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U.19 Long Civil Rights Movement: Breaking New Ground

Interview U-0660
Janawa McCaskill
29 June 2011

Abstract – Janawa McCaskill

Interviewee: Janawa McCaskill

Interviewer: Robert Hunt Ferguson

Interview Date: June 29, 2011

Location: Glady's Restaurant, 107 Hillside St., Lexington, Mississippi

Interview Length: 1:18:54

Mr. McCaskill spoke about his childhood growing up on a farm near Greenwood, Mississippi in the 1970s and 1980s. He was the youngest of nine children growing up and recalled the type of work he did growing up on the farm and the types of ideals – hard work, faith, cooperation, responsibility, having dreams – his father instilled in him through farm work. Mr. McCaskill had very interesting viewpoints about life in the country – he believes that living in the country and operating a farm instills important life lessons and values that many people currently are not exposed to. Though Mr. McCaskill is relatively young compared to other farmers this project focuses on, I think he is a good source for explaining the social and cultural lessons African Americans in the second half of the twentieth century learned growing up on rural farms. Mr. McCaskill also highlighted the cooperative nature of black farmers in the rural South and their bartering system.

Field Notes – Janawa McCaskill

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THE INTERVIEWEE: Mr. Janawa McCaskill was born in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1970. McCaskill grew up on his parents' farm near rural Greenwood, the youngest of nine children. When Mr. McCaskill graduated high school he joined the US Army where he served in Desert Storm. In the 1990s, after getting out of the military, Mr. McCaskill bought land near Lexington and started a cattle farm. The farm near Greenwood has been in the family since the 1880s. Mr. McCaskill's sister now lives on the Greenwood farm with their convalescent father. In addition to operating a cattle farm, Mr. McCaskill is a fulltime physical therapist.

THE INTERVIEWER: Robert Hunt Ferguson is a PhD Candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ferguson is white, male, native North Carolinian, aged 32 in the summer of 2011. His research focuses on race relations and labor in the rural Jim Crow South.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW: The interview took place at Glady's Restaurant during the breakfast hours. Mr. McCaskill described Glady's as a meeting place for local people, mostly farmers. While I was there, about twenty customers came in and out of the restaurant, most of whom knew Mr. McCaskill and spoke to him. All the clientele and staff were African Americans. Mr. McCaskill and I sat in the back of the restaurant and conducted the interview. As we chatted, however, more customers came and we decided to move outside where we could chat without so much background noise. We moved the interview to the parking lot and stood at the hood of his truck and finished the interview. We paused when big trucks drove by carrying lumber so that we wouldn't be drowned out. Mr. McCaskill mentioned his father, who still lives in Greenwood and wanted me to interview him for the project since he could tell me more about the Jim Crow era.

Interviewee: Janawa McCaskill

Interviewer: Rob Ferguson

Interview date: June 29, 2011

Location: Lexington, Mississippi

Length: 1 disc, approximately 1 hour and 19 minutes

START OF DISC

RF: My name is Rob Ferguson. It's the twenty-ninth, I believe.

JM: Yes.

RF: Yes. It's June twenty-ninth, 2011. What's the name of the restaurant we're in again?

JM: Gladys Restaurant.

RF: Gladys Restaurant in Lexington. I'm here with Mr. McCaskill. Would you mind introducing yourself?

JM: My name is Janawa McCaskill. I was born in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1970, October. I now reside in Lexington where I raise my family. I've been here since 1998.

RF: Okay. And you were just telling me a minute ago about the history of your family's history with the land. Recount that real quick.

JM: I was explaining to Rob that my father would be a good reference for the work that you're doing. He's ninety years old. If he lives to see August, he'll be ninety years old. And I remember him telling me of his experiences where my grandfather, well, the land that we have in Greenwood that his grandfather purchased the land right after the Civil War, I think in 1881. My father's father, which would be my grandfather, died at an early age. My father was in the neighborhood of maybe nine years old and I remember him talking of experiences that they come up

during the Great Depression and they had to virtually move off their own property to live on another farm to work. There were nine kids. They had to move off and work on someone else's property, sharecrop, until they could have enough money to come back to their own property and live. He lives in Greenwood now with my sister. He went to World War II. After World War II, he returned home and supported his mother and his younger sisters, his younger siblings, and eventually purchased land, around fifty acres. He farmed. He raised, there are nine of us born, but there's actually seven alive. So with seven kids, he, I guess, paid for the land that he has through farming. Pretty much all he's ever done was pretty much farm. He raised—are you familiar with what they call truck patch?

RF: Yes.

JM: He truck patch farmed where he'd sell vegetables in town and on the side of the road. That's kind of how he supported us, raised a few cattle, swine. I moved, well, I went to the army in 1988 after high school, kind of wanted no part of farming. I wanted no part of college. I wanted to play sports pretty much and I had an injury and it kind of led me to the military because I couldn't play sports anymore.

RF: What did you play?

JM: Baseball, I loved baseball. In the military, I further injured my knee and was introduced to physical therapy and through the military and the physical therapy experience, I was inspired to kind of want to be a therapy assistant. Well, I started preparing myself for a PT assistant and staying in, reenlisting, and somehow a little war by the name of Desert Storm, I was involved in Desert Storm from Fort Hood, Texas. We were deployed and that was kind of my inspiration to get out and to go to college afterwards because those very things I didn't want to do,

I saw the light that education was my route for preparing myself to manhood and raising a family. In 1991, I got out. In '95, I graduated from PT school, stayed in the military, in the reserve.

I always kind of would go out to the farm and visit my dad. Eventually, he persuaded me to start raising a few cows. And one thing led to another and I eventually had a small herd. He sold me his herd because he was wanting to retire. I bought his herd, added some to mine, which created a need for me to need more land. So through friends, I was put in contact with some people here in Holmes County and we purchased two hundred, well, we got two hundred and eighty-three acres is what we farm now and that's kind of where I've homesteaded with me and my family.

It's been an experience. I don't regret it, but it's been up and down with the economy, going from, I guess, from the growth I've experienced, it has caused me have to do some trial and error-type farming because I really didn't have a lot of guidance, I have to say. My father could teach me how to raise twenty, thirty head, but when you move to a hundred and twenty-five head, that's a big jump and to move to an area where you're the only, you're homesteading, there's no other family, you're kind of, your friends and people, the relationships you make along the way are the people that you help.

