

Katherine DuClos - Straw Filled Mattress

I slept on a rope bedstead when I was a kid. And every fall...every summer, dad raises straw...oats, and then he'd separate it. He had a big thrashing machine, they called him a separator. And when he got a whole lot of that nice fresh oat straw mother would take the mattress, which was like a big pillow, it opened up through the center and buttoned with buttons, and we'd take that down to the barn, dump the straw out, and she'd wash it.

And then we kids would take it down to the barn on the bridge, and we'd fill it full of that oat straw, and we'd tuck it and tuck it and tuck it 'till it was way high, way up like this. It looked like a great big roll. And we'd drag it back up the house and mom would make it up and it was fun to go to bed that night because we knew we'd got to climb up, you know, on that oat straw.

And one time my sister's bed broke, the rope, and I saw my dad string it up. And you had to have a special tool to tighten the rope with. And that's up on the hill, that up there. That's kind of interesting and I thought, well now, don't many people have slept on rope bedsteads with oat straw. But that was my bed for years and years.