you feel at the time knowing that it was you and the siblings close to your age that was bearing the burden of helping out the family? How did you feel towards your older siblings?

Strickler

I didn’t know any better. Now that I am older I regret... I ...I have uhmm... bad feeling about that, but they didn’t know either. They were doing... they were starting their lives and they ... it, it makes me...my sister that was there...it made us closer together, but I resent those people that didn’t help us out. That didn’t help my mom. That they knew what my mom was going through but all they could think about was bringing their kids to my mom to have them watch them or I mean like the wedding we had to watch the kids. I can remember one wedding were my sister got to go to the wedding and then she came home to watch the kids and then I got to go to the reception. So those are the types of things that, so I started babysitting when I was nine years old. So yeah I have a lot of resent feeling about growing up and about my family, but I’m over that now that I know their lives were full and kids you know how kids can make you....that’s your whole life. So you can’t really take care of your family and try to take care of a family you probably want to get away from because you were probably... felt the same way, ashamed or whatever.

Spence

Do you think that was probably the worse of the hard time for your family?

Just that burden of family care for you. What you know were some of the hard times for you?

Strickler

Well, when my father passed away my mother had, he worked at Wright Paterson and he was a plumber on the side and he did a lot of jobs in Knolewood which is by the new Fairfield Mall, that's were we lived growing up and he did ...our house was the first house on that block. And he did a lot of the plumbing for a lot of the people. Well back
them you didn’t have like receipts and stuff like that so when he died people owed him money, like people that he did Beaverview Bowling Lanes he did Dunigin hardware, he did all that stuff and my mom tried to get the money from them and they said, “well we don’t owe you any money”. So those were the hard times when there was seven of us and my dad passed away my mom didn’t have a job and then, the times where you would, you know their was no communication. My mom never remarried, my mom never had that many friends, my brother he, I mean …it’s weird because he got into trouble and then he went to prison and it was... I could just go on and on. So those were the hard time when he was a junior in high school, senior, or maybe he even graduated I’m not real sure. Then he was, we had to send the kids off during that time, and then he ended up getting in trouble and he was tormented about it, he was felt guilty about putting them in a home and everybody felt that guilt. So I think that was the worse time in our lives. Was when my father died and we tried to collect some of that money to pay for a lot of that, I …a lot of those bills and stuff and we lived really, really on my dads social security and his retirement from Wright Pat.

Spence
Do you remember how you felt at that time, what your individual thought at, how old were you...Nine?

Strickler

Nine when my dad passed away…and I can remember my brother coming in and my brother Mike was the one who tried to save him and he gave him mouth to mouth, because he was sitting at the table, my dad was and he just passed, you know slumped over and my mom went to go get my brother and he gave him mouth to mouth. My dad regurgitated. So he’s the one that got busted when…so I think all that made him feel like he was part of the blame that he didn’t save his dad. So as a kid I remember getting up and them saying you don’t have to go to school today because your dad has passed away. And I remember that and I remember thinking…oh…I didn’t really see him and I didn’t know him that much but I was saddened by it. And I remember being, just, I think I was, I just didn’t know any better growing up. I just didn’t know that, I though ever bodies life was in the same turmoil or the same dysfunctional. I just, you just didn’t know how other people, I didn’t ask people about their lives or anything growing up, so it was just the way of life that I only knew?

Spence

What were some of the ways that you would cope with that way of life? Either during it or after you realized that that wasn’t the way that the majority of people had their lives?

Strickler

I think that I was very outgoing. You would think that I would be recluse or whatever but I was more try to be funny. I would go out and try to get people to laugh at me at
school or whatever and I think that was my out. To be... I didn’t want the attention on
my self it was just I would say things and people would laugh at me and I would think, “I
didn’t really think that was that funny”, but evidently it was fun to a lot of people, and of
course when I graduated from high school I was considered the class clown. So I think
that was my out towards it all, just... and the nurturing and caring now I think my feeling
toward people are really sensitive to a lot of people now that I’m older and I’m known for
that. Being sensitive to other people, family, if I hear stories about other families I think
that that’s... I consider one of my gifts as far as people tell me.

Spence

You mentioned that your mom didn’t let you go out of the yard much. What were some
of the things you did for fun or with the family within the home or out side with your
friend. I mean did you ever do things with your friends for fun?

Strickler

Well I had a friend that lived across the street and she was allowed to come over but I
wasn’t allowed to go over to her house to often. But I had a good friend that I am still
friends with. I was four years old when I moved over there and she was four and I stayed
in touch with her all those years. So I had her and my sister of course. We played kick
ball, we played...we had an imaginary rock that we had in the back yard that we... we
just made up our own games. We would play wagon train and we would play a doctor, I
mean we just, those were the type of things we did. Now, when I was in high school I
was involved in pep club and things like that. I played inner-mural sports. I didn’t...I
wasn’t that involved in sports, I did get involved as much as I knew. My mom was not,
she would let us stay home from school if we wanted to. She didn’t care if we wanted to
say home, if we said we were sick. She wasn’t really involved in our lives. We would
have to get ourselves up in the morning. I had a girlfriend that would always come pick
us up in the morning time. But as far as being involved I was involved as much as I
knew. My mom was...she didn’t care about our grades. I mean I didn’t get bad
grades...I got C’s. So I didn’t do that well in high school and grade school. I remember
not wanting to go to school a lot of the time because I didn’t have the same clothes and
things that other people had, but I had a lot of hand-me-downs. I can remember going
once...so I guess what it boils down I didn’t know any better; I didn’t know any
different. The games we played was amongst the kids, my nieces and nephews and
brother and sisters. We did a lot of singing like I said, we didn’t play any instruments or
anything like that, so I guess we were considered more of a boring type of growing up.

Spence

Tell me about, more about how you felt about your mom not being involved with your
life?

Strickler
I didn’t realize that until I got older. You know I didn’t know if other people... When I became a mother I realized that being involved...I think that kids do a lot better being involved, with parents being involved in their life. I resented my mother because once I got out...because I would have to beg her to go to the basketball games. I can remember getting on my knees and crying and saying “please let me go”. She wouldn’t let us go do it. It would take me an hour, so I would have to go... if the basketball game started at 7 I would have to start at 5 o’clock to ask her to go to the basketball games or the football games. She just didn’t want us to go anywhere. Especially after the kids were gone, so it was like she...that was her hold on us, so once I was 18 I was ready to move out. My sister paid my first months rent and I was out of there once I was graduated from high school. Because I didn’t want that life, cause she wouldn’t let us do anything...she wouldn’t let us go anywhere. I mean it was begging her and I resented her for it. And then when I grew up and got out and started having a family of my own I realized that she didn’t know any better.

Spence

Tell me how you felt when she either wouldn’t let you go or...

Strickler

I hated her…I hated her

Spence

What was your, like your reaction to that?

Strickler

I couldn’t just understand it ...I was like what is wrong with you, it was....why wouldn’t she let me go places? Well did she fear she would lose us and that would...like she lost her, the mentally retarded kids? I just didn’t understand it, I just didn’t understand it so I would go in my bedroom and I would just be so mad at her. I hated her, I hated her.

Spence

Tell me about the times you got to go. What would you do once you got out...how would you feel the few times she did allow you to go?

Strickler

Well I would be the ...I felt like oh I’m out of the house and she would give us....you would have to be home at certain time. Of course we got there because we were afraid
that we weren’t going to be able to go out again. So we did well that way once she told
us we had to be home at a certain time we would do that. But it was like oh my god she’s
letting us go out what a relief! So you know once I moved out ..I was pretty tame when I
was living at home, but once I moved out went...freedom for once so I was pretty wild.

Spence

You were wild once you got out?

Strickler

Oh yeah, I mean I did a lot of stuff I mean I didn’t set at home...I explored a lot of stuff.

Spence

Tell me about some of those things.

Strickler [gestures]
Spence [laughing]

Strickler

Oh man

Spence

You can tell me

Strickler

Well, I mean I partied a lot. My sister and two other girls lived at the apartment in
woodman park and we just had parties all the time, we drank a lot we had the freedom of
just being able to do whatever we wanted and we would stay out all night and we would
it was it was wonderful. It was a life that I just couldn’t believe that was a life that there
was. So I mean I got to date. Not that I didn’t date in high school. I had a few dates. I
never went to any of the proms or the homecomings or any or the dances. Because I was
really just friend with people. I didn’t know how to be a girlfriend. I didn’t have
boyfriends really because I didn’t really know what that was about, so once I got out and
I started dating somebody it was like okay this is what it is all about.