And I found Holmes County to be a great place as far as the village-type structure where a lot of times, there's still some things we do barter. I may have a friend where if I (**6:14**) and he's a mechanic, we may switch out things. If I need some help with this, a lot of times it's not money. We return favors and that's a lot of the ways that we, in the area, we kind of combat the economic type because I've found that most of the people are grassroots people and they're really great. They'll tell you when you're going wrong. You have people to tell you when you're going wrong. You have people that will celebrate you when you're doing right. So I really like it here.

Right now, we've been farming, we've been cattle farming, I've been cattle farming since 1997, I believe, 1996. We kind of got started on acquiring our land when the lawsuit was coming with the USDA. We had just started our application process. I'm a physical therapist by trade. My wife is a speech therapist. So I don't want to say we're non-traditional farmers, but I've gotten into the western-type lifestyle. My kids, we 4H, we have horses. Those are our hobbies. We love to rope, tame rope. My son started goat tying. It's been a great thing for family, family lifestyle, raising children.

RF: Sure. How many kids do you have?

JW: I have two boys.

RF: Okay. And you found support for that too in the community, for getting your kids involved in 4H and being involved with the cattle?

JW: Yes, yes. This year is my son's first year. I happened to be at a neighbor, Butch Cox, at his arena, and one of the guys that works in Stoneville, the research center, with Mississippi State, he said, "Your son, he does pretty well on his horse and his rope. Why don't you get him into 4H?" So a lot of times, there are things just word of mouth, people helping people, said, "Why don't you get him into 4H? I think he'll do well." And we've always kind of gone. We would visit the pig shows and lamb shows, but that's not really his main interest. He loves horses. So it has helped him to cultivate those skills like competitiveness, preparation, dedication to something. So I've seen him grow in the last three weeks. This was his first 4H show and he qualified for the state his first year. So Saturday, July second, we'll be in Jackson at the state 4H show.

RF: Is he pretty excited about that?

JM: Yes, this is the highlight of his summer, I believe.

RF: What did he qualify in?

JM: Pole bending. He was in four events. His first event was goat tying. Well, we practiced on it and he had a wild goat. His goat, he tied the goat, but the goat got up. He was the very first child to make a run. So I think for him to be the first one and to not watch or know the pace of what was going on, he did really well because tied the goat, but he got up. He took it hard that the goat got up. He was crying in the corner. I picked him up and encouraged him that he'll do better. The next event was the calf roping, breakaway roping. Well, he was close, but the calf, he missed just by a little bit. Well, his confidence is building. Well, Saturday, he placed fourth in pole bending. Well, that really, I told him, he qualified for the state with that fourth place. Out of twenty-two counties, he was fourth place. So he was really six feet tall then. And his last event was a stakes race. He placed sixth, which they only four, the top four. So he barely missed.

So I expect him next year to do very well. It really has made him where he wants to compete. Before, he was a little laidback where he was not really competitive. He just had fun. Well, that's what we focused on. Have fun. If you win, lose, or draw, just have fun. We train hard. That's where's the stress, when we train. Now let's have fun.

Met a lot of children. One thing I like about the 4H environment, social skills where you're meeting people that you don't know and kids are being kids. They're going and meeting kids. Before you know it, they're helping each other groom horses. They're helping each other. He even, what I call, gave a little goat tying seminar for the children. Even after we competed, he was showing the children, "Okay, this is how you tie a goat." And we had our little goat done. That's what I like about him. He's helpful. He's a helpful child and that's one of the things that I think farming and country living has kind of promoted.

My father always says that you can take a child from the country and put him in the city and he can make it, but it's hard to take a child from the city and put him in the country and he make it

because the country kind of prepares you for manhood or being responsible. Well, sometimes city life does not promote the same. I guess an example is one day, we noticed when a lot of the sharecroppers, their offspring moved to Detroit, St. Louis—

RF: Chicago.

JM: Chicago and there was a real, I guess, they're in demand, from what I hear. The opportunities were great for them because they already were prepared on how to work and how to be responsible. So I guess that's one of the prime examples of where city life has helped or country life has helped to build the factories.

RF: When I was talking to Mr. Anderson yesterday, he moved to Milwaukee for two years. He said he was the hardest worker in the plant because he grown up all his life getting up at dawn and working on the farm. Where you involved with 4H when you were growing up?

JM: No, my mother, she worked with the extension service. She was a homemaker. So she went around showing people how to can vegetables, even to can meat. I didn't know when I was young that you could actually can meat like in the jars, the mason jars.

RF: Not just cure it.

JM: Cure it, she had a way of. My father, that's also one of the things he would do. He would, swine, he would cure the hams and the pork bellies and people would just love it. He would salt them down and smoke them. So I got a chance to--.

He always pushed with us to know as much as you can about everything that you do. Even if you don't farm, know how to farm because you never know what you'll have to do in the future to support your family. One of the things he would always, as a child, he would tell me, "Okay. There are two things that I will never get you out of jail or support or bail you out of. That's stealing and drugs because in my opinion, there is nothing on earth that you have to steal. There's nothing on

steal that you have to sell drugs to acquire because I'm sixty." My father was fifty when I was born." He said, "I'm an old man and I get up every day and work and I know you're a young man or you're going to be a young man and you have more energy. So you should be able to work and I'm going to teach you that. I get up every day and I keep something for you to do."

I remember some of the time, I would have friends in the community that didn't have much to do. Their parents didn't farm. They worked on factories or jobs. They would come by and say, "Look, we're going fishing" or "We're going somewhere," a group of boys, say, "Can you go?" And I'd ask my dad and he'd say, "I've got some chopping" or "I have something for you to do in the field." I would tell them I couldn't go. I had one friend by the name of George (**15:36**) and he would say, "Look, if I stay in and help you, will your dad let you go?" We finished and I'd ask my dad. I'd say, "Dad." I just actually told him what my friend said. He said, "That must be a true friend because the other kids are gone. So I'll tell you what." The amount of work that we actually had, he cut it down. He said, "Y'all do that and you can go."

And even after I graduated, I was three years older than this young man, so even after I went to the military, that young man would come and help my dad. My dad had to be maybe sixty—I was seventeen—my dad had to be sixty-seven. He would come by every time he'd see my dad come by in the truck with cotton seeds or something, something to do. He'd get on the bike and help him and wouldn't charge him. Well, my dad would just give him money. He'd say, "Look, you're a young man. You need some money in your pocket. You didn't have to come here. I appreciate you coming down here. Here, take this money. I would have to do it by myself." Well, this young man now works **at Grangolf Nuclear Power Plant** in Jackson. He was actually the center for (**16:46**) in college, football.

RF: Really?

JM: Yes, he was (**16:54**)'s center at (**16:55**). And he wants to do a little farming type, raise a few goats with it. He has three children.

