

LUCY

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To Lucy, who welcomed me warmly and recalled her life so that I could write my story, I owe a very special thank-you.

I also want to give a special thank you to Carol Simonson, who introduced me to Lucy and accompanied me the many times I interviewed her.

## PREFACE

The Lehigh Canal was completed in 1829. It transported anthracite coal to market. It began at Mauch Chunk (which is now called Jim Thorpe), Pennsylvania and ended at Easton. At Easton the coal boats could pass on to either the Morris Canal which crossed New Jersey and ended at New York Harbor or the Delaware Canal which ended at Bristol, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia. The Delaware Canal was completed in 1832. For much of their existence the Lehigh and Delaware Canals were run as a single operation under the administration of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company.

All of Lucy's boating was done on the Lehigh and Delaware Canals. It took Lucy one week to make the one hundred mile round trip between Mauch Chunk and Bristol. During this trip she would pass through more than seventy locks. The longest distance between the locks was the eleven mile level on the Delaware Canal.

The boats used on the Lehigh and Delaware Canals were 87 1/2 feet in length and 10 1/2 feet wide. Most of them were hinged in the middle so they could be uncoupled into two separate sections. This is important because the boats were longer, when hinged together, than the canals were wide. Thus they had to be unhinged to be turned around a section at a time. The boats were lighted by a night hawker--a big three reflector kerosene lantern that could shine light about 30 feet in front of the boat. Night hawkers were always mounted near the bow or front of the canal boat.

All canal boats had boards lining their coal holds. Coal would work its way through loose spaces between the boards. Once a coal cargo would be unloaded the boat people would pull the lining boards up to reclaim all the coal that had fallen into the bilges.

## Preface (Cont'd)

When Lucy speaks of Laury's she refers to the boatyard and coal loading chutes of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company which were located on the Lehigh Canal across from the present village at Laury's station. After 1924 all boats were loaded and repaired there, thus shortening the length of a trip to Bristol by twenty miles.

Today the Delaware Canal has been preserved by Pennsylvania as Roosevelt State Park and sections of the Lehigh Canal have been restored by various local governments in Carbon, Lehigh and Northhampton Counties. To learn more about these canals, visit the Canal Museum which is located on Route 611 south of Easton, Pennsylvania at the junction of the Lehigh, Delaware and Morris Canals. For those interested in learning more about life on the canals the following books are recommended:

- "Tales the Boatmen Told" by James Lee; and
- "A Delaware Canal Journal" by C.P. Yoder.

Lance E. Metz

Historian

Canal Museum

Hugh Moore Park

Easton, Pennsylvania

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## FOREWORD

LUCY is the story of a pioneer woman who boated on the Lehigh and Delaware Canals. Her life was raw and brutal. She was beaten by her father and later by her husband Jonas White, but,... "Sure I loved Jonas," she told me. "I was young, didn't have no friends..."

Lucy was strong and loving, faced horrors and went right on living. She steered the boat, drove the mules and cooked and washed in the canal. Her day started at 3:00 in the morning and ended at 10:00 at night.

Lucy was born in 1897, the oldest of the 25 canal people still living. She was 8 years old when her mother died--of worriment--the doctor said. It was then that she started boating, taking turns with her brothers and sisters. In 1918 she married Jonas and boated from Mauch Chunk to Bristol and sometimes out to the 'gas house' in the Port Richmond area of Philadelphia.

The canal people lived a life quite independent of the town people. They had their own stores at the locks, they slept and ate and worked on the boat from March until December. Their recreation, if they had any, was with other canalers. They were often harassed by the town children, especially from Easton on up.

When the boats were light (unloaded) they were high in the water so that passing under the many bridges was .a tight squeeze, forcing everyone on deck to crouch. That was when children sometimes threw dirt and stones down on them.

The life of these canal people was hard, grinding, and brutal--but Lucy and many of the others who lived on the boats speak of it wistfully, wishing they could return to the days of boating. "You know," says Lucy, "if someone said to me today, 'You want to go



Foreword (Cont'd)

on the boat?' I'd say sure--I'd go in a minute!"

As of 1983, Lucy is alive and living in Lambertville, New Jersey.



1) You'll swim or drown

There was five of us kids in the family, my half-sister Clara, my brother Willie, my real sister Maggie, me, and my baby brother Warren. We lived on a farm in Point Pleasant and Papa farmed for a man there. He took care of the chickens and pigs and cows. I used to get on the horse's back and take him back to the barn.