Spence

Were you disappointed that you didn’t get to go to the dances in high school?

Strickler
Yes! I think about that all the time...I think about

Spence

How did you feel at the time tough?

Strickler

I was so saddened that I wasn’t able to get to go. I mean no one asked me. I was more of a friend to everybody and it was sad. I just remember being really sad.

Spence

We have gone over the bad times...do you want to tell me about the good times growing up?

Strickler

My dad was like a loving man...he was like very very...but then he was mean also and I can remember him and he would be one way then be so mean the other way. We got beaten a lot by mom and dad so I don’t think I did so much because I was one of the younger ones. But, you know my sister got hit by a broom. you know just different things like that that happened. The good times I remember he was very he, was a hugger and I can remember my mom if I laid on my mom’s lap she would mess with my hair and like when school be...start she would go out and buy us what she could buy us. And I can remember my sister and I being close. I don’t really remember...I can remember the family on thanksgiving and stuff we would all go out and play flag football. When the family was together it was a lot of fun. We played games and stuff. Those were some of the good times. I can’t really remember too many of the good time. You focus more on the bad time I guess. But a lot of the...you know...now that I am older it wasn’t as bad as I thought it was back then. Cause I really don’t remember a lot that went on.

Spence

You mentioned whenever school would start your mom would take you out and take you guys shopping and where did you go shopping and what was that like.

Strickler

We each got a pair of shoes and an one outfit and we would go to Rinks. which was a store located off of airway road and sometime she would charge things at JC Penny’s. And I can remember her thinking okay now how am I going to pay for this when it comes time. But, we’d get a pair of shoes and maybe a coat. But it was usually Rinks or JC Penny.
Spence

What... would you say...well from what you told me a gather that your family was very inner dependent and very ...what work was to be done needed to be done by you guys around the house and things...tell me what that was like with chores or siblings carrying extra jobs or what you did other than take care of your siblings and baby-sit, what kind of chores did you have.

Strickler

Well when my dad was living we had a fourth of an acre garden so we garden a lot. I can remember going out there and having to pick those green beans, and strawberries and apples and pears not pears but peaches. I remember having to do that. We would have to do the dishes as a group. One would dry that type of thing. We would have to keep our bedrooms clean. Once my dad died all that stuff went pot. I mean...my mom would do all the canning she would make grape jelly...my dad would make ...you know everything was from scratch. They would make doughnuts and like I said grape jelly and the meals would be a big meal on Sundays. My mom did a lot of the cooking...we really didn’t get in the kitchen...but we setting the table and things like that. But he died it was so bad that she could not...we had an acre of grass and we would have to go out there and mow the grass because my brother who was so rebellious. He would never want to mow the grass so the grass would be like two to three or five inches ands we would have to go out there and mow it because he would never, never go out there and mow it. All my brother and sisters did not, they never came and helped us or anything like that. So those are the type of chores that I remember ands I hate to mow grass to this day. I hate it.

Spence

When you say help us what sibling are referring to... like how many of you guys were actually active

Strickler

Three, just my brother mike my sister Bernadette and of course my mom. Because the other three, they were...when my dad died my little brother was five no he was four so he was handicap. And then my brother that, my other sister and brother that were handicap they couldn’t do anything. So we would have to bath them...we have to..it was just like taking care of your own babies growing up....it was... we had to take care of them plus do the chores so it was like three of us and then my mom of course.

Spence

How do you think that reflexes on your own family now... as far as you feeling like at the age of nine ten eleven and on that you were raising your own family taking care of kids at that age?
Well, I remember when I got out on my own that I would never have kids... I said I would never have them... ever... I hated them... hated kids. But you know when you find somebody that you love and you get married things change. I can remember just thinking that I was afraid that I would have a mentally challenged kid I was afraid when my kids were nine that something would happen to me. Or Billie or .... those are the type of things you think about when your kids are younger because I wouldn’t want that for any kid lose a family member like that..

Spence

How do you think that formed your... the family you made for yourself? When did all that change for you?

Strickler

Well, when you find somebody that you care for and you know the responsibility and you know a different responsibility you get married and you... then you think OH gosh I want to have a child to love... it changes it does... then I appreciated mother too once I got married... the conflict and the dysfunctional and I know I wanted a better life for my kids and as far as raising them and being active in their family life and doing the games and taking them places and showing them off and reading to them and wanting their education to be the most important thing in their lives. Those are things that you... that made me to be, well that what I wanted be with my kids. Especially education, reading to them and making sure that they had the comfort of two family members they had the security of knowing that two people loved them. Not that I didn’t think that my parents, my mother loved me I just understand it at the time until I did get married.

Spence

What did you come to understand, what did

Strickler

She did the best she could for what she knew, she didn’t even graduate from high school. She was a kid herself when she got married... 16 years old... first child at 17. I can to realize that was all she knew. I think she was depressed I really believe she was a depressed women. And what she knew was how she raised and I have come to appreciated her now. I mean I’m sorry that I hated her and I’m glad I was raised the way I because it gave my kids a better life I believe. Does that answer the question you were trying to get to?

Spence
Yeah...that’s fine. Was your mother still living when you realized this.

Strickler
Yeah

Spence
Did you have any conversations with her about this?

Strickler

OH yeah. On her uhhh she ...lets she died in 1988 and she knew she said to my sister I know that Marty loves me. So she knew.

Spence

I am going to stop the tape for a minute because I know you pulled out some pictures. So I’m going to stop the tape for a minute.

Spence

This is picture number 1 that we’re going to be talking about. Do you want to just tell me a little bit about…

Strickler

This is when I was in high school. They wanted me to pose. One of the guys, the cameraman, and the photographer that worked for the school yearbook asked me to pose for him. So I posed and he snapped and that was in the yearbook.

Spence

Were you in the yearbook a lot?

Strickler

I was in the yearbook a lot, yeah. I was class clown. In fact I was the beaver for two games for Beavercreek high school. I was the eager beaver for two games until I realized I was making a fool out of myself. I no longer did that but, that’s one from high school.

Spence

Did you like that that you were in the yearbook so much?

Strickler
I think I was pretty popular in high school. If anything came out of it I think I was fairly popular, even though I didn’t go to dances I think I was fairly popular, outgoing.

Spence  This is picture number two.

Strickler

This is my first grade picture. I can remember my mother cutting my bangs, cutting my hair for this. It was first grade, hated school. I can remember being so afraid to go to school. I didn’t go to kindergarten so this was my first year there. It’s at E.G. Schall School there on Kemp Road.

Spence

Your mom cutting your hair was that something that she did regularly?

Strickler

No, she cut my hair on this occasion but my sisters... I had two sisters that became beauticians so we did a lot of that growing up. They would mess with your hair. When they were going to beauty school they would put rollers in your hair and doll you up. She really didn’t cut our hair that much. She gave me a perm once and I guess I can talk about that picture later.

Spence

We can talk about that picture now. This is picture six.

Strickler

That’s my third grade picture and my mother gave me my perm. The night before. And I can remember I always called this picture Boso because I had that curly side hair going on. I never wanted to show my teeth because my brother and sisters would make fun of my teeth. They use to call me bucky beaver and of course Beavercreek High School I fit right in. But, a lot of my pictures I don’t really give a smile. I really didn’t want to show my teeth. I realize there I probably didn’t realize how big they were going to get. Now that I look at it now it’s not a bad picture really. I don’t look like boso the clown but I can remember my sister and brothers making fun of it.

Spence

This is picture number three. You can tell me who the people are in the picture

Strickler
I am looking at the picture so the woman on the left is my aunt Mattie that was my mom’s sister. The man on the left or the center is my dad. The woman on right to my dad is my mother. And the man on the right is my mom’s brother Louey. Uncle Lewis Blalock, he owned Blalock trucking with was a big waste management firm in Dayton Ohio. He was the owner of that. My mom had two sisters and three brothers and that’s an old picture. I’m not sure what the date is on that but it was probably back in the fifties sometime.