RF: Did he grow up here? Were his parents—

JM: His dad worked offshore and his mom was a stay-at-home, took care of the family, and we lived a half-mile from each other.

RF: Okay. So he was over all the time.

JM: So pretty much he was over. We were best friends. He would come over all the time in the summer and he would help out with things we had to do. My dad, one of the things he speaks of the people in the South, kind of say we are better off because we don't do farm work and he says he kind of disagrees. He said one thing that he notices from childhood to now, he said now the emphasis should be to own that farm. He said, "Now that's the difference." He said, "Because other people make it owning their farms and they live well." He said, "When I farmed, I knew actually where my children were. They were two rows over or one row over on either side. We all worked together. They didn't do drugs. They didn't get into trouble." He said, "Now when they got home, they were ready to go to bed." He said so that's one thing that's why he said farming was great. He said, "Because I knew where my children were." He said, "When I farmed, out of a twelve-month period I worked hard, maybe five months. That's from planting it or preparing it, planting, harvesting. The harvest was October. October back around to February, March was feeding cattle and feeding the livestock and going, just preparing for the next year." He said, "Now families have to live, some families have to work two jobs, both parents working two jobs while the children are at home watching TV."

We're missing that now and that's part of what helped us to be who we are, being that I had to work and I had my brothers and sisters. We shared a bed and shared a room and you know what

all goes with sharing a bed. You have two brothers or three brothers that are sharing a bed. Well, it leads to one day I can't wait to have my own room. It leads to dreaming, in other words, and when you have a dream, you prepare yourself for that dream. That's another one of my father's, one of the lessons he always wanted. He hated you to say you hated something pertaining to work or "I hate to wash dishes." And we would try to: "If you wash dishes for me, I will sweep the floor for you, and you said you hate washing dishes." Well, if he heard it, your job was washing dishes until you either liked it or you did a really good job of acting like you liked it.

And his thing was make a child have a dream. Don't let it be too comfortable because they'll never dream and they'll never make a plan to go anywhere. So the thing is make them dream: "I can't wait to leave here. I can't wait until I don't have to chop. I can't wait until I don't have to get up and feed these hogs. I can't wait to get out of there. I hate this. I can't wait to leave." So then what you do is you prepare to leave. You don't just sit around and do nothing, and that's something he instilled in all of us to do something and learn what you can because you never know. Times get hard. If you can plant greens, your family can eat. If you can plant peas or any little thing, you never know what you have to do in life to make an honest living. That was his thing: "I want you to be honest. I want you to be a family-oriented person." My father's a minister. So that's another thing that he always wanted you to have an understanding and a true relationship with God and loving people, not just taking advantage of anyone.

I think that from my mother's side of the family, my mother, health care runs in my family. Even though we farm, I have a sister that's an RN. I have two cousins that are RNs and kind of health care kind of runs in the family also. I don't know which side of our family it comes from, but even though we can do manual work. I farm when I get off. I work at the hospital and I come home and relax by cutting hay or riding my horse or doing something on the farm. It's a way of winding

down and to go to bed physically tired is okay. It's mentally exhausted that's the issue. So if I can come and clear my mind and make myself a little tired, I sleep well and that's a plus of farming.

RF: Does your father still pastor?

JM: No, he doesn't pastor. My father, he has early Alzheimer's, so he lives with my sister now. So he's not able to live by himself, but he lives on our property that he's purchased.

RF: What denomination?

JM: He's a Baptist, but his philosophy is pretty much denomination's not—there's no salvation in denomination and religion is a way of life. It's your way of life that he's more focused on than your title or your group that you belong to. It's your way of life. Do you love your fellow man? Do you know who God is? Do you have a relationship with God?" That's kind of the way he pastored for forty. My dad, he started pastoring right before I was born, so like 1968 maybe, 1969, and he pastored a church up until 1997. So he's helped to guide a lot of young men and young women in life.

RF: When you were growing up, did a lot of socializing center through the church or was it mainly through your siblings or through your friends?

JM: Okay. Pretty much everyone was out of the house when I was born.

RF: You are the youngest?

JM: Yes, I'm the youngest. It sounds strange. I have nephews and nieces that are older than I am.

RF: Yeah, okay.

JM: My sister, I have two sisters that have, I have two nephews that we're within a month of each other.

RF: Wow, okay.

JM: One born in August, one born in September, and I was born in October.

RF: You said your dad was fifty, right, when you were born?

JM: Fifty, right.

RF: Yeah. So that makes some sense.

JM: And everybody was pretty much out. My brother next to me was thirteen years old when I was born. So when I was in preschool, first grade, he was graduating high school. My sister that lives next door, Olivia, she had three children. She had one son that was three years younger than I am. So we grew up like brothers. My oldest brother, he had a son that was three years younger than I am and we grew up like brothers. So I had friends and nephews that we all--. In fact, during that time in the 70s, the parents could work and leave you. If my dad was going to town or something, we would go to the woods. That's something. The only thing I remember was the Atlanta child kidnappings. That's the one thing that made my parents kind of say, "Okay. Y'all stay close to the house." Atlanta was far away, but the rumor was he was going, "What's all this?"

RF: People saw him in Greenwood.

JM: Yeah, "stay close." But that's what's different. Our parents could go to work or they could, my sister and her husband, they could go to work and my nephews, we'd be at home. My dad would be maybe in town selling vegetables or taking care of business and we would just be in our little community. I grew up in a community that was settled by my great-grandparents. It's called Browning, Mississippi. It was settled by blacks after the Civil War, that type, after the Civil War and kind of black people got money to buy some land. It was settled. It was kind of swamp land kind of, and they settled.

RF: In the delta?

JM: Yes, right on Highway 82. It's east of Highway 82, just east of the highway. They have an old artesian well there that's a historical landmark that people would come from miles around

with their wagons to get that water. It would just come out of the ground, but they put a pipe and capped it and they could fill their barrels. But there's a well, people come from miles around. That well was a big part of the life of people. It may be something you may want to look at also, we're talking about.

RF: Yeah. Thank you for telling me about that. So it seems like the stories about your family and your history are really obviously important to you. Is that something your father and your mother talked about as well and did you hear the stories from your parents?

JM: My father and I, like I said, we'd go to the corner church. He would pastor a church an hour and a half away. So that meant a lot of time. You know how you hear the stories over and over and over and over and over? That's the type how it would go. He would have his war stories he'd tell and I find myself doing the same thing, telling the jokes over and you know how the joke goes. Someone else is new around it, but you know how the joke goes. Well, he tells this story of something and it goes over and over. Sometimes, you could see this in your mind what he's talking about. I went on Ancestry.com for one of my friends and I was down in Nachez at a blacks in the Civil War program and they spoke of the Third Colored Regiment, which was down in Nachez, a place called the fort.