It was Papa taught me to swim. "You'll swim or drown," he said and tied a rope around me and dropped me in the canal. I kept tryin' to hold on to the boat, but then I went down and come up paddlin' away like a dog. I swum all the way over to Aunt Lizzie by the bank. She'd call to me to "come one, come on" over to her. That's the way I learned. I never was afraid again. I would jump in and swim around any time.

I didn't boat until Mama died. She died when I was eight years old. She used to say to Papa, "Don't take them on the boat, you'll drown them." Mama wanted us to have a good education, so we went to school on Greenhill Road in Lumberville. We'd go by horse and wagon--there was no automobiles then, But we didn't do much studyin' we was real devils. Some days we'd go under the bridge and get soaking wet and the teacher would send us home.

We didn't have no toys except I had a doll and Maggie had dishes. We used to set out on the road and make mud cakes, but I wanted her dishes, didn't want my doll. "Give 'em to me," I said, but Maggie said she wouldn't so I grabbed her arm and bit her on the wrist. Oh the blood come out all over--than I ran away.

Maggie went home. Pretty soon, it started getting dark and I was scared the buggerman might get me. Poor Mom--she didn't know what happened to me. I went home and Mom, she was working' on the tailor-pants she

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sewed. She just told me to wash myself, eat my dinner, and study my lessons. I **2.** thought maybe nothin' would happen, but me and my sister were in bed together and after a while it was 12:00 and Mom come in with a mush paddle-- a big wooden paddle. "Get out of bed," she said to Maggie, "and put your head down on the bed and your heiny up." Then she hit my sister 'till she cried and cried.

After she finished with her she told me, "You're bad. Look what you done to your sister. You put your head down and your heiny up." Then she hit me real hard with the paddle. I cried and when she went away I tried to sleep on my belly. I left Maggie keep her dishes and I kept my doll.

2     Mama died of worriment

Mama worked hard at home and she did day work too. She cleaned house for Dr. Willis Walters. She walked over there and back--it wasn't far, but she got tired--she'd come back and just set awhile on the couch. Then she'd be up cookin' for us. Nights she'd set sewing--treadlin' the old machine--stitching pants for the factory in Pipersville. She used to bring home a couple dozen pairs to work on...she was busy all the time.

After a while she just give up. She didn't want to live any more. "My husband don't love me any more--he don't take care of me," she said. She was cleanin' one day at Dr. Walters' and she wouldn't even eat her lunch.

"Come on Annie," he said, "eat a little," but she wouldn't, touch nothin'. He fetched her home, told her to rest. The next day she still wouldn't eat. She was real sick. Pop took the wagon and he got Dr. Walters back and he come in lookin' mad and up the stairs he went to see her. When he come down again he said, "She's got double pneumonia." He told Pop to bring her bed down to the parlor and he stayed there--slept on the couch all night.

Papa made us go to bed, but we was laying awake and we heard Mama callin' to us, so we went down. There was a lamp lighted on the table and Mama was sittin' up--her long hair hangin' down on her shoulders. She had beautiful hair--so long she could set on it. She told us to come close to her--she could still talk a little.

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"I want you on one side," she said to me, and "you on the other," she said to Clara. "Now part my hair in the middle and plait it and put it around my head." Then she said real slow and sad, "This is the last time."

We went back to bed and when we got up in the morning she was dead. "She worked herself to death," Doctor Walters said. "She died of worriment" If Papa got the undertaker and he fixed her all up and when he was finished, he lifted me up so's I could kiss her goodbye.

We done the best we could after Mama died. Maggie and I fed baby Warren--he don't remember any mommy. My oldest brother, Willie, and a neighbor got us ready for school and we walked up the hill every day for a while--then Pop started taking turns puttin' us on the boat. Before Mama died she told Papa, "Don't take those kids on the boat." But he was the boss, so we went on the boat. Clara aggravated him to move away from the farm so he got a house in Point Pleasant, right near the lock.

Clara wouldn't have nothin' to do with us. "I'm not your sister," she'd say. Papa had three wives and she was by his first wife. Clara didn't want us new kids--we wasn't family to her.

One day it was rainin' and these two women come to the door. They said they didn't know how to get to Danboro and would I take them there and they would pay. Pop was away workin' and so was my big brother, but his horse was there and his wagon. I took the two ladies and my little brother Warren went with me. We went to Danboro and they paid me.