Spence

Were they apart of your family a lot. What do you remember about aunts and uncles?

Strickler

Well, my dad was from a large family and he was from Tennessee and he was very wealthy when he was growing up but he didn’t have anything to do with his family when he moved up here. His dad had a mistress so he didn’t have anything to do with his dad after that. He was close to one brother, two brothers. We would see uncle Wilburn and I can remember eating watermelon and M&M and they drank a lot. So, I don’t remember my grandma or grandpa in fact I think my mom only meet my grandma once.

Spence

Did you know that as a child that your dad came from money?

Strickler

No, I later learned that. They were very well off.

Spence

How did you feel when you learned that? Did you wish that you had that life for yourself?

Strickler

I didn’t really understand it back then. I wish I knew more about the history part of it. I’m sorry that he’s gone now that I don’t know more about what really went on back then. Because a lot of thing went on that probably goes on know but we just don’t know. In fact I think that one of my dad’s brothers was homosexual. So back then it was not talked about. But he was a nurse and he divorced his wife and had a live in, a man that lived with him. So things went on back then, it’s interesting I just wish I knew more about the background part of it.

Spence
Did you know as a child about your uncle?

Strickler

Yeah. As I got older they talked about it.

Spence

What was your understanding of that.

Strickler

My mom she just said they always thought, and they called them homosexually at the time, that he had that type of lifestyle. They didn't make a big deal about it.

Spence

So it was fairly accepted within the family or it was never talked about.

Strickler

It was never talked about. Until we got older. Now a days everything is being talked about. My mom was very quite about her life, she didn't tell a lot of things so you couldn't get much out of her. She would mention that because when you would get the family together they would talk about stuff. That some of the things we would ask about. I mean he was meticulous about his life his house things like that they would talk about. They knew that he liked men.

Spence

You mentioned that when your family would get together you would have...you would get together and talk and things. Is that a pleasant memory for you?

Strickler

Since there is so many of we had a lot of graduations a lot of birthdays. Not the birthdays, we never celebrated [birthdays]. I never had a birthday party. Wedding, funerals, graduations, baby showers, that type of stuff we all do still get together. It's fun! We have a great time as a family. And all the nieces and nephews say how great it is to be with all the aunts and uncles which is my generations. How neat it is to have all of us get together. Yeah we do talk about the old times and everybody has stories. It's a good time now that I'm older.

Spence

What about when you were younger?
Strickler

You didn’t appreciate. When we were younger I remember all those kids coming over. That’s all I can remember saying, “oh my god I want to be somewhere where there are no kids.” I didn’t really appreciate it until I got older. The fact that family is important. When we do get together it is fun.

Spence

You also mentioned that you never had a birthday party?

Strickler

I never had a birthday party.

Spence

Never to this day?

Strickler

We have people over but I’ve never had a birthday party were my family gets together for it. No. Like friends over we’ll have a cook out. But never actually had a birthday party no.

Spence

Would you like to have a birthday party?

Strickler

No. I don’t think so, I don’t think I would like that.

Spence

Why not?

Strickler

I don’t like attention brought to myself. I like to be funny but I don’t like to be the...I can remember getting married and thinking, “oh my god everybody is looking at me” and I didn’t like it. I guess I like to be the person to give I don’t like it to be given for me.
When you were younger did you know that other kids had birthday parties? How did that make you feel or were you aware?

Strickler

No I wasn’t aware of that. I didn’t really realize. I don’t even remember getting cakes or presents or anything like that. You didn’t know any better. Now I can remember a fried of my in high school had a slumber party and it was her birthday. So I can remember being in high school and going to a birthday party but I never thought of myself having one.

Spence

Let’s go on to the next picture, number 4.

Strickler

This is my mom and dad. In 1956 they won a trip to Chicago and a water heater from the AO Smith Company, that was a heating and air-conditioning place. They won because we were the biggest Smith family under one roof. So they featured us in the newspaper back in 1956. They had an article in the newspaper about us. I don’t know how they found about our family but this is their picture, they were going to get on a plan.

Spence

How old were you when that happened?

Strickler

I was one years old. I just remember the article and it was featured in the daily times ands it was a big deal I guess. They had to get all the family together so I think it was big deal. If it was in the paper it was a big deal.

Spence

Picture #5

Strickler

This is my sister Virginia on the left as I’m looking at the picture. My sister Bernadette and her twin Bernard, who was handicap and Virginia is handicap, and of course myself on the right. And I think I was four years old in this picture. And this is my house that was on Potomac Street which is on the east side of Dayton. I don’t really remember why we’re laughing. The kids weren’t as handicapped then. As they got older they got medicated. They look pretty normal there don’t they? Now Virginia passed away. Bernard lives in a home at the MRDD, in Chambersburg Road. He’s still living.

Spence
Do you visit him?

Strickler

No

Spence

May I ask why?

Strickler

I don’t know. I can’t even give you that reason. It’s so depressing and it’s terrible of me to say I don’t know why. My sister Bernadette and I say we’re going to do this we’re going to go over their and visit them but it’s so sad to see them. Because their not the same, I mean they don’t know us. They don’t even know us. They were helmets. It’s bad. I feel guilty for not seeing them but I don’t go see them.

Spence

Do you think you ever will?

Strickler

Yeah I will. If I can get my sister down her. Then I’ll have to do it privately.

Spence

How many of the handicaps kids are still…

Strickler

Well, Bernard and Jimmy my young brother who is five years younger than me so he was born in 1960.

Spence

Do you see Jimmy?

Strickler

No, They’re together; they room together at MRDD in Dayton, Huber Heights. Virginia’s passed away. She was living in a group home and they said she died of heart element. She died in 1986, I think.

Spence
This is picture seven.

Strickler

This picture I am four years old and it is my brother Bernard on the left and I am on the right and this is Easter. We would get dressed up for Easter, when we lived on the east side of Dayton we always went to Holly Trinity Church. We were all baptized, but once we moved to Beavercreek we never went to church unless there was a wedding or something like that.

Spence

You guys look fairly well dressed or dress up was that just on special occasion?

Strickler

On special occasions. I'm sure that was what my sister wore last year. We got dressed up on Easter it was a big deal. We used to have Easter egg hunts and that was a good memory. The family would always get together on Easter and there would be dozens of eggs, died. It wouldn't be candy eggs it would be the regular bolded eggs. But I don't remember boiling them I don't remember dying them I mother did all that. But I can remember Easter was a big deal to us.

Spence

How was it like charismas and other holidays?

Strickler

Christmas, I don't remember Christmas. I remember getting maybe a few things for Christmas. I don't remember.

Spence

Do you remember Christmas tree?

Strickler

We used to have an Aluminum tree with the light. That tree we had from the day I remember Christmas to the day I moved out. It had that spiraled colored light and there was a colored plastic thing that went around and it would shine on the aluminum tree and turn the tree different colors. I don't remember Christmas hardly at all. I don't remember it being a fun time. I don't remember Christmas. I hate to say that but I don't remember to much about Christmas.
Spence

When is your first memory of Christmas. Was it once you were older?

Strickler

I believe when I moved out of the apt it was probably the best Christmas and every Christmas since then has been a good Christmas for me.

Spence

How do you feel about not having a Christmas

Strickler

You just didn’t know any better. IF your not out in that world. You live that lifestyle inside that house where you didn’t see to many people. I regret that now that I didn’t know. I think that’s probably why I go overboard now for Christmas. Oh! I do remember getting an easy bake oven. All my nieces and nephews coming over and I would not share with them. My nephew David who is a year younger than me says he can remember I was so mean about that. I wasn’t going to share one thing with him out of that easy bake oven. I don’t remember being mean about it, but he remember that. I did get something that I wanted so that was good memory. I don’t remember Christmas morning. I remember getting my easy bake oven. I don’t remember saying, “oh my gosh I’m going to go open my presents. I don’t remember believing in Santa Claus I don’t remember what I was told about Santa clause. I don’t remember any of that.

Spence

Tell me about picture number 8.

Strickler

This is my mother. When she was very young. I’m not sure how old she was there. But I remember her giving me this picture. She’s beautiful.

Spence

Is that how you remember her looking?