RF: It's familiar.

JM: It's where during slavery, slavery times, it's where they brought the slaves. They were traded, bought and sold right there at the fort. Well, after the Union Army started coming in and blacks started enlisting into the Union Army, that became a place for enlistment, for black troops to enlist into the Union Army. And I found that my foreparents, my great-grandfather, was in that regiment. So it's amazing how almost every war that has gone on in the United States, I haven't gone back as far as the War of Independence, but Civil War on up, I've had someone in my family

that I know that has gone. And when I went to Desert Storm, that was one of my, I didn't know about the Civil War, but I was like, I've had somebody in every war, the Korean War, World War I, and they all came back. God, I feel that God has protected us that we all come back without being mangled or mentally, we're okay.

I have one cousin. He was in Vietnam and sometimes I know in the South, a lot of times we're taught that if you disrespect your parents, it's kind of what other people call bad karma or it's based in the Bible: "Honor thy father and mother that their years will be long." Well, he didn't make it back and he was one that would swear at his mother or hit his mom as a teenager. He had a drug problem. And I kind of felt that he was kind of set for that. But for the most, everybody that's gone has come back and it has helped us to prepare for life.

RF: Let's see. You brought up a lot of great points and answered some questions. With your mom, she was involved in the home demonstration clubs. Is stuff that she did through the clubs, was that something that she did, she had learned growing up as well, some of the canning? JM: Yes.

RF: Was that something she (**30:52**)?

JM: She had a large family. She was from a large family also. I remember my mom, her sisters. My dad would bring a truck, a pickup truck full of corn, and the kids, we would sit there and help prepare it and that would be her--. At night, she would get it prepared and put it in bags and they would all divide the corn or peas or we would go to a fruit orchard and pick peaches. Anything pretty much we would have, we would have those big freezers. My sisters live in Detroit and she would can enough food for them to take back to Detroit that they needed to rent a little U-Haul trailer and wrap it in quilts and take it back to Detroit, take it back up north. We would have maybe

two of those big freezers full of food and that was just me, my mom, and my dad. We didn't eat it. We couldn't eat all of that, but she would have it prepared for them to take back up north.

RF: I want this to be comfortable, but I'm worried that it's getting too loud in here for the microphone. Do you mind if we step outside?

JM: Sure.

RF: Is that okay?

JM: Sure, no problem.

RF: I know that might be kind of awkward. I don't know if there are chairs out there, but with the TV and everybody talking, it's just I don't want you to be drowned out.

JM: Right.

RF: So let me pause this and we'll step outside.

JM: The restaurant's kind of like the gathering spot. A lot of times, everybody, like Floyd, like the barber shop on the Andy Griffith Show, that's kind of. Everybody knows each other. We sit around and you may eat awhile and you're going to see somebody you hadn't seen in awhile. They come in and we all talk. We have our own, our regulars that come in. We sit around and eat and talk.

RF: Yeah. I asked somebody in town where the restaurant was yesterday. They were like, "You've got to go up there and try the food." Let's see. So we were talking about your mom and taking food up to Detroit and everything. I'm really interested in the things that your parents passed down, the ideals that they passed down. Do you think the ideals that your father passed down to you about responsibility and hard work, do you think that he learned that from his family, from his parents?

JM: Yes. Like I said, he had uncles and my father, he had uncles that he did have to support. They helped to kind of give guidance, but for the most, that's what he always taught to us,

the importance of family, being responsible to take care of your family. If you want to pause it, we can pause it.

RF: Sure. Yeah, I'll pause it.

(break in conversation)

RF: So we were talking about your father, some of the ideals he grew up with. Do you think he got that from his parents?

JM: Yes, and he really, he didn't—well, how I'm trying to put this is that the younger generations had changed. His ideals didn't change with the younger generations. His thing was it ain't my fault that this child's parents didn't have anything for him to do. My mom would always say, being a mother, she was like, "Ain't you working him too hard?" or "Don't you have doing a little too much? The other kids are not doing this." He said, "Well, I'm not concerned if their parents don't have anything for them to do. I know he's going to do this because this is what he's going to be. There's no other option but to get up. Don't sit around all day. Get up and work. Get up and do something." He said, "If you don't work, you'll pick up another habit, stealing, and that's something I'm not going to have. So get up. I want you to be able to take care." That's his thing: "I want you to be able to stand on your own feet, take care of your family. Pretty much, I want you to be able to take care of your own family and be productive and be an honest person." So that's everything that he believed in, children respecting their parents, respecting others.

I grew up in a neighborhood where, say if we walked down the street and you passed, it's something common in the South in the older days, if you walked down the street and there was an elderly person on a porch, if you didn't speak to them, I grew up in that type community, they would tell your parents that you walked by there and didn't even say anything. And there you go. You're in trouble. Or if you did something, they corrected you. Some would go so far as to spank you if they

had to, but they would: "I know your dad didn't raise you like that. Come away from over there." They didn't say, "I'm going to tell." They said, "Come away from over there right now or do--." They'll correct you to do what they're--. If you don't do or say something, don't give them respect, there will be consequences. Where nowadays, if you tell someone's child something, that child may disrespect you and then the parents is going to disrespect.

My father, even in school, he said, "I believe and I'm on the teachers' side first and that's what I want you to understand. If that teacher calls me up, I'm on that teacher's side because I sent you out there for that teacher to teach you and that teacher cannot teach you if you are disrespectful. If you're disrespectful, a horse, I can't train a horse that's disrespectful. I have to first get that horse's mind in order to train him." That's his thing. "Your teacher can't do anything with you if you're disrespectful. So if I send you out there, it's just like me being out there and I'm not going to send you to someone that I don't trust."

RF: Let's see. You said you have sisters. I know you were probably younger, but when your older brothers and sisters were working on the farm, was the labor split up between boy and girl, like boys would work in the field or did girls work the field too?

JM: No, everybody.

RF: Everybody? Yeah.

JM: My dad raised—I had an aunt. He had a sister that was committed to the state hospital, mental, and he raised her six children along with his six children. So that's twelve children at once he raised and I came along after everybody else was grown, but he raised twelve at once. So he had a big—

RF: Lots of people to take care of, lots of people to work, yeah.