I should have come home the way we went, but I went over the bridge and some nosy people saw us and caught my father when he come down and told him about me and the horse and wagon and said the horse was all lathered up. I had got the horse home alright and washed him down and wiped him.

Pops come home and I threw the money on the table for him, but he didn't care nothin' about the money--he grabbed a stick and started beating me.

Con'd.

He broke the stick and went out to get another one, then my little brother 6. quick pushed a window open and helped me climb out. He was cryin', "Start and run--hurry up!" I hadn't no stockings on or no shoes, but I ran across the cornfield out to the road.

My Aunt Addie and cousin were out with their wagon getting horse feed. They saw me with all the blood. "Oh my God," Aunt Addie said. They took me home and got my clothes off so's they could wash my back. "look at her back," they said. It was cut this deep, half as much as my finger. "You go down town--have your father arrested," they said.

Well, I wasn't of age, so how could I get my father arrested? They give me money to go on the train, but when I started across the covered bridge there was Pop comin' towards me. He got me by the arm. "Come on young lady--where do you think you're going?"

"I'm leaving," I said, "I'm going on the train."

"You're not goin' anywhere," he said, "I'm the boss." He took me to a store and bought me some shoes and stockin's and then he took me home. My older brother said, "You better look at my sister--why did you beat her? It was my horse and my wagon. She could do anything she wanted with them,

it'd be all right with me. I'm the one should get the money!"

4) Where's Clara?

One day after Mama died, we was all playing around--it was Sunday, and this man come up to our house in a horse and wagon. He tied up the horse and come on in and when he saw us kids, he said, "You kids like candy?" Well, sure, we said, sure we do, so he give us a dollar to get it at the store. We went to Sam Heed's store at the lock and got some Jew-Jews and taffy and licorice and set down and ate them. When we walked back to the house there was the horse still tied up and out the window come a suitcase they throwed right into the wagon. My sister Clara come out then with a bag of stuff and holdin' hands with this man.

"See you later," Clara said. They untied the horse and went off trottin' real fast. We watched 'em go and we didn't know nothin'. We just went back to playin' then. The lady across the road come over. She knew we was goin' to be alone.

"Honey, your sister left," she said, "they're going to get married. You lock up and if you hear anything, you holler."

My Pop come home early. Somebody told him his daughter run away. Pop says,

"Where's Clara?" He wouldn't believe us when we said she was gone. He looked in the coat closet--it was empty. He come down and he was mad. "Woman at Centre Bridge told me the truth. She's gone, alright--took everything belonged to Mom." Pop took us kids with him to Tumble Falls.

We were barefooted but we walked all the way. We got to Aunt Lizzy Dillon's house. Pop rapped on the door and Lizzy come and told him, "They went to Phillipsburg to get married." (He didn't know they was really hid under the bed.)

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They went off after Pop left and got married. They took the ring that **8.**

was Mom's. Pop had taken it off her hand before she was buried and kept it in his room in a box. He wanted it back real bad. "It belonged to my

wife," he said. He tried to stop Clara but she was old enough to get

married--there was nothing he could do.

We took care of ourselves. There was lovely people in Lumberville and

they was always ready to help us. Pop had us take turns goin' on the boat.



5) We'd be workin' all day

We'd be workin' all day when we was boatin'. Sometimes we played along the banks but we was never with other kids. Except on Sundays. We'd lay over then and the kids would play together--play tag. I played checkers sometimes.

The mules had brass bells on their collars and they'd tinkle; it was pretty--sounded like music. Sometimes when I was driver I'd ride the lead mule. I even slept on him sometimes when we had a long haul to the next lock, like on the eleven mile level. We'd go all night, that's when I'd sleep. I'd put my head down on his collar between the hames, so I wouldn't slip off and he'd go walking on, quiet-like in the night. It was so dark--there were no lights on the canal, only the night hawker on the boat, shinin' in the shadows.

One time I was ridin' along on the mule...It was real cold and dark and one of them bums that had their fires on the banks climbs up to where I was and says: "Ain't you afraid?" I said no I ain't afraid of nothin'. He just looked at me and then went on down the bank to his fire. I really was afraid, but I wasn't going to tell him.

Another time I was leaning over behind the lead mule so's I could unhook him and let a boat pass. I had my head down when bang, he kicked me right here. Well, I went flyin' right into the canal. They come with a row boat and got me out and brought me into the cabin to lay down, but I just got up and went back to steerin'. We got a doctor at Point Pleasant and he put three stitches in me.