Strickler

No, never. My mother was always a big women. I never remember her like this. But she loved this picture. I had it blown up for a couple of my family members. Gave it to Bernadette.
Spence

How do you feel about the picture?

Strickler

Oh my gosh she’s beautiful. I just wonder what her life was like…at that time.

Spence

Picture 9

Strickler

This is my house in Beavercreek. My dad built this house. My mother use to scare us all the time in this house. She had this phobia about being afraid. So I can remember not really liking the basement of this house. But that is the house I can remember going up in.

Spence

You said she use to scare you, what do you mean?

Strickler

We would be sitting in the living room or something and she’d say, “I hear something down stairs.” It was just us in there and how where we going to protect ourselves if somebody was down there. I guess it was funny to her or whatever.

Spence

Do you mean she did it on purpose?

Strickler

I think she did it on purpose. A lot of my sister remember her trying to scare us. My one sister Gerry had the memory of her standing on the back porch and they were coming down the street from one of their friend’s house and she on the back porch with a sheet over her acting like she was a ghost. They were scared to death. I don’t have really good memories at this house.

Spence

How long were you in that house?
1959 I was fours, probably going to turn five that year until 1973.

Spence

Until 1973 which would be about the time you graduated...

Strickler

I turned eighteen on June 30th and I moved out July 1st. SO I graduated in my when I was 17 turned 18 on June 30th and my sister paid my first months rent on July first and we moved in. To Woodman Park. But we wanted out of there we hated that house.

Spence

Tell me a little bit about the day you moved out. The feeling you had, what you remember from it or the days approaching you moving.

Strickler

I can remember my sister telling me...I didn’t have a job so, she told me she would pay for my first months rent. Of course I was moving out with a girl that I went to high school with everybody was going to get a job and everybody was ready. Well, I’m the only one who didn’t have a job. I can remember being so excited about it, oh we were. I remember thinking, “there you go mom you were so mean to us this is what you deserve.” We didn’t even care about my mom. We wanted out of there. We didn’t even care we just said we’re out of here. And it was the best feeling ever. The freedom was so wonderful that we never had to answer to her anymore. It was a wonderful feeling and we had so much fun moving out and moving in and setting it. It was neat. Doing our own thing putting fish net over the walls and tapestry over the walls and being able to smoke cigarettes. But you know what my mom let us smoke she didn’t care if we smoked back then. She didn’t really care, we weren’t allowed to go anywhere but we could smoke cigarettes so that doesn’t make any sense. But as far as drink and stuff, I think I was drinking in my senior year. You know I would have to beg her to let me go out but then we would go out and have a few drinks and at the Union Depoe down on Brown street and then she got more lenient on my senior year. We did get to go places, we did get to party a little but not much. Like I said we had to beg her to let us do stuff. We hated that house. We think about the basement, we hated it. We didn’t have air-conditioning. I can remember my mother being in just her bra. It was so hot in there. I remember her making a screen for the garage so we could kept cool.

Spence

Does your mother still live there. How long did she stay?
Strickler

She sold, she couldn’t afford it anymore.

Spence

How did you feel when she sold the house?

Strickler

When I look back now I think why did I hate that house? I love going back there and looking at it. What so wrong with that house. We hated it, we hated that house. Probably because we just, my dad died, it wasn’t fun growing up, it really wasn’t. I don’t remember when we sold that house.

Spence

When she sold it had you come to that conclusion that it wasn’t such a bad house?

Strickler

No, we didn’t care about her selling it. Let her sell it. We didn’t care at all. I’m sure she did. I think her house payments were only 87 or 89 dollars a month. She couldn’t afford it.

Spence

Was it just her in the house when she finally sold it?

Strickler

Yeah it was a big house for just her. My brother was in and out. He had job, he’d come home sometime when he wasn’t working. He lived with a bunch of girls so I’m sure he was in and out of there. Hated him too.

Spence

You hated your brother too?

Strickler

Yeah, it was bad because he was mean.

Anne:

Which one was he?
Strickler

Mike. He was the one that tried to save my dad. He was older than us. He never had a job and he always wanted to use our car and my mom and him fought constantly. We fought with him.

Spence

How do you feel about him now though, what kind of relationship do you have with him now?

Strickler

It’s a little strange. Him and I are close but I still think about all of the things he did to my mom and all he did to us. He would take the care and he was just real mean to us growing up. I think he’s sorry for that now and I talk to him a lot. I think he regrets a lot of the things he did. In fact he’s got a son now and he wants Bill and I to be his foster [parent] is anything happens to them. It’s in the will that he wants me to be the mother. I can only be as close to him as I am now. I can’t get any closer and there is a strain there. But I do love him, he’s my brother. I would never do anything to hurt him... I don’t even think he knows that. That I have feelings that I kind of get mad about because I would never probably tell him that. He’s a good guy, he was just growing up to, dealing with his own problems, demons and evil things just as all of us were.

Spence

The last picture is a large family picture. Now this is your whole family?

Strickler

Well my little brother is missing. The youngest brother because he was born after I was. And this is when we won the biggest Smith family under one roof. And this is the Volkswagen buss that we toured around in. Of course you had to have of course because there was so many of us. This was the family vehicle. This is one of the picture they had, I’m not sure if it was in the newspaper but this is one they took for the newspaper.

Spence

Can you name everybody?

Strickler

Yes. (from the right) Father born in 1908 his name was Robert Hayward Smith he would be 95 years old. He died in 1965. That is me in his arms and I am 1 year old it was in 1956. next to me is my mother Mary louse. She was born in 1915 and she died
January 22 1988. She as her hands on my brother mike. Next to him is my brother Roy. Roy Wallus Smith. To his left is my sister Gerry. To her left is my sister Genevieve. To her left my sister Anna who has pasted away she died of leukemia. Left of her is my sister Betty. This is my sister Mildred’s daughter Beverly who is older than me. Holding Beverly is my sister Mildred who has also pasted away with cancer. To the left of her is my brother Bobbie who is passed away and he died of an aneurysm seven days before my mother died. To his left is my brother in-law warren who is married to my sister Mildred. He is still living but my sister Mildred has passed away. And this is my brother Wilburn who is still living [last one on the left back row]. So Wilbur is the oldest then Bobbie then comes betty, Wilbur, Anna, Genevieve, Gerry, Roy, mike, this is my sister Bernadette who I grew up with, she is standing in from of my sister betty.

Spence

Lets name them just the our kids standing across the front. Right to left

Strickler

This is Steve which is my sister Mildred’s son who is older than me. This is Virginia my sister who is passed away. This is Bernard our brother that is mentally challenged, this is my sister which is Bernard’s twin my sister Bernadette. So I’m a year old and their probably a year and a halve the twin are. So the order is ....Virginia, Bernadette and Bernard and then myself. Brother James who is five years younger than me and he was born in 1960.

Spence

Now was he one of the handicap children.

Strickler

Yeas, and they said he was a change a life baby because my mother was forty-five when she had him.

Spence

So when did you mother start having her kids?

Strickler

Seventeen years old. My mother spent ten years of her life pregnant.

Spence

What do you think when you see that picture?
Strickler

I love it, I love it, I love this picture. In fact everybody loved it and they made copies for everybody in the family. My brother Wilburn has two boys and his wife is a photographer and she enhanced this pictures and she gave all the brother and sisters a copy and I look at it and I think what a nice looking family. And you would not have know the hardship that family went through. I look at my dad and I think, “wow what a handsome man. I love this picture and everybody loves this picture.

Spence

So how many of the siblings are still livings?

Strickler

There are ten of us still living. Bobbie, Mildred, Anna, and Virginia have passed away. So four have passed plus my parents. And we still get together Thanksgiving and Christmas every year. And of course if there are wedding and graduation we still get together. There are 20 nieces and nephews there’s over 100 of us.

Spence

Do all of you get together?

Strickler

Most of the time we all get together.

Spence

Where do you get together?

Strickler

We have to rent halls. We rent Bishop Board Hall in St. Luck’s Parris we rent the Grange hall there by Tabby’s funeral home and the eagles’ nest off of Richland center. There are over 100 of us, amidst family. I mean I’m a great great aunt. That would be my nieces’ son having a child so my kids have third cousins that they still see when we get together.