JM: And a lot of mouths to feed. Some of the family wanted to kind of: "I'll take this child and I'll take that child." No, they all need to grow together. His whole thing is always family: "I want them to come up together as a family because one day, they will have to care for their mother. So I want them to come up and be able to work together. So when their mother needs them, when they get grown, they've been taught. If they don't do it, it's up to them, but they've been taught." So that's his thing: "I'll teach you. If you stray away from it, at least I taught you. You have the choice to do wrong, but you were taught right."

RF: How does your father talk about his experience in World War II?

JM: World War II? He came up during the segregated army. It was an experience. What I recall him talking, he spoke of when he left home. He had a brother also. He had two brothers. My dad's two brothers also went to the military, to the army. They were drafted also. He speaks of it. He doesn't regret it, but he always says, "Well, I don't like how they treat us after you get back home, veterans." He didn't want me to go into the military simply because of the way you're treated when you get back home. You don't have any, people that don't go get just more rights than you do. You're gone and you don't get. But he said, "Before you stay here and do nothing or work at McDonald's or something, at least you have benefits if you stay. I'd rather you go to the Air Force." But I was going into the military field. He said, "Well, you can do some of that when you get out. So I can kind of--." He had to sign me in. I couldn't go on my own. I was that young. I was seventeen. That "you're going to get away from here, you're going to want to do something, you're going to dream," it worked because at seventeen, I had a plan.

RF: You were ready to get out.

JM: Uh huh and I had put action. I put some wings to it. So yeah, I'm a product of the "you're going to get up and do something. You're not going to lay around. You're going to wish and you're going to move."

RF: It was after World War II that your father came back and bought land?

JM: Right. Yes, after World War II, he came back. I'm trying to, I think when he married my mom, they lived with his mother for a little while. Then he bought some land and then he bought a little more land and eventually, he ended up with like fifty acres.

RF: Wow, okay. Did he use any, do you know if the GI Bill helped him out with buying land or--?

JM: I'm trying, I don't think so. I don't think so. I can't say, but I don't think so. That was back, way back, especially after, during the times. I don't think that was the case.

RF: So was he involved with the lawsuit against the USDA?

JM: No.

RF: No, he wasn't, okay. But you mentioned that before. You said you were buying land about the time that all that was coming out. Did that affect the loans you received or—

JM: No, because I had good credit. I had farm experience. Like I said, I had been a therapist for about five years at that time and my wife, it was both of us applying. So I don't think—

(conversation is interrupted)

JM: I don't think we really had. I don't think one way or the other that it hindered us or helped us. It may have. I wasn't really having a--. The only thing was timing. The one thing, I was told that the government, they had to wait to be funded again for the next year before we could

move forward, but it's just little things you go through. It wasn't like I was just denied or given the run-around or anything.

RF: Do you know if your father ever faced anything like that, if not from the USDA, then from other--?

JM: Well, I hear my father was kind of involved in the civil rights era also. So being a minister, a lot of the ministers were involved in it. He had his experiences being in the delta during the 60s and 50s and 40s. He has his stories of what happened. When it comes to my kids, I figure there's enough of that going on. I don't really dwell a lot on because like I said, we go to 4H and my son, for the first time he ever said, "Dad, I was the only black child there." He said, "They were nice. I had some that didn't talk to me and some were nice." I said, "Well, son, all you do is carry yourself in a respectable way and people, don't disrespect anybody. Don't let anybody disrespect you. If you find somebody that's not a person you need to be around, just leave away from them. Just don't be. You don't have to be someone's friend that does not want to be your friend. Just keep going and treat them with respect and go about your way." And I said, "That's how you do that." And that's why I said it was social skills you learn with the 4H. He really got a chance to— (conversation interrupted)

RF: And so up in Greenwood, your father was involved in the movement, mainly through his experiences as a pastor. Is that—

JM: Right.

RF: Kind of how it happened?

JM: When they were having the marches and boycotts, he was in that era where things (**44:50**) and he was involved in some of the things that went on.

RF: Did you ever hear him talk about registering to vote, the first time he did that?

JM: I can't remember just offhand, but I remember him speaking that people take for granted things that were just not a right. They were a privilege. They treat it just like it's nothing. (conversation interrupted)

RF: Well, speaking of the bartering thing, it sounds like you talk about your childhood in the same way that you describe your current community, lots of sharing, lots of cooperation.

JM: Yeah, right.

RF: That was actually going to be one of my original questions to you about how your community functioned. Does it go so far as to if somebody's sick and can't work in the fields, you have a neighbor come over and help?

JM: Yeah, if somebody dies unexpected. I had one of my friends, one of the first people I met when I moved here and really helped me, they called him "my daddy" because we developed a relationship to where we'd hunt. I'd go up to his house and just sit around or in the morning, I'd go down there and his wife said, "Come on and eat." And when he passed, that was one of the first things. I said, "Look, if you need help feeding the cows or you need help with anything, let us know." Sometimes we'd see a fence broken. We'd be hunting on the property and if we see a fence torn or broken, we'd let her know the fence is broken and we'll be back in the morning to fix it. We'll come back and mend the fence.

So yeah, it happens where if somebody is sick. It doesn't happen all the time. It depends on everybody's relationship that if somebody's sick. My friend that was here earlier, he had open heart. He just had open heart back here in November, December. Well, we helped him. We feed his dogs, ride through by his house, feed his livestock, and make sure, "Look, don't worry while you're in the hospital. We've got this taken care of until your brother or somebody gets here. When your brother gets here, if there's something he needs, we'll help out with him. We'll make sure, go to the

store for him. He doesn't have a car. Just go to the store and make sure he doesn't need anything. He'll stay at the house and just check in on him. If he wants some beer or something, bring him some beer."

RF: Another person I was talking to the other day mentioned that when he was growing up, he's in his 80s, when he was growing up, if a neighbor was sick to the point of they were worried about them passing, that neighbors would come over and sit with him all night so the family could get some rest. Did you see any of that, that type of stuff growing up or now?

JM: With the younger generations now, I don't see that as much unless it's family. Family do it, but as far as, that's one of the things that has changed. My dad would say, "Sometimes if you were killing hogs and we were killing hogs, I'd bring my family over and we'd kill yours and you'd bring mine and they'd switch out." It's on different levels. Some things are not the same as far as, well, with the health care has changed to where now, if I'm that sick, I go to the hospital.

RF: That's a good point, right.

JM: Things have changed for the better as far as health care. I go to the hospital now if I'm sick or home health, somebody comes by, where I don't get as sick.

RF: Hospice.