We used to carry a lot of stone from the quarry in Lambertville to Bound Brook.

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We'd go to the New Hope lock and get a scow to put a cable on us and pull us across the river. Then we'd be locked into the Raritan Canal (Delaware and Raritan Canal) and go down to Bound Brook, New Jersey to deliver our load. The canal went right through the town of Trenton and the kids there used to yell at us and they'd take nails and tacks and put them down hoping we'd step on them with our bare feet, but I never did.

I remember one time--it was a real hot day--I'd bought some bread. I had my sunbonnet on, I was skipping along, singin'. I just kept on skip<sup>p</sup>ing right into the canal. I popped up real quick, but my bread was soggy wet and I lost the water jug I was carrying.

6) They say it was a dog's life

They say boatin' was a dog's life, but I loved it. We always had money **in** our pockets, but we worked hard.

We'd get up at 3:00 in the morning to get the mules out of the stable, brush 'em, give 'em their feed and hay, put their harness on. The locks opened at 4:00 so we had to get going before that.

There's two people works at a time--the steersman and the driver. You steer with a long stick in the back of the boat and it's hard to move, but you have to. You could get grounded easy, because the canals are narrow. If you got stuck bad you had to be pulled out. The bank boss'd see you and he'd get some mules to pull you back. Sometimes a mule'd fall in. You had to get help quick or he'd die. Sometimes a drowned mule would be down there all through the winter and couldn't be hauled out until spring.

Some locks you knew was bad, like Lumberville--they was lots of fights with other boatmen--so you had to hurry to get through. Some lockkeepers was slow, some had left their wife workin' and she had trouble with the gates.. But there was real fast ones could get you through in 10 minutes.

When we'd switch from steerin' to drivin' we'd take a pole and do a jump to the towpath or maybe swim.

We kept everything in the cellar--that's what I called it. There was the steps going down. We had a table that'd fold--we had a bed that'd fold too, and the stove. We didn't have much clothes--there wasn't much place to put them--just put them in a box. We kept oats in the hinge and we kept food in

-Cont'd-

with the oats. There was a wash tub and I washed on Sundays--there

wasn't no time to do it the other days when we were boatin'. I'd heat up water on the stove and carry it up and scrub my clothes on the top. I'd put up two poles for my clothesline, one **in** the hole where the pump was, the other in the hinge.

We carried a barrel of water to drink. There was a certain place in

the river where the water was good--any other place it rotted in a coupla' days.

We never had any trouble gettin' water for washin'--and we rinsed

right in the canal, drop it in--whoosh--it was all done.

When we cooked we had to go back and forth from the cellar to the steerin'--

couldn't stay down long or the boat would go aground. I'd have two pots goin' on the stove, the foldin' table out with dishes on it--nothin' fancy,

but we ate good. We bought things at the stores at the locks. We got biscuits from one place--kept them in a jar to eat along the way. One of the lock tender's wives made good potato bread--they called the lock "Potato Bread Lock."

When everything was cooked we brought it up on the top of the boat and then the one was steerin' ate first, then changed places with the drivin' one, so's he could eat.

Sometimes we'd sit there floatin' along, eatin', feelin' good, then we'd go

under a bridge and some nasty kids would throw stuff down on us--dirt and stones--pretty rotten. I remember it going right in the plate of food I was eating and I had to throw it all away.

There was some nasty kids alright. A gang of 'em would come hootin' and hollerin' down to the canal, pull off all their clothes and jump in naked.



They'd swim up to us and try to climb into the boat. Boy, I sicked

13,

the dog on 'em--they never got up, but they sure tried.

7) I loved those mules

'We had two mules--I loved 'em. Pop named 'em but I forget now. They're my friends--I'd talk to them--they'd waggle their ears, look at me out of the sides of their eyes, kind of sad, like. They was smart--knew what to do, you didn't have to tell 'em much, but you had to stay with them--you left them alone, and they'd just stop and eat. Sometimes we put muzzles on them, so they couldn't eat the grass--then we could leave them walk while we stayed on the boat. We had fly nets on them and I made things to put over their ears so's to keep the flies off.

You didn't see many horses on the canal--horses couldn't stand it. Mules were tough and they didn't eat as much as a horse. They didn't go near the water either. Horses did. They'd wade right in, but mules don't like the water--the only time they get in is if they get pushed and pulled too hard when the boat lines get tangled.