Spence

Do you like that?

Strickler
We love that, we love it. It is something that my mom would want for us to stay together and that’s the reason we stay together. She would have wanted it.

Spence

What role do you play in coordinating that?

Strickler

My sister Betty is the coordinator, she gets it together and we all have to bring a dish. Getting a Santa clause and getting a place. We’ve even done things at Wright Patterson Air force base. I’ve rented the lodge out there and the Kitty Hawk center there. So each of the sisters and brothers, excuse me the brothers don’t do anything, but the sister get together and find the hall and get the food coordinated. We get together Fourth of July too. Three time a year unless there is a graduation. Now my daughter Stacie is graduating and my son is graduation so we’ll get tighter for that and I had to rent out a hall.

Spence

But generally that is an enjoyable time.

Strickler

It is so much fun. My son just wrote a little paper about me, and he wrote the role I play when we go to the outings. It’s like when I’m there I’m so good with the kids and they all think of aunt Marty as being the closes with all the kids. I always make over all the kids just, so that they know that I’m here. Bryan wrote something at Scholl that complemented the type of person I am.

Spence

And you like doing that for the kids know?

Strickler

I like making over them. They love it I give them a lot of attention. I make sure I say something to each one of them.

Spence

Now that you have your own family now and that you are of that age you are and you’ve had all these family experiences as of today what are your plans and what do you think is living the good life for you know?
The good life is having family. Not that I get together with my family as far as I depend on them, but I what I want for my kids is for them to know that I’m here for them always. That I love them. The good life is knowing...having good job and being able to support your kids and giving them the things that I never had. But also being able to appreciate that there is more to life than the terrible things, there family even thought I didn’t appreciate the family life I had growing up I do appreciate what I can give my family now.

I’m asking for the good life for you, not the good life you want to provide for your children but the good life that you want to live for yourself?

Being healthy, being here for my kids, being able to see that type of thing, my kids’ grandchildren, my kids being married being healthy, having a relationship that’s probably more secure probably because you did have a dysfunctional family. Being able to retire being in a sunny place. Moving to Florida some day. Living my the beach and that’s good life for me. When I’m able to retire to go ahead and move. Maybe the a house up her maybe in the summer time and them being about to go to Florida in the wintertime. That is my goal to some day do that. We talk about it a lot. Being able to go on vacations every year. I never got to have a vacation when I was growing up. So being able to do that. Being able to do what I want now that I’m working. Be able to have the nice things in life. Those are goals those are things, having a good retirement., being able to support ourselves once we’re retired. Just being able to travel and be there for my grandkids.

You made a statement that you came to realize that your mother did the best she could with what she had and for what she knew. I asked you if you had had any conversations with her after you had realized that and you said yes. You told me about a conversation your sister had but you didn’t tell me about a conversation necessary that you had. I wanted to follow up on that question to see if you remember any direct conversations with her.
I think I remember several conversations letting her know that I knew it was difficult raising all the kids and being in the circumstances that she was under. Since I had kids I remember talking about how’d you do it and I don’t know how you put up with all of us. So I came to appreciate that and I think I told her several times that I was grateful that she could do that and not be insane. I think we had several conversations. I can’t really remember specific conversation as far as exactly what I said but I knew that she knew. You could just see it with all the grandchildren and stuff, how everybody just swarmed around her. Everybody in my family as they got older appreciated the fact that she did the best she knew how.

Spence

Did she have any words of advice for you?

Strickler

Yeah, she thought I was kind of a whiner. So she thought that I should stop doing that. She said, “Don’t think so much.” I can remember her saying that one time for me. No, I can’t really remember her saying like things to do. If I would yell at the kids she would say “don’t yell at the kids.” No advise or any saying. No direct advise she had given us. She didn’t really meddle in your business to much. She would get mad at me if I would comment on Bill, like “you better good to him”...that type of thing, so she wasn’t full of wisdom of different quotes or things like that that she would tell us. She just commented on things, if you would say things about your husband or kids she would always come back with a more positive, not to say that, don’t tell them their fat, don’t say that type of things, but as far as advice no.

Spence

Also after I finished the interview you made two comments to me. One, that you were said, that you felt like you were sad a lot when you were child and two, you briefly talked about or made a comment about your mothers death and how difficult that was, so I wanted to talk about those two comments you made, so if you want to start with the sadness as a child.

Strickler

I told you that dad had pasted away so I think there was a lot of sadness in the house. Friends never came over so whatever we had was amongst the kids, my sister and the three other siblings, but I don’t remember having much of a childhood. I don’t remember being happy. I remember all the negative things I guess. So now that I look back I thing I was sad only because I only knew sadness I only knew the dysfunctional, nothing was happy. We didn’t do things as a family as a vacation. Those are things that would make you happy and there was nothing ....if you consider going to school happy things, well I
hated school. So I think there was a lot of sadness. I can remember going into the bathroom a lot and being by myself and talking to myself in the mirror. So, kind of alone sadness to get away from all of the other things that were not normal, I think.

Spence

Was that just when you were younger or did that go through adolescence and teen and adulthood?

Strickler

Yeah, it went through adolescences when I can remember, but I don’t remember much of my childhood. When my dad died at nine I remember that, but I don’t remember too much of that. But after that I can remember going into my classroom when I got back after my dad had passed away and I felt so alone. Nobody talked about it and I can remember just being so sad. When I was in high school I became more outgoing, but I don’t remember being happy. I think I was still sad. But once I moved out I kind of figured I’m on my own and now you make what you are. Your responsible for yourself now.

Spence

Then the other follow up question I had was about your mother’s death because you commented, I think you said it was traumatic or a really hard time. How was that different than your father’s death for you?

Strickler

Well, I was really young when my dad died and he wasn’t around a lot so I wasn’t close. But when my mother passed away she was a big part of our lives. Babysitting, I would take here to the grocery, I would talk to her everyday, we were a big part, anything we had here she was here, if we went shopping... So she was probably my best friend when I first started having kids. I needed her approval as far as if I was doing things right. Like you said advice, I would ask her a lot of stuff about what should I do if the baby is doing this, what should I put on them. She was just a good sounding board plus I knew she had raised so many kids. So she became my best friend. I couldn’t stand her when I was growing up but once I had kids and understood that being a mother was not that easy she did the best she knew how. When she passed away I lost my best friend. I could tell her everything. I didn’t really tell that much about personal things, about Bill and I but as far as the kids I had somebody that I knew I could trust in making the right decision on them. Or I could talk about people and it would never go anywhere else. Or we could talk about family members, so I lost my best friend really and that’s why it was so traumatic. It was so sad because I figured she lived such a rough life that why would god take her...she was seventy three when she passed away, but still she didn’t act seventy three she was real spunky. So I couldn’t grasp the feelings. I was really mad at god for that because she was just beginning to live her life being able to have money so I was
just...I didn’t understand the whole thing. I didn’t understand how he could take my kids’ grandmother from them. My kids adored her. That’s why it was so traumatic. Everybody felt that way. It wasn’t just my family. It was all my sisters and brothers. The grandchildren just dearly loved her. And she was closer to my kids because I was doing a lot for her. I felt that was my payback to take her to the grocery and be a part of her life. I felt good doing that.

Spence

Did you see a lot of difference between her being a mother to you verses the way she acted towards being a grandmother?

Strickler

Oh defiantly, you knew that my mother had the love for everybody because you would see it when she would go different places. You could see it in the grandkids, because she’s had grandkids like I said older than me. Maybe because I was growing up I couldn’t understand that. When I had my grandkids she defiantly showed them the love I didn’t feel like I got from her. It was a different type of love. We can let you just take you children and go home or what ever and she didn’t have to deal with the burden of the whole household, trying to take care of somebody. The burden of feeding them and... Bryan was three when she passed away. It was to me a lose, a big lose because I felt that she was a big part of my kids life and they looked forward to her coming over and we use to go skating together. She was just doing more with me were she never did anything with me when I was going through high school. She never went anywhere with us, it was a chore to get her to come pick you up after school...she just never did it, but she was more comfortable in her life when everybody was out of the house.

Spence

So as a adult you felt like you were getting to do your childhood activities with her even though you were an adult?