JM: Yeah, hospice. I don't get as sick because I've done something about it earlier or I've changed the lifestyle. I don't eat certain things. I know that this thing right here makes me sick and it's not something else, folklore. A lot of home remedies worked, but some things we found that worked a little better. So I don't get as sick now.

RF: So that's interesting. So it's not necessarily that the community has changed. It's the health kind of has changed.

JM: Yeah. Health has changed also to where people, they go to the hospital, they go to the doctor now, where there some instances where some doctors wouldn't see you if you're black or they wouldn't give you quality care. It was just enough and be gone. So now, we have doctors or times have changed when it comes to certain things like that. It's just the system has changed to where now, I'm a physical therapist, now if my mother breaks her—when my mother went and had her hip surgery, I couldn't have been her physical therapist, doing her home therapy, not through Medicare, but I could have been the one that's come by and given guidance along with the therapist's instruction that she had. I could have: "Okay, Mom, we're going to do this also." So that's how things have changed. Before you didn't have a physical therapist in your family. So you were dependent on someone else or you may not even went to, well, you didn't have a physical therapist at that time. So yeah, if you broke your hip back then, they weren't doing hip replacements and if you break your hip inside the socket, it doesn't fix itself. So what happens? You're in the bed and you die. So times have changed when it comes to certain things, when it comes to health care, to where we fix things earlier. If you look at HIV, within another couple years, HIV will be a treatable condition like diabetes or high blood pressure or something like that. It will be something that you treat with medicine. People live, what, twenty years now? Twenty, thirty years sometimes now with HIV.

RF: Was it twenty years ago this year that Magic Johnson announced. I think it was '91.

JM: '91.

RF: Yeah. So at least twenty years. You talk a lot about what you want your kids to get from this lifestyle, growing up in the country, I guess, and with cattle. It sounds like your children already know that and when your children get to be your age, if they're listening to this interview or

someone who listens to this interview who never grew up in the country, what would you want them to know about what the land sort of means to you, what the lifestyle means to you?

JM: I was explaining to someone, for me, my farm or my land, there's nothing like getting up on a morning like this morning where it has rained the night before. It's cool. The grass is wet. I'll go barefoot. To get up, walk outside barefoot or if you want to put on your shoes and just take in everything that you see, the beauty, and to me, that's when I say, "Thank you, God, for everything you've blessed me with. I know sometimes I'm stressed because there's something I need to do. There's two or three things that are due at the same time. I am truly blessed." A lot of times, I just come out and say, "Look, I'm truly blessed." Or to go out at night sometimes like you've dropped off the face of the earth kind of, where you go back, you can't see a streetlight or a house light. I'm on the back of my property maybe a mile away from my house. I can't see a streetlight. I can't really hear a car. I might hear a dog bark, but stars, to see stars.

And to bring, someone from the city comes, it's like, "Man, I can't believe. Look at all these stars." I'm like, "Man, this is how we live." And most people, a lot of people, kids that come from the city to visit, by the time they get through there, when their parents put them in the car, in two minutes they're asleep because they've chased the ducks. They've ridden a horse. They've petted the dog. They've looked at the cows. They've ridden around in a truck on a hayride on the back of a truck. That's a big thrill for most kids from the city. Get on the back of that truck and just ride around the gravel roads or ride through the pasture and see the cows. They get a chance to be loud. They don't have to be cooped up and locked up. They can move around and run and nobody, parents can say, "Okay, they're alright. I can turn my back because they're in the open space." We have to watch out for snakes or something like that, but you don't worry about somebody abducting them or

somebody abusing them. They're just able to be children. They're able to be a kid, throw rocks, fish. I can just be a kid.

For my kids, that's what I like when it comes to my kids. They can, for once, be an honest, innocent child. I can be innocent and just do as a child. I don't have to worry about somebody harming me. I think that I'm blessed that I can share that with others and that's why I think that we all are called for that. The Lord has blessed you with so much. It's your responsibility to use your excess to help someone else. Ms. Brown, that's one of the things, I'll have campouts, chaperoned campouts.

RF: She was telling me that, yeah.

JM: How the kids come over and the parents just bring a pack of hot dogs. You bring hot dogs. You bring buns. You bring a six-pack of soda. You bring water. You bring relish. You bring ketchup. You bring eggs. You bring bread. You bring a gallon of milk. And we would have enough to do a campout that night and breakfast the next morning, campfire, and for a couple of years, I was able to do that. Basically now, with me working the hospital, my weekends are tight. Where I work in Greenwood, we work seven days on and seven days off. So almost every other weekend, I'm working. Then I'm off for seven days.

RF: So far is the commute for you?

JM: Forty minutes, forty minutes one way.

RF: Your wife also commutes or she works—

JM: She works in the local area.

RF: So it sounds like, and tell me if this is accurate because I certainly don't want t put words in your mouth, that having access to the land and actually having that land as yours, all the

things that you deem important, hard work and faith and responsibility and family, all those things you find—

JM: Right there on the farm life.

RF: So you could say that's true—

JM: In a package that everything that I hold close and dear. If I go to New Orleans, in like two days, I'm ready to get back to the house. If I go to the city, I'm ready to get back home. Most of my fun right here in this area, usually I'm within five minutes of my house. If I'm hunting, I'm right in the area. If I'm fishing, I'm right in the area. If I'm riding my horse, I'm right there on our property. I may leave to rope, to go to a competition, but most of my hobbies I do right there on our property. And my kids will wake up in the morning: "Let's go hunting" or wake up: "Hey, I'm going to get some bait. When I get back, we're going fishing." I come to town and when I come back: "Alright. Come on out. Let's go." My pond is as close as from here to that house, which is maybe, what two hundred yards. The place where we fish, maybe two hundred yards from my front door.

RF: What do you have in the pond?

JM: Bass, brim, white perch, pretty much everything that you fish for in the state. My son caught a six-pound bass last year.

RF: In the pond?

JM: Yes.

RF: Wow.

JM: I was at work, but that's what I'm saying: "Even when I'm at work, I've taught you to be safe. You don't have to go do anything wrong. You can do fish while Dad's at work and Mom's sitting in the house." And that's the thing. He likes to fish. He'll go fishing while his brother likes to video game. Well, my oldest son, he's outside and that's what he likes to do, fish. Or he'll go check on and

feed the dogs or he has little chores. He wants to buy a shotgun to hunt, to dove hunt: "Well, your thing is collect cans. I know you're not going to get rich collecting cans, but the things is you have a dream and you're going to put action to that dream. Okay, I'm going to keep all these cans and when I'm at an event, I find some cans, put them in a bag, put them in the truck." And I have some people say, "Man, you're making that baby pick up cans?" Like it's beneath him. He wants a gun and when he gets that gun, he has purchased that gun.