We took good care of those mules. Before I went to bed I give them some hay, oats (little molasses mixed in) and I'd wash 'em with soap and water.

I'd get their harness off and let 'em roll--that made 'em feel good--they really liked that. They got sores under the collar if you didn't take care of them. There was an inspection lady from the SPCA. She'd be standing at a lock someplace and when you come up you had to move the collar so's she could see if there was sores. If there was, then she'd arrest you and you had to buy stuff to put on them 'till they cleared up.

Walking the mules was good when it was nice, but when it was raining and you're cold and wet you just want to get someplace and stay there. Then

there's the snakes that run across the towpath--they usually come out like-

-Cont'd-





that when it's storming. The mules were afraid of them and they'd jump up and 15.  
sometimes they'd land on your feet. The lightning and thunder was

bad and it was su<sup>p</sup>posed to be attracted to the mules' shoes, but I was so scared  
that many a time I hung fast to the mule.

8) I met my husband on the boat

The way I met my husband, Jonas White, was when he wanted his boat washed down and he come around and asked my father could I do it. Pop said, "I don't care," so Jonas got me to do it regular for him for pay. I scrubbed it all out. You know how he paid me? Come over here--I'll whisper it to you how. He gave me a lovin', that's how he paid me.

When he courted me he'd walk all the way from Tumble Falls to come to see me He'd knock on the door and ask Papa could he take me out. Sometimes Pop'd say, "She can stay out to 11:00." I'd keep the gate shut and talk through the gate--he'd set on the pole fence. Pop said he'd give me a lickin' if I didn't get in like he said.

When the fair come to Trenton, Jonas wanted to take me, so he asked Papa.

"Sure," Papa said, "but she can't go alone." Papa went along with us.. Jonas bought our tickets and even took us out to eat.

We got married when I was 21 in a church in Milford. It was just us two, nobody stood up for us--there wasn't nobody could do it. I wore a plain waist and skirt, no wedding dress--didn't have a ring neither. After we got married, Jonas went back on the boat. I stayed at the farm with Mom White.

9) On the 'Hicken Hill with Mom White

Mom White lived at a farm on the 'Hicken Hill\*in Point Pleasant. When I lived there I did everything--I plowed with the two mules, I pitched hay--took care of the chickens, cows. They must have thought I was made of iron the way I worked. When Jonas was there he wouldn't do nothin°, he'd say, "You plow, I'll fix somethin' to eat," and then he'd leave me workin'.

Mom White walked with two canes, but she had her own cow she wouldn't let no one milk but her. I had to bring the cow over, tie her up and Mom would milk her. She made butter herself, too. She had a churn and she wouldn't leave you churn it, she'd put it in bowls and then she'd send it down town by the boys to exchange for food.

Before me and Jonas come, Bill White and his wife and kids worked the farm, but Bill--he drank a lot and Mom hated that. She was glad to have me and she was good to me. 'I always did things the way she wanted when I was there.

Mom baked pies and bread. She could see the canal from the top of the hill where she lived so when 'she seen a boat comin' she'd get one of the boys to take down some butter or pies or bread to sell td the boatmen.

Jonas come and stayed at the farm when the canal froze and he stopped boatin'. If the boat got stuck in the ice it lay there all winter. We'd quit in December usually, and stayed on the farm until March, when he started again. When you quit in the winter, the company kept back some of your pay until after Christmas. A lot of the people got jobs like cutting ice or workin' in the mill when they were off the

boat, but Jonas, he didn't do nothin'. There wasn't nothin' for me to do so I stayed in the house or when I wanted out, I'd go to the barn--I loved that farm.

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At Christmas time my husband didn't want no Christmas tree or nothin'. I didn't have no money and I sure wasn't gonna get any of his money! Sure

I was happy with Jonas. I was young, I didn't have no friends--nobody\on the boat would be a friend. They kept to themselves--women worse than men. There was mostly men on the boats anyway.

\* The .'Hicken Hill was Tohicken Hill, located in Bucks County, Pennsylvania

10) Hello, Mommy, you're going to have a baby

When Jonas and I come up to Mom White's one Sunday, Aunt Addie was there and she says, "Hello, mommy, you're going to have a baby." I didn't pay no attention to her. I wasn't feelin' too good, but Jonas--he wanted to go to the dance. Well, we went, but mostly we just sat and watched. Then I got this terrible pain in my belly. Jonas said we better get back 'cause somethin' was goin' to happen. He'd been kind of laughin' at me--he knew all along what was wrong.

We had to walk all the way up the 'Hicken Hill. I kept havin' these pains and Jonas kept draggin' me till we got to the house. Aunt Addie heard me cryin' and she come down and helped me into the house--then she made me lay down on the couch. Jonas went after the doctor and he come right away. When he saw me he said, "Honey, you're goin' to have a baby real soon."

"Who, me?" I said, "You're a liar."

"You'll see," he said--then I got one big pain--whoop--out she come--a baby girl.

You know I never had no mother to tell me--how was I to know? That was my daughter Margaret--we called her "Maggie". She grew up tough as me. She could swim like a rat. She'd jump off the boat and swim anytime!

I stayed there at Grandmom White's until she died--then I went on the boat with Jonas. They sold the cows and mules and chickens so we just run the farm on Sundays when we was off the boat and in the winter when the canal froze.

I was always at the farm when the babies come. They was Charlie--he was born after Maggie, then Eddie. I raised all the kids on the boat. When they

Cont'd



was too little to walk, I tied 'em fast with a rope to the boat. We had a big umbrella, red and white it was, the kids stayed under it. If I wasn't busy steerin', I'd stay with 'em. They didn't have no toys--well you know I never had any--except my doll.



11) We had to keep the boats clean and runnin'

We had company boats--the Coal and Navigation Company owned 'em, but Jonas had to buy the stove and the barrel and the mules. We had to keep it clean and runnin' but if it needed to be heisted (dry docked) and repairs done, they done that.

There was two kinds, the stiff boats (one boat) was the easiest to steer but they was somethin' to turn around. The hinged boats was two boats hinged in the middle. You could take 'em a<sup>p</sup>art so you could turn 'em around one at a time. They was 87 ½ feet long and 10 1/2 feet wide. We hauled about 100 tons of coal--carried the same whether it was a stiff boat or hinged. It took a day to unload it and then we had to wait at Bristol till the tide turned before we went back.

We used to go to Bristol, all the way to the 'gas house' in Philly around pier 13. The tug'd come and pull us out into the waves so big they'd go right over the boat. I was scared to death. One time the boat was bouncin' up and down. I'd go and lay down--I just couldn't sto<sup>p</sup> throwin' up--kept goin' down in the cabin.

The captain of the tug he yelled to me, "Come on up top." Then he took me in the tug so I wouldn't get sick. It was nice of him. We had to fill our barrel with water there, too. We'd lay all day. Sunday in Bristol Basin--kids run all over the boats. It was pretty bad.

When a ship'd come in and wanted soft coal, we'd go out to the middle of the river to load it. One time when we was at Marcus Hook after the ship took the stuff, the boss come out and said, "You're leaking." There we was bouncin' around in the middle of the river leakin'! Then he started blowin' his horn like he was goin' to leave--blowin' "boo-boo, boo-boo."-- Cont'd -

I was thinkin' if he lets us go adrift we're like to drown. Then some guy yells, "Don't get scared mommy, they won't let you go." Two fellows pulled us around the ship so we got back and got another boat. But no more--I wouldn't want that again. We made more money in Philly, but it was too scary.

12) I didn't see no good time, just work, work all the time

We got our coal from the boat. Nobody never bought any. You know those boats was lined with boards. Well, some of the coal'd fall down between the boards, so after we unloaded we'd pull up the boards and we'd have all the coal was there **in** the bilge. Some of them bad actors on the canal would sell the coal to buy a drink. There wasn't much else to do for a good time. I didn't see no good time--just work, work all the time.

When we lived on the boat we didn't have no washing machine, or bathtub or back house--nothin', but we had plenty of water--just reach over and get all you wanted out of the canal. I cooked and cleaned, I steered or drove them mules, workin' all the time. My husband wouldn't hire nobody. I never thought about workin', just did it, it all had to be done. I got so tired at night--didn't even get out of my clothes--just lay down and seemed like I'd hardly been there when Jonas would yell to get up. It'd be dark and wet and cold sometimes.

We had a conch shell with a hole in it and we blowed when we was comin' to the lock. You had a lot of breath, you could blow really loud, so you could hear it maybe half a mile.

One place we unloaded they had a bucket come out over the boat on a pulley, pulled by a horse. You shoveled coal into the bucket, then the horse pulled it back and they dumped it out. You know, people talk about barges on the canal, but they weren't no barges, only boats. A barge you don't do nothing--it just goes, but a boat you have to steer all the time or you'll go aground.

The cabin was little and dark, just two little windows. It wasn't hard to clean, nothin' much to it. When it was hot we took the legs off the stove then took it up to the top and set it in the hinge. That's where we'd cook in the summer.

For breakfast we had coffee and I'd fry coupla eggs--you had to hurry--had to get it quick or the boat would go aground. I enjoyed every bit of it. I was never sick, only at Bristol in the big waves. Sure I fell overboard sometimes--didn't make any difference, I could swim. *My daughter*, she lived in the water. When she steered she'd jump in, swim, and get back up and steer.

13. The day my baby died.

It was Sunday my baby died. We was tied up at Laury's, the boatyard where they loaded coal, and I was going to do my washing and scrubbing. The kids wanted to get out so I told my husband, "You watch them while I scrub." Well, I might as well of told the stove to watch 'em. He just went off and lay down to sleep. Maggie, she tried to look after little Charlie, but she was only 4 and he was 3.

I was working doin' the clothes and I heard Jonas call me. "What do you want?" I said, "Come out here," he says "and see what I have." I went out and there he was holding the baby out flat like this, drowned. I grabbed him and took him over to the hatch cover and I rubbed him all around his eyes and all over his little face. Water kept comin' out of his nose and ears and everyplace, but I kept rubbin'!

The lock keeper come up and said to me--"Let me see him." "No," I said, but finally I let him and he put his hand over where his heart was. "Honey," he said, "don't rub him any more, he's dead. You have to get a coroner and you have to get a place to bury him."

Mr. Church, he's the super of the canals, come over and he said, "Oh no, oh no, oh no." Then he took my hand. "Honey, I'll pay for everything." He did, but look what I lost--nothing would bring him back, all that money, but think what he was worth to me.

Mr. Church was cryin' too. He was good to me--he said he'd get our boat loaded first, even though we weren't the first in line, then, he said I wasn't to steer and he hired someone to do it. We went down to Point Pleasant and I took my daughter, she was a little thing, but we walked three miles to get the coroner and undertaker. We got him buried at a church, too. My husband, he wouldn't go, he said, "You and your daughter go yourself."

I never forgot my baby. I remember now ne used to sing. He'd come up and sit on the hatch cover. "Mom, you want me to sing?" he'd say. If you want, I'd say, and he'd sit there singin' "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More" while I was workin'.

A year after Charlie died I had Eddie.

#### 14. The Eye-talians

One \_\_\_\_\_ day we was boatin' along where the railroad comes in near the canal near Mauch Chunk. There was a lot of Eye-talians, real dirty Eye-talians--you know they're dirty--ones that work on the railroad. They started callin' me bad names. We carried a shotgun and it was loaded so I grabbed it and shot at them but I fell over when it went off. I was so mad I broke the gun **in** two and threw it in the canal.

Jonas bought another gun and the next time we went by them Eye-talians they started yellin' again--real nasty. "Come on over, we want you."

They kept hollerin', so Jonas jumps back on the boat, goes down and fetches his gun and starts shootin'. He got one in the leg. I was scared. I seen this guy fall down--blood comin' out.

Jonas went back to driving the mules and when we got to Lumberville, this fella told us, "Hey, don't go up, you shot a man in the leg on the railroad, you better stay here for about two weeks." We stayed there and one day when Jonas was doing somethin' with the mules a man come up and knocked.

"What do you want?" I said.

"I want your husband--you're arrested--you got to go to Mauch Chunk and pay a fine." We went on up there and Jonas had to go over there in a row boat. They made him pay \$15.00 for shooting the Eye-talian. I didn't go, I said I wouldn't--I stayed in the boat.

15) We got tired of boatin'

We got tired of boatin', so when we heard they needed people at Point Pleasant--two people for two locks, we went there. They was close together, so I ran one and my daughter ran the other. It wasn't easy. You know you turned one thing to let the water in, then you let the gates open--then you let it out from the other side. They paid us \$20.00 a month and we had free rent at the red house where a road goes down to it at Point Pleasant. It had two floors, one with a kitchen and another room upstairs for sleepin'. Outside, there was a pump and a back house--no runnin' water inside. Margaret, she went to school while we was lock keepin' and when she was away, Jonas'd take her lock. We done most of the work but my daughter, she didn't get no pay, just a bicycle Jonas bought her. We worked all day at the lock--didn't have no time to wash or anything 'till Sunday. You had to have good ears to hear the horn when they blew it so's you'd have the water up--those boats would come up and go down all the time. Some boatmen blew on conch shells, some tin fish horns. I was glad to have Margaret staying with us at the lock. When we was on the boat she stayed at Raven Rock with Aunt Addie so's she could go to school. That's in New Jersey on the Delaware and Raritan Canal above Stockton. Long as you were on the boat there was no time for school--how could you? You were boatin' till it froze, then you started again in the spring.

One thing I liked to do was fish. There was little round windows in the lock house and I'd put a rod out the window to try to catch a fish--didn't get much. Once in a while I'd get one and I'd fry it. Most everything we ate was from the store--didn't grow nothin', didn't know what a garden was. One day when we was tendin' lock my old pal Joe Reed come to me. I'd known him a long time--everybody knew Joe Reed-- a real big man, come from Freemansburg on the Lehigh Canal. He says to me, "Where am I goin' to get a woman?"

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He says to me, "Where tun I goin' to get a woman?"

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Well, there was this woman from Texas, named Nellie. When she come by I told her to stay because a man was going to meet her. Then I got Joe Reed and I said, "I'm goin' to introduce you to this woman--there she is--do you want her or don't you?" "Sure I want her--every bit of her," he says. Well, he took her and married her but she died, poor little thing.

16) Little Eddie died

Little Eddie was only 9 years old when he died. We was at Beggartown-- Beggartown's what they called it, but it was a nice town. Uncle Charlie White had a farm over there and he wanted his corn cultivated. He took Margaret so's she could drive the mule. Little Eddie wanted to go along. I said, "Don't let him up on the mule," but he wanted to ride, so Margaret put him LID with her. She said she would take good care of him. Uncle Charlie, he give her a canoe paddle--that was the worst thing he could have done. The minute that mule felt the paddle his legs started flyin'.

He kicked and kicked, then he run. Eddie, he started slidin' off but his feet caught in the collar so he was hangin' there with his head banging along the stones in the road. He couldn't get free 'cause his feet was held fast in the collar. Margaret run and caught the mule--he kicked her in the side of the head, but she pulled Eddie off. She took him, laid him on the ground, folded up her sweater for a pillow under his little head. She started hollerin' and runnin'--"C'mon, C'mon, get my brother!"

They came and brought him to me--carried him into the lock house. He was all blood and some of him was gone--here and here--he was all broken up. A lovely lady, she come and helped me--told me they had to take him in the ambulance to the hospital, real quick. I went there. They kept asking me all these questions I didn't know.

"Just fix him," I said, "Oh God, do it--fix him so he can live!"

Somebody said, "His eyes are open, do you want to talk to him?" "Just fix him,"

I said, "make him better."

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I come home--they said it would take a long time. So I waited. Then they said, come back, but come prepared. I don't know what they meant. He died and I had to get the undertaker.

Both my babies was gone. I don't know how I stood it--I wouldn't be here today--but I pray to God every night. Jonas was gone too. I left him and went to live with some friends in Freemansburg 'till I met this Eye-talian, then I married him.

17) I wish to God I could go back on the boat

Now I got nobody, only myself, they all passed away. But I remember boatin'-I remember the rainy days, the lightnin', thunder, the night hawker shinin' on me when I was ridin' the mule along the towpath all night. I remember the big waves when we went all the way to Bristol. We changed boats at the river--got one all cleaned'up and then took it to 'Chunk.

Those mornings the alarm went off at 3:00--we'd go out together, me and Jonas, with the curry comb and brush to clean the mules. But most of the time Jonas was lazy--didn't have much to do--what did he have to do? He had me doin' the work. I didn't have time for anything else--couldn't go to church when I was boatin'--honey, how could I? --had no time.

Sometimes when we was floatin' along through the narrows where there was woods and bushes near by, Jonas'd go off and pick some huckleberries--they was really good. He never did go off and hunt like some of the fellows--what he liked to do was lay down and sleep.,

You know, lookin' back on it, boatin' was a hard life, but I really enjoyed it--always had a good livin'. If somebody said to me today, "You want to go on the boat?" I'd say sure, I'd go in a minute. I wish to God I could go.