Strickler

Yeah, I felt the comfort there. I appreciated the fact that the person she was and she just couldn’t do it at that time and now she was able to and we grew like sisters really. It was a great thing it was a great time in my life to have her there.

Spence

Tell me about when you meet Bill, which is your husband?

Strickler
I worked at Dessie, which is no longer there; they moved the place, and he worked at Dessie. I played softball on a girl's softball team for the Dessie team and he also played softball for the men's team. And they had a NCO Club, which is a club all the military could go to, and the civilians could go there also. So everybody after the games we would meet there. You know whatever you do, drink and play pool and dance. I had a girl friend that I lived with at the time; she was saying, "I think that Bill Strickler is so cute." She said if she were taller she would be going after him. Well I didn't think he was that great myself. I mean I though he was too quiet. But, we kept going out and doing things and then he asked me out and we had our first date on my birthday. That's how I meet him.

Spence

Did you guys date a long time before you?

Strickler

No. We had our first date June 30th of 1978 and we were married April 7th 1979. We lived together. My roommates were jealous of him because I did everything them. So they got mad at me because I wasn't doing the things with them. I was having him there. We were living at my mom's house at the time and they moved out so Bill had to move in because I couldn't pay the rent. So he moved in in December and we were married in April.

Spence

Did you have the typical wedding? What kind of ceremonies and rituals...you know traditional aspects?

Strickler

Well, we're catholic so we had a catholic marriage. We got married at Emanuel Church, which is part of UD's chapel. We had a catholic ceremony. I had three brides' maids. My sister and two other friends. So we had the traditional catholic ceremony. And we had a reception after words at the Officers' Club. We couldn't stay at the reception long because we had to get our flight out to go Martin Nique. Which is down in the Caribbean, for seven days. Nobody ever heard of Martin Nique back then. So it was pretty primitive when we got there. It was a nice resort area but it was a little different. We had to drive from the airport on bus full of natives. It was on all these winding dirt roads to get to the hotel. But I guess it's real built up right now. It was interesting. We were a little skeptical about what to eat too, because we didn't know a lot about the place. It's a French island so a lot of people spoke French. The beach was nude then too. There
was part of the beach that was nude. Which, you never heard of that in 1979. It was beautiful down there.

Spence

Did you go to the nude beach?

Strickler

No we didn’t go to the nude beach. Believe it or not I was modest probably back then. I shouldn’t have been because now I’m a lot heavier, but back then I was thin I shouldn’t have been modest. We could just see it. There was apart of it and after that it was just nude. So we didn’t go. It was fun. We got back and we lived in the same house that we were living in before. We had a dog, my mom’s dog because she was living in Florida at the time.

Spence

You said you were living in your mom’s house was that the house she had after she sold the one on Fairknoll?

Strickler

No, she sold the one on Fairknoll then she bought a house in Xenia then she sold that house in Xenia and bought one in Dayton. So it was on Folmer Dr., which was right off of Burkhart, which is real close to where you live. We lived there, well we got married in April and in October we put a down payment on our first house.

Spence

And were was your first house?

Strickler

It was off of Willington Pike. I can’t remember the name of the street, gosh isn’t that terrible. It was a three-bedroom house. I can’t remember the name of the street. That’s so stupid. In the Kettering area.

Spence

Where did you guys working then?

Strickler
We were still working at Dessie. Playing softball still doing all the normal things. Softball and entertaining friends.

Spence

What were some of the things you guys would do for fun at that time? Were there young couples that you hung around with?

Strickler

Oh, yeah we hung around with one of my best friends that I knew at Woodman Park. Pam and Sunny who didn’t have any kids. But I’ve know them since 1975. We hung around with them. They had friends who owned a farm so we would go horseback riding with them, have big picnics there at the farm. And Bill would play golf every Sunday. So Sundays I spent with my mom or family. But he would always golf on Sunday’s every Sunday he would golf.

Spence

Does he still do that?

Strickler

No, I’ll have to tell you the story when I started having kids. He continued to golf, but it got to be were we got kind of sick of him playing golf. He played golf about five times a week before I meet him so he was a real good golfer. He still enjoys that though. He goes about once a week now. But it’s different now...you know when your raising kids or whatever. So we played softball, got together, went to festivals so we were always doing something. Family, get together with family, you know so there was so many of us we had a lot of weddings or go to Cleveland to see his parents. Hobbies...we didn’t have any hobbies. He played golf and I played softball...oh I was on a racquetball league. So I did do that and I played volleyball, but that came later in life.

Spence

Where were some of the places you would go out? You say you would hang out or you’d go out?

Strickler

Mostly the NCO Club. ‘Cause that was where all of our friends would play softball. We’d go to the NCO club right there on base.

Spence
What does NCO stand for?

Strickler

Noncommissioned Officers. It would be where people could go that were not officers. Noncommissioned would be enlisted people or you were civilians. Then they had an Officers’ Club and we would go there sometimes too, if they had a guess that would take you. So that was what we would normally do; play softball go in there afterwards and you know go home or whatever. But most of the friends we played with stayed there. It was just like a big hang out.

Spence

You guys were married in April of ‘79 and Stac is your first child…

Strickler

No Stacie wasn’t my first child. I was pregnant with our first and I had a miscarriage.

Spence

And when was that?

Strickler

All I remember is that I had a miscarriage in February of 1980. And that was our first I was like 8 weeks or 12 weeks. I can’t remember. I told everybody, that was a mistake and here I ending up losing the baby.

Spence

Were you excited though?

Strickler

Oh my god, yeah. See I never wanted kids and you find somebody you’re truly in love with and that changes. I was 24 and Billie was 28 at the time so we were ready to have a family.

Spence

Was it planned or was it….
Yeah, we kind of knew. I lost that one and they told me I had to wait three months to try again and that’s when I…and Stacie was our first and she was born February 4th 1981, 11:11 am at Kettering Hospital.

Spence

Upon losing your first child were you somewhat reluctant with trying again? Tell me how you really felt during that time?

Strickler

We were reluctant. I didn’t think I was going to stay pregnant. I didn’t think that was meant for me to have because I was so adamant about not having them. And I was a little afraid because my brothers and sisters were mentally challenged. There was a fear… a lot of fear in something like that happening to me also. We talked about it. We just thought that we really wanted to have them so that was what we decided we were going to do.

Spence

Do you think that put a lot of stress on your second pregnancy?

Strickler

Well, I think the doctors put me at ease because they said that they felt that most pregnancies, the first ones do end up….that it’s not uncommon for that to happen. So I had faith in him that he was directing me in the right place. Of course we knew we wanted the kids so we decided we would try that again. It happened and we’re glad it did.

Spence

Tell me some of the ways you prepared? In actually preparing or mentally preparing?

Strickler

Oh my gosh, I was by the book. I got the books and I got the advice. I wasn’t going to do this and I wasn’t going to do that. I knew I was going to breast-feed. I knew my kids weren’t going to act up and my kids were going to sit at a table. I prepared my self. I knew I was going to fix there food not buy baby food. I knew I was going to fix all there foods. And I use to grind Stacie’s food. I did everything with a grinder when she was growing up. And I breast-feed her until she was eight months old. I pumped. My sisters would get so…I followed the books. She wasn’t going to act up when she went to the store. I don’t know how it happened that she did not do that, but she wasn’t going to touch people’s stuff when she went to their house. I had good support from Billie. He
was very helpful. They were going to have a bedtime and it wasn't going to change. I worked so I had to have a schedule. So, I prepared a lot. Now I wasn't prepared for the labor pains [both laughed] but I was prepared with the Lamaze classes. I was going to do the breathing and go all natural but that didn't work out either. I took care of my skin. I weighted everyday on my stomach. I did gain 35 pounds with both my children. I weighted the same with each. I had a French-Fry fetish with Stacie. To this day she eats them but she doesn't like them as much as I did, I don't think. I prepared. I was ready for it. Name books, I knew I wanted to name her Stacie from day one. I knew that was what her name was going to be.

Spence

So Bill was active? Was it more like you planned and then he went along with the plan or he was active in deciding your plan that you had or the ideal than you had for your kids?