RF: He earned it.

JM: He earned it. I'm going to help him, but he earned it. A certain percentage of that, when he cashes that check for those cans, if it's eighty dollars: "Wow. This is my eighty dollars toward my gun." And right now, he's hunting with a gun that my dad made me do the same thing for. My thing was feeding the pig and he sold the pig, and my son hunts with the gun that when I was his age, my dad did that for me. So now he's going to the next level. He's buying a better gun. (laughs) He's buying a better gun, but the thing is he's through that same thing. It's teaching a value: "If I work toward something, I can get it and anything that I work hard enough for, I can have. The next thing is I have to be patient because not everything comes overnight. I may want this gun. I may collect cans for a year. I'm only going to have so many cans. I'm not going to have enough cans." I'm going to help him because I want him to have it, but that's what. I figure that's the next thing too. I'm teaching: "Okay, help your family. Help your kids, but also have them work for what they want to do so they will work."

And he's excited about the gun. He's always cans. He has, I don't know, maybe two or three big garbage cans full. So it'll be something. I'll help him out, but I'll be glad to help him out because he has picked up cans. We'll go walking. I walk for exercise and we'll just put a backpack on and we'll pick up cans on the side of the highway sometimes.

RF: That's great.

JM: Because I could go purchase a gun and he'd have it, but it won't be, you don't have the life lesson.

RF: Right. Well, is there anything about landowning, about farming that I haven't asked that you'd want future generations to know?

JM: It has taught me a lot about life. To break a horse, you have to learn the psychology of that animal and a lot of times, it's the same way with people. Patience, farming has taught me patience. It's something I still have to work on, but to be patient and to prepare because there's always something coming in the future. And those things that you can prepare for, prepare for. Another thing it's taught me is that those things that I cannot change, don't worry about anything. There's nothing I should worry about. I should be concerned because when you're concerned about something, you move to action. After you've moved to action, be it praying, be it going out and moving on your prayers, on your faith, after you've done, moved to action, if it has not changed, you have to let them go. Certain things you can't change in life and you accept them for what they are and you appreciate each day for what it is. I know down the road, I would like to have a paid-off farm with a nice, big house and a nice, big barn, but in the meanwhile, I have to live each day, appreciate each day for what it is so I can get there because if I just look down the road, I may think that I'll never get there.

Health care has kind of taught me how to prepare, like okay, I look at outcomes. That's what health care teaches me, outcomes. I work in the geriatric population and I tell most people I love my job because I get to see the outcome. If I go to this man or woman and I have some men that you go them, they say, "Well, I was a hell of a man when I was your age." And if he based that on how much alcohol he could drink, how many fights, how much hell he could raise, if you look at him, in

most cases, he has run everybody off. He hadn't invested his time wisely. So he's at the mercy of strangers, whoever will bring him water, whoever will change him, whoever will help cut his food up.

I have some cases where the man, he may have lived a little while, but he spent his time with his family. He loved his family and sometimes, in those cases, you get a man where he, what we say, should be in a nursing home or this lady is sicker than this man because she's caring for him. Especially when I did home health, it's not the patient with Alzheimer's that's the sickest. It's the caregiver because they don't sleep because he's up all night. They're having to do everything for this patient. They need help, where like if they were in a nursing home, they would have help, but something about: "I just can't let him go to the nursing home because he cared for us and he took care of us when we couldn't take of ourselves. So we're going to take care of him."

So I get to see and I have some guys, men and women, they spent all their time working, making money, and they were successful at that, but what happens when they get old, they say, "Well, call this number" and it's the bank. They say, "Don't let them take no more money out the bank. They don't care nothing about me. They just want my money." Well, they did a noble thing by working, but they missed the family and that's where farming brings you back around. I put my kids in the truck. I had my kids in the truck in a babyseat. I'm going to feed the cows, put them in. I cut the truck off, take the keys out, and they watch me feed cows, watch me ride the tractor. Well, eventually, that child wants to ride that tractor and drive that tractor. I have a son that every time my truck moves, he wants to be out there with me.

So that's the other thing of farm life to where it really promotes family, to where you could start them off young. If you're on your job and you work in a law firm, a lot of times you can't take your kids with you. You can take them if you have the what, bring your kid to work day, maybe, but you can't regularly. But on the farm: "Okay, y'all, get in the truck. Let's get some sandwiches, put

them in the cooler, some water. Get in the truck." And put the emergency brake on, teach them: "Don't touch this truck. Leave the air conditioning on if it's hot. I'm just right out here feeding up." You've got the emergency break on. They can't take it out of park and they won't move because the break is on. You just sit there and you watch Dad for awhile and eventually, they get big enough to where they can come out. Before you know it, they're opening gates.

That's where my son is now. Everything on the farm, he knows how to do it. He's just not strong enough. I'll say, "Go open that gate." He'll open the gate for me, he'll close it. I'll say, "Go get me a wrench." And that's the proudest thing. If we're taking loose a motor or doing something, I'll break it loose to where he can get his wrench to take it loose. That's his thing: "Oh man, I took that loose. I helped fix that motor." And that's what farming does for children. When he goes home, he's ready to go to bed.

I have a neighbor (**67:02**). He's dead now. He asked me, he said, "Jay," he said, "I need to come to your house and find out what you've got out there on that farm." "What are you talking about?" He said, "No matter what time you bring my boys, my grandsons home, they get them something to eat, go to bed, take a bath and go to bed." He said, "If it's twelve o'clock in the day, they get them something to eat, they take a bath, and they lay down and go to sleep." He said, "If it's nine o'clock at night, they take a bath, get them something to eat, and go to bed." He said, "Now when they're just laying around the house, they won't stay still for nothing. They're gone. They're in the streets." He said, "There's something about when they go ride them horses or when they go with you that day. Whatever y'all do during that day, when they come home, I know where they are." And that goes back to what I was telling you my father said, "Because I know where they are. They're in there asleep and I don't worry about them," he said, "But I don't know what's going on when they're just laying around here."

So that's where I think the farm has helped, especially in the African American community when we farm. Even when people sharecropped, they knew where their--. I didn't like people being taken advantage of. That's a disadvantage. But when it comes to the life lessons you learn, that's the great thing. I have friends here that are not college graduates. Some of them are not high school graduates. But they've taken those life lessons they've learned, farm life. Their parents left them some land.

