

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

4/9/09

Peggy Van Scoyoc (PV): This is Peggy Van Scoyoc. Today is Thursday, April 9, 2009. I am in the home of Ms. Jeanette Evans, here right on Evans Road. We are going to talk to her today about her life and times in Cary. So, let's start out, your family goes way back in Cary, is that right?

Jeanette Evans (JE): Yes, my family were born, at least my mother was. My father was born in Moore County.

PV: Your father was born in...?

JE: Moore County, near Sanford, North Carolina. But my mother was born right here.

PV: Wow, so were her parents also from here, or did they come from somewhere else?

JE: No, they came here. My grandmother on my mother's side, I really don't know where she was raised. I don't know where her home was.

PV: But your mother was born right here in Cary.

JE: My mother was born right here, and all the kids were born here.

PV: How many children did she have? How many siblings do you have?

JE: Ten in all. I'm the only one living now. I lost my sister about two months ago. She had six boys and three girls.

PV: I'm sorry. Are they all still around here?

JE: All of them dead.

PV: These are your own sisters and brothers.

JE: We used to talk about my last sister that died, she used to talk about which one was going to be gone. I said, I'm not worried about that, and you shouldn't. She was in a nursing home when she died.

PV: That's hard. So how many children do you have?

JE: I have two living. I had a son, that one up there. He died in a car wreck in 1977. Hadn't been too long come out of the Army.

PV: Yes, he's in uniform there [in the picture.] I'm sorry to hear that. So are these other two your daughters?

JE: Yes, those two are my daughters.

PV: Now are they around here? Are they in Cary?

JE: One just left. She's in Raleigh, at Brier Creek. And the other one's living in Cary that I was telling you about, over in Silverton, the one on the right. The other one, she lives in Brier Creek.

PV: Brier Creek, that's not that far either.

JE: I have two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. That's just about it.

PV: Now, was your husband born here in Cary?

JE: He was born in Apex. When he was just a small child, maybe about a year old and they moved. His dad is from Cary.

PV: So he's obviously an Evans of Evans Road Evans. Now is he one of Clyde's sons?

JE: No. Clyde Sr, that was his uncle, not his daddy. My husband was Clyde Evans' first cousin.

PV: Of Clyde Jr. So who was his father, Tildon or...? Who was