Strickler

For some reason we just had the same ideals. I just knew how he felt. He had never held a baby until my nephew. My nephew was born in 77 so that was the first time my husband had ever held a baby. So whatever he read... I got that book on each trimester. I could see each time what the baby looked like in my stomach. We would go through that at night time. He didn't know any better so he was going off of what I knew from babysitting all though years. He had never changed a diaper.

Spence

You remind me a lot of my mom when she tells me about really taking good care of her skin on her stomach you know using the lotion and grinding our food and breast feeding...and this is a random question but were you disposable diaper or cloth diaper?

Strickler

I was a cloth diaper. But I rented them. We had a diaper service. So they came every week to get the diapers. And they washed them then they would put brand new... you just put them in the bag they came in and they came and got them. I wasn't about to use disposables.

Spence

Do think that your experience in baby-sitting really helped you a lot?

Strickler
I don't think anybody could tell anybody how to love their children. Once you have that child the love is there and it's so unconditional. You just can't believe that that person's yours. Well when I baby-sat I could care less about those kids. I cared for them because I had to but as far as you treated that with fine kids gloves. You just wanted them to be everything that you were not.

Spence

So you think it would be more of your feeling of love toward your children that made you take care of them not your necessary your experience of knowing how to take care of them?

Strickler

Yes I believe that. It may have helped a lot, because I did know how to change diapers. I had all these tricks that my mother would tell me. Like if you couldn't get the pin in [the diaper] you would scratch it on your head and the oil from your head the pin would go in there. So those were things that I did learn from babysitting and from my mom teaching me. And like I said my mom was a big part too. So she would tell me like if the baby was constipated how to hold it and keep the legs up. She was a big part of that.

Spence

Do you look forward to passing that on?

Strickler

I don't know if I could say to much to my kids? Stacie probably wouldn't want my opinion on things. I think she's the type that she's going to do it here way. She might ask some questions but I don't think I can just freely give it to her. My mom would kind of do that, "I don't think you're doing that right" And I can't see me being able to get by with that with Stacie.

Spence

Did it offend you when your mother would say those things to you?

Strickler

No it wouldn't offend me but I would think, "I read the books" [laughing]. But I wanted her opinion I would want her to tell me. If I gave them to much of this do you think that was going to hurt them. I think Stacie might want that. But I don't think I could say you're holing that baby wrong or that type of thing.
Spence

Once you had your kids... you have Bryan too who is four years younger than Stac?

Strickler

I had Bryan in 1984 that was planned. We planned him. The doctor told me October second and he was born on October second.

Spence

How was that pregnancy different?

Strickler

He was very very active more so than Stacie was in the womb. And I always said no little girl would treat her mommy this way. I mean he kicked an awful lot. I had a lot of pressure down in that pregnancy. Both my kids weighted the same one was just a little longer than the other. So that was weird I thought. Their birthdays are the same numbers but indifferent sequence, so I thought that was odd too. There about three and three quarter years apart. I don't know why I waited so long to have Bryan because Stacie... we had such a good time with her. I took her to the library. I can remember reading to her, Billie read to her every night. We said prayers every night and put her to bed at a certain time. But Bryan was a little different. We did the disposable diapers. I tried to do his food. [I] only breast-feed him for six months. It was a little more time I had to spend on Bryan and Stacie together. Plus she was going to pre-school and I was working part time. It was a little difficult having two of them. The values here still there. We were going to send them to church, they were going to go to their first communion. They were going to go to their confirmation and baptism catholic. So the values of that, being raised in a church were I wasn't, but Billie was, I wanted that for my kids. I wanted them to have a place where if they needed someone to talk to they could go to God.

Spence

Did that remain in their lives or was that just kind of early childhood, did you guys stick to that?

Strickler

Well in eight grade that's when they had confirmations. Stacie and Bryan hated to go to church. We didn't go every Sunday, we were spermatic. Bill would go more than me since he was raised more strict than I was. But we would go on the holidays and stuff like that so it became part of our lives but as they became older it was more difficult to get them to go.
Did you allow them to make the decision for themselves?

We didn’t go as much as we should have probably gone, so we made them go when we went. Then when Stacie got older she didn’t want to go so we didn’t really make her. But for holidays and stuff we ask her know for her dad that she goes with us.

What were some of the things you did with your children for them to have fun?

Every Thursday we roller-skated, they had classes for us. Stacie was in the Girl Scots, which I never got to do when I was younger. Stacie and Bryan danced, which I wanted to do when I was younger and never got to do. They were in Boy Scots, soccer, she played the viola. She took keyboard lesson. Always went to the library. She was in Indian Prince and Indiana Guide, she was in that with her dad. She loved that, that was a neat thing for her and her dad to do. So they went camping a lot. Girl Scots she went camping. She had a pin pal at one of the nursing homes. She used to go spend the night with her grandma until her grandma passed away. So we did a lot of stuff. Festivals. Like holiday at home parade, Americana parades here in Centerville.

When you thought “what activities am I going to put my children in”, did you pick the things you wanted to do but you didn’t get to do?

Exactly. I wanted to take dancing when I was younger because…and I ended up taking dancing with her. Her and Bryan and I did end up taking dancing. The dance instructor wanted the mothers to dance so I ended up doing it and I took dance for about three years. As I got older I was able to do that but I did it with my kids. Like when we would get together as a family I would know all the latest dances so I would have to show everybody the dances. Bryan, I got him into modeling, Stacie did some modeling for Elder Bermans, and so I had them do that too. So they were very involved when they were growing up. Swimming, and that was another thing I wanted to be apart of a swim club. So we had a swim club here that we joined. They were both very good swimmers. Stacie especially was one of the best swimmers out of the kids. They were in gymnastics for a while but they didn’t like that though.
Were you pretty open though to letting them stop doing the things they didn’t like?

Strickler

Yes, I did. Stacie to this day wishes she didn’t stop dancing because she really enjoyed that. They made the decisions. All the decisions that were made they were the ones that stopped them from doing them, it wasn’t me. Like the instruments and stuff.

Spence

I assume you and Bill went to all of the events that were associated with those?

Strickler

We never missed a one. All the open houses, all the teacher conferences. I was room mother for Stacie’s second grade, I was room mother for Bryan’s.

Spence

What’s the room mother?

Strickler

Going in and helping the kids with like flash cards or like the parties they’d have, I did all that. I even worked at the school for a while, when I was working part time I actually got hired by the school. They’re called teachers aid. We did a lot of the printing of there test, I did that for a couple years too. I was very active in there classroom.

Spence

Did you enjoy that or were you doing it just to be active?

Strickler

I loved it. I loved them to be able to go in there and to see my kids and how excited they were to see me and all the other kids how excited they were. They would say, “you’re Stacie’s mom?” It was just so much fun. I miss it ‘cause my kids aren’t active in stuff. My son works now, so just to go in there and see him working makes me really proud. And just if one of his co-workers says something about him it makes me fell just great, wonderful.

[We discuss school activities and them not being in any extracurricular activities.]

Spence
How did you feel when Stacie left for college?

Strickler

I was sad. I couldn’t believe she decided she wanted to go away. I just thought she would always want to stay around here. I was kind of glad that she was confident and independent enough. I must of raised her very well to be able to have the confidence to go away and leave the family and do so well down there. I missed her terrible, we had plenty of tears, I did. I don’t know if she did. I think she’s grown to appreciate the fact that we were doing the things only for her benefit. Now that she’s older I think that she is starting to understand that.

Spence

What are some of the activities that you do now as a family. With Stacie gone and Bryan finishing up high school?

Strickler

Just families get get-togethers. Sometimes we’ll go to the movies together, play cards together. Bryan likes Trivia Pursuit. We don’t play that that often, I don’t know all the answers, and him and his dad are kind of competitive. Really the older they get the less we do with them. Really the family activities if we would get together with the whole family. There’s not much that we do now.

Spence

Does that bother you now that you don’t get to…

Strickler

Oh yeah, defiantly. I always ask them, lets go, lets go do this or lets go roller-skating, lets go bowling, but they never want to participate in that.

Spence

Do you think that’s a part of growing up?

Strickler

I think, now Bryan would probably do it more so than Stacie would. But Stacie is very independent and she’s got her…thinks that her life…and I can remember being 22 and
thinking that too. You know I’m going to do what I want to do and not do things as a family. She would rather hang out with her friends than be around us.