Well, I'm smart enough to know how to work. So what I do now is get me some cows. I save me three or four hundred dollars every now and then and buy a cow. Now I'm my own bank if I need a thousand dollars right quick. If I leave a thousand dollars in the bank, I'm not going to get much return on it. I also run a risk I could lose that cow, but a lot of times, it's not the case. If you get a cow and she raises you a four-hundred-dollar calf the next year, you're your own bank. Eventually, you get enough. If you need five thousand dollars or ten thousand dollars or you need to clear some money right quick, you can liquidate that. It's an asset you can liquidate within two days of needing it. There's always an auction. There's one Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and there's one on Friday. They're not right here. They're within seventy miles.

So that's one thing with the farm. Sometimes it helps us to be our own. If you're working on a regular job and you put your money in your farm, it allows you to be your own bank in some cases, your own emergency fund. You've got your own emergency fund set to where you're not going to get rich on it, but if something comes up, the economy's slow. I know people that have gone, lived six months to a year out of their farm. They're selling cows. I have to sell some stuff, but I can pull myself through the next six months to a year just this way. I watch, budget myself, and I can do this. Eventually, I'll build it back up again and if something happens again, I can do it again.

So that's why a lot of the older people, they tell me, "Son, keep you some cows because you never know." You might need a thousand dollars or a couple thousand dollars. You can get cash and there's always something to make you pinch off your cash. You've got a thousand dollars sitting in the bank in cash. You end up buying tires for your car and you can kind of really make it a little bit longer or you want a TV or something and you really pinch off your money and it's gone eventually. But if you go buy that cow, she's out there and if something comes up and you need some money, you've got it there. In a couple days when you get your money, go buy another one or just continue to buy as time goes on.

I wouldn't put all my, I don't put all my eggs in that one basket. But that's the thing. Keep you some kind of emergency, something you can kind of liquidate if you need to.

RF: Well, thanks for talking to me.

JM: And my kids, they don't have to farm if they don't want to. I don't push that you've got to farm, but I do push that you're going to learn about it in case you have to to survive. You will know how to plant corn or some greens because you can plant greens in a little area. You can plant something to eat sometimes in a little lot and survive and live well.

One thing we talked about, you asked me if my dad talked about the military experience and I know this, people that live in the rural areas, your country folk, they survive better in times of disaster, war. World War II, the people that lived out in the country, farmland, lived better than the people right there where they're bombing the cities. One thing I noticed from Desert Storm, the people out, the Bedouins, they live, they still have their camels and goats and they live better than the people in the city where everything's getting bombed. If you look at your disasters here in the United States, Japan, and everywhere else, the places, you have an earthquake. The people that

live in the city live harder than the people in the rural areas. So that's something. My dad would talk about country living. You live better. Remember Y2K?

RF: Sure.

JM: Talking about the Y2K scare, talk about why you don't go buy all that stuff. I said, "There's a pond right in front of the house, all the fish you want, water. If we have to boil water, you can." I said, "There are some blackberries. There's always something going to be that you can eat around here." It sound country and backwards.

RF: No, not at all.

JM: But there's always something. I know how to hunt. We can kill a deer or we got cows. We will make it. We can be fine. So don't go and live, don't let the scare get to you because we're blessed and we're blessed enough where if somebody else needs, we can help them. If somebody else wants to, I have friends that want to fish, people that want to fish. Fish, just don't bother anything. Just make sure you fish. Don't steal any of my property. Come and fish. I've had that happen too. You kind of open what you've been blessed to try to share and people take advantage. They steal something from you. But I also know that you're blessed.

That's something I'm also taught. My dad said, "Anything that you are blessed with, you also can lose. Anything that you have," he said, "Everything has a beginning and an ending, except God's love. God's love is forever." But anything other than that has a beginning and has an ending, and you don't know how it's going to end. So anything that you have, you stand a chance of losing and don't let anything that you lose make you lose yourself. So if there's anything that you have, it's good to have it. You can lose it tomorrow. And it's better if you can give somebody or somebody can steal from you and you still make it. You're better off if somebody can steal five dollars from me, that means I was blessed to have five dollars. Or if you're stealing five dollars, I don't know why you

stole that five dollars. You could steal that five dollars because you're on drugs. Well, I'm better off because I can get another five dollars because I've been taught to work. Well, you're in bad shape because you stole the five dollars and now you're going to eventually be in trouble because you're going to steal something else if that's your philosophy.

The next thing, it's better to give than to receive. Well, I used to, I can't understand it's better to give than to receive. It's always better to receive. No, you could be the one guy to receive a meal. That means you don't have a meal. Well, I'm better off if I can give you a meal as opposed to the one that's got to beg for a meal. So that's kind of where that comes in. It was explained to me after I got older and I understand now, okay, he is right. It is better to be able to, if somebody steals something, you don't want him stealing that, but if you can make it after someone steals something from you, that's a lesson within itself. That's letting you know, okay, you're alright. God is going to take care of you. You do what you have to do to prevent that. You don't let that keep happening. That means you have to change your fellowship with a person. You change that. That means you don't come back over here, whatever. That's what you do. But it makes it to where you don't worry about it. To, I don't worry. Small things don't bother me so much.

(conversation interrupted)

JM: The biggest thing that bothers me, if somebody bothers my family. Anything material, I just realize that it comes and goes. I don't feel that life is over, if I die tomorrow. I tell my wife that. She don't like to hear it. I say, "If I die tomorrow, I lived a good life. I've gotten to see a lot of things in the world. I've been around the world." The only thing I don't have right now is I haven't seen my kids get grown and I haven't grown old with my wife. Those are the two things that—I don't worry about bills. I've gotten to where I think I've been prepared for that. The Lord tells me, "I'm going to take care of you through all." Even if you don't have this property, it doesn't define who you

are. If you don't have these cows, they don't define who you are. So don't get so caught on them to where it bends you out of shape if you don't have them. It's like I say, anything you have, you stand a chance to lose. I'm at that point, but it's always in my mind. Anything I have, I have a chance of losing and it's not because I'm wrong or I did something wrong. Sometimes the Lord has another plan for you. We don't know sometimes what our plan, what our overall mission is. Everything is a tool. That land just may be a tool for me to get in contact with another person. I wouldn't be talking to you, I don't think. So everything is a tool, is an instrument.

RF: This has been great. I appreciate it. Yeah, thanks very much. Again, is there anything else? I don't want to cut you off.

JM: I think that's it. If later on—

RF: Sure. Alright, well, thanks very much. I'll go ahead and cut it off.

JM: Alright.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Emily Baran. August 2011