

# Everett and Grace Porter talk about the Great Depression

An interview by Pam Maddix McGlone

**Everett:** *You couldn't borrow no money during that time. The banks wouldn't loan no money. They didn't have no way of getting it back you know. A feller couldn't get none out if he couldn't put it back in.*

**Pam:** What did you do?

**Everett:** *I run a grist mill myself. Made meal. Ground meal and made butter. Back then, everybody growed their own hogs and cows and we sold cream and we got by pretty good. But let a depression come now and see what would we do. Everybody living out of a can, now. Nobody got no hogs, nobody got no cows, nobody got no pens or raising nothing. Gasoline's up so high you can't afford to run the tractor now. I don't know what — it'd be an awful time now if we had a depression. It was bad enough then. But everybody just kinda fixed for a depression then. We raised our own feed. About all we had to buy was soda and salt and just a few things like that. We raised beef and corn and made bread. There wasn't no such thing back then as light bread. They didn't have no light bread in the stores you could buy. Oh, they did in places but not around the country stores.*

**Pam:** Did you work for that WPA or whatever it is?

**Everett:** *No I didn't work for em. They wouldn't let me.*

**Grace:** *He worked in the mine.*

**Pam:** How did that work? How much did it pay?

**Everett:** *Well, it didn't pay very much. Maybe a dollar and a half a day. They built this school house up here — the Upper Tygert School. They built school houses all over the place and different buildings and built roads. They built about all of these roads through Tygert and all around — they built them roads. The WPA did. They promised them enough work to try to get em through the depression and get em out so they could kinda live you know and get to workin. The brickyards was all shut down. Hoover was the President. He went a fishin and never got back and he got put out.*

*I don't know what to think about a depression if they would keep coming, but I think these young people don't know nothin' about a depression. They don't know what it really means. Now you take everything and shut it down till you couldn't get a job. A dollar a day is all you could get for your work if you **could** get anybody to give you work then they didn't have a dollar to give you.*

**Pam:** Well, how did you raise your families?

**Everett:** *Well, we had milk and butter and...*

**Grace:** *Was that when they started takin' out for social security?*

**Everett:** *No. They didn't have no social security back then during the great depression. I had to go in*

*there and get a social security card in 1936. That was my first card. All of us miners had to go in and sign up and get that social security card. That was in '36.*

**Grace:** *A lot of people thought that was awful to take that out of your check, you know.*

**Everett:** *They took 1¢ to the dollar. Of course 1¢ was more then than it is now. It would go a long way back then. They too out that much but that sure comes in good now. After all these years payin' in. It's been 30 years. I took it out in '36 and retired in '66. I paid in 30 years.*

**Grace:** *No, Everett, it was '62. It's '76 now.*

**Everett:** *It was hard times back then, but everybody enjoyed what they bought and they appreciated it. They don't appreciate it no more. They just stick out that hand.*

**Grace:** *What your check was, you just kinda had to manage it.*

**Pam:** *Did you make clothes for mom and all of them?*

**Grace:** *Yeah, Yeah. Most of the clothes. I'd make a little overalls and shirts, you know. I made your mom a little dress and whatever we needed.*

**Everett:** *Everybody didn't live like kings, then. They do now. That's what's a matter with our country now. The poor people's living better now that the wealthy people then.*

**Pam:** *Mommy said it was something when they got the catalog out got to order underwear or something.*

**Everett:** *We'd send out a little order every once in a while to Sears and Roebuck. In World War I we had inflation like we have now. You'd have to pay \$10 for a pair of shoes and \$5 or \$6 for a pair of overalls.*

**Pam:** *Did you have to have stamps and stuff?*

**Everett:** *Yeah. Things was rationed in World War I. Everything was rationed. They rationed food and everything. Coffee and gasoline. Pretty near everything.*

**Grace:** *Even Lard was wasn't it. You know they had up there by the, oh, they had kind of a place sold stuff up here you know right where Bill and Blanche live now. We went up there and bought stuff.*

**Everett:** *They rationed the lard. You could only get so many pound, you know.. 20¢ a pound I believe it was but it was rationed and you could only get just a few pounds — 5 pounds something like that at a time if you could get it. Everybody that could they'd jump in and buy what they could get you know. They didn't help it any.*

**Pam:** *Well how could people make it that didn't own a farm or anything.*

**Everett:** *They lived on a farm, yeah.*

**Grace:** *Well, maybe not everybody did.*

**Everett:** *'Bout everybody in the country back here, 'course around the brickyard, they worked at the brickyard, the men did. I seen 'em line up at the little company store back there. They'd line up to get their pay. If a man had worked a days pay they'd line up the next morning to get paid for it. They didn't wait til payday. They'd come and get - they called it scrip. They was supposed to discount it 10¢ to the dollar to get the cash. They'd go on and go to the store and buy groceries and buy what they had to have the next day. They didn't wait til payday, they'd draw it out everyday. I don't know. It was a pretty hard time.*

**Grace:** *Back then they had pretty big families, too.*

**Everett:** *Yeah, most of them would have pretty big families.*

**Pam:** And all their kids would get out and work, then?

**Everett:** *Yeah, take all the kids out and farm. Let 'em raise corn. You can't get 'em to do nothing now but play ball. They don't know nothin' about work. They don't even know how to hoe in a field, these young people don't.*

**Pam:** I DO!

**Everett:** *No, ya don't. (chuckle) NO, you don't. Back there they did. When a girl married, she could make biscuits.*

**Pam:** Well, I can make 'em now.

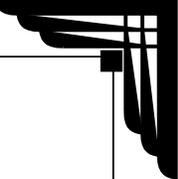
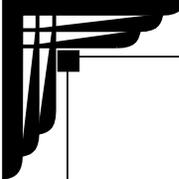
**Everett:** *Now ½ the girls that marry can't even make a biscuit. Her mother has to wash the dishes. They can't even wash the dishes. That's right.*

**Pam:** They helped each other back then, too, didn't they? Like farmers would help other farmers?

**Everett:** *Yeah. That was one thing. We didn't have no insurance, but you let somebody get sick in the country and everybody in the country would take their teams and go in a plow his ground and plant his corn and do the work and it didn't cost him a thing. They just done it. Now you can't hire nobody, let alone get 'em to do it for nothin'. There's a lot of difference in people then and now when it comes to helpin' people. We'd go for miles and take their teams and plow all day and fix his crop and put a fella's crop in and plant his crop and then they'd cut wood. Everyone of us would take a saw and saw big piles of wood. Now you can't hardly buy wood.*

**Grace:** *They ain't nobody to help you cut it.*

**Pam:** Now you can't get nobody to work unless you pay 'em.



## Everett Porter's testimony:

I'm thankful for old time salvation. I'm glad that one day the Lord saved me, sanctified me, healed me, and kept me for 30 years. He's wonderful. Praise God for salvation. Wonderful to know that we're saved and sanctified and on our way to heaven. Praise the Lord.

## Gracie Porter's testimony:

I want to thank the Lord this evening for what He really means to me. He's been so good to us down through all these years. I've lived for Him now 30 years. We just thank Him for everything — the many blessings he's given us and keeping us. What He's really meant to us all these years. I have no desire but to go all the way with the Lord and live in heaven.