Spence

What were some of the things you would do for them that you didn’t have growing up as far as for Christmas and birthdays, Easter...how is it different for your family?

Strickler

Oh Christmas is terrible here. I just, we go overboard for them because we’re the only ones that buy for them. They have no other person buying for them. Bill’s mom will give them money or whatever but that’s the only gift they get. Their Christmas is what we get. I decorate; I don’t remember my mom making a big deal about decorating. But they have their own trees down there and we have ordainments for them that they made. They put all their ordainments that they made or that they bought or we bought them and they put them down stairs. Easter, I try to send them something. They still get a stocking. I try to fill it with goodies. Valentines Day I try to make sure we send them a card. They had birthday parties when they were growing up. Where I never had a birthday party. And we always try to make a big deal out of their birthdays.

Spence

What are some of the things you’ll do?

Strickler

Take them out to eat. Stacie had skating parties. Bryan had bowling parties. They had friends [over] or slumber parties or pizza parties. I always did something for them until they got to be about eleven or thirteen then we stopped. We though enough is enough.

Spence

Then what type of stuff would you do?

Strickler

Go out to eat and give them money or buy them a gift that they’d want. So that type of stuff.

Side two:

Spence

I was just asking Marty how it felt for her to be able to provide Christmas and fun birthdays for kids...that she didn’t get to have.
Strickler

It makes me feel good to be able to give in that way. I may go overboard but I feel like...its just us its just the four of us. That’s our family. When my mom passed away I felt kind of alienated from my brothers and sisters cause I think the connection with all of us was her. At Christmas time we have friends that we go out to eat every Christmas Eve with them and then Christmas day is spent with us, just the four of us.

Spence

The whole family doesn’t get together for Christmas.

Strickler

No, we get together after or before depending on when the people from out of town can get in. So they do get together as a big Smith family. But, Christmas day is usually spend going to church or like last year they had to watch church because we didn’t end up going Christmas Eve. Bill made them watch church on TV [laughing]. But it makes me feel great that I’m able to give that opportunity to my kids. To give them a car, I didn’t give it to them but they had to pay me for their cars. That they are able to have that were I never had it. Never had the pleasure of owning a car when I was growing up.

Spence

Do you think you sacrifice a lot for yourself in doing that? That maybe you don’t give to yourself?

Strickler

No. I think we’re pretty comfortable. We have vacations. My kids they got to go to vacation and they got to do a lot of things. So that made us feel good and we were able to do stuff with them. So, I don’t think that I’ve sacrificed at all... not doing with out. Not that we’re rich or anything, but we both work so we have the money to be able to give them a nice place to live and for them to be able to go to school. And I always said that too that my kids were going to go to college, from the time that they were little. I was going to make that important in their lives. That education was going to be the number one thing for them. Where we never talked about that when I was growing up.

Spence

Well, how does it make you feel that spring quarter Stacie is going to be done at OU?

Strickler
It’s very exciting because she will be the first one in my family, out of the girls, that has ever graduated from college. That’s nieces and nephews and brothers and sisters, she’ll be the first.

Spence

How many would you say came before her?

Strickler

Well there is 29 niece and nephews, so I would say...there are two that are left that are girls who are still in grade school, so she’ll be the first. All have gone through and not finished. She’ll be the first so it’ll be a big deal when she graduates. I’m going to make it a big deal.

Spence

What kind of celebration are you going to have?

Strickler

We’re going to have a family get together and I’ve rented a place. I’ll have it catered or have a BBQ and make a big deal out of it.

Spence

Do you think that’s as important to her as it is to you?

Strickler

No, I don’t think it is. I don’t think she wants to go through the graduations which we want her to. She does not want to do that. It’s a big thing. So, its exciting. I get two graduations this year. Bryan will be graduating from high school also.

Spence

Is he planning on going to college as well?

Strickler

We are planning that. We’re planning the stages right now. He’s not sure where he wants to go. He got excepted at UD, University of Dayton, which is a local campus. He either wants to go there or to Miami, if he gets accepted there.
How does it feel different with him going to school opposed to when Stacie went to school?

Stacie and I were further apart as far as personalities. My son he is more of a mama's [boy]. So it's going to be difficult. But he is defiantly one that needs to be away from the family.

You think it will be more beneficial for him?

Defiantly, only because of his shyness. He's very very shy.

Now that you're kids are older what are some of the things you and Bill do for fun just the two of you?

Hopefully I'll get to play golf with him. I'm not very good but I have the set and stuff. I'm not very good and it's kind of aggravating. I like to go to the Webster Street Market.

What is the Webster Street Market?

It's a place where they have vendors come out and they sell all kinds of organic stuff and flowers and things like that. We'll be able to go on weekend trips. I feel bad now when Bryan's home, I feel like I have to be here for him to cook dinner or whatever. But Bill and I will probably be able to do more weekend trips. Have more friends over. We pretty much do what we want to do now. Hopefully we'll be able to think about moving to Florida and saving some money to do that.
So do you look forward to Bryan leaving?

Strickler

No, no not really because I think its going to be kind of real quiet here because him and I have a good time together. He wrote about me for one of his class projects and it really hit me hard because he said that I was one of the most important people in his life. So, if he goes to UD he’ll be close and I’m going to be hopefully really active. Maybe I can get involved in the school that way, some of the programs, I don’t know. It’s such a local place maybe we can get him involved in some stuff. But it’s going to be hard I think when he leaves. Very, very difficult.

Spence

You talk about vacation was there other places you’ve gone other than Floridian?

Strickler

We’ve been to Circleville and I have a cousin that lives in Jacksonville and we can go visit him. We go to Siesta Key. We’ve been to Los Vegas. I’d like to go to Louisiana. He (Bill) has a sister who lives in Savanna, a sister who runs a bed and breakfast, so I though we’d like to do that. Just to be able to take off. Hopefully we can retire in eight years.

Spence

How much have you incorporated Bill’s family into your own?

Strickler

Bill’s mother she’s come to stay with us a few times but we don’t see them as often. He has a brother who lives in Cincinnati and they don’t communicate too much. We probably see them once or twice a year. He has a brother who lives in Cleveland by his mom and we see them maybe twice a year. His sister we see her maybe twice a year. But we don’t really see to much of them. I leave it more up to Bill. Stacie is real good about keeping in contact with her grandma. She sends her cards sometimes. Bryan isn’t as good about doing that. They’re not really close to their grandparents. My husband isn’t very close to his family. Like he says he’s closer to my family than he is to his own family. He’s a quiet man...he just doesn’t make much of an effort. Most of the time I’m saying, “Did you call your mom?” It’s kind of a sad thing for my kids, but they don’t make an effort either, the other side. But that is just how it is.

Spence

Tell me some of the activates you do just for you, that don’t involve anyone else?
Well, I love to buy makeup and do facial and things like that on my self. I’m not a shopper but I like to coordinate outfits together. I like to buy stuff for the house and I wish I had more time to decorate and hopefully when Bryan does leave I’ll be able to remodel most of this house. We’ve done a lot to it so far but there’s rooms I want to change and I enjoy doing that. Reading magazines. I go up to my room and read my magazines, look at furniture and Better Home and Garden to get ideas. I like to be around people. I go out with my girlfriends a lot to party and dance. My husband and I like to do that also. I like being around, partying and dancing, going out to eat, being around friends...I love that. I really enjoy that, I really enjoy people. And Bill does too, he’s raring to go wherever I am. So we visit people and go out in Circleville and October Fest and camp out. I have many friends since I was young. I still have friends from high school that I’ve remained friends with for all these years. So that tells you something that friends are important. I can’t wait until Stacie gets married and be able to plan that stuff. [laughing].
Annie Spence
Oral History Project
Photographs provided by Marty Strickler

School Pictures
(Right) Marty's Mother at age 16 (Center) Parents after winning a trip to Chicago for having the biggest Smith family under one roof (Left) Parents with Marty's Aunt and Uncle
Marty in High school – Marty at age four with siblings (right to left) Virginia, Bernadette, Bernard, Marty
Marty and Brother Bernard before Easter Egg Hunt
Family House on 2110 Fairknoll Dr
Family Picture for newspaper after parents won trip to Chicago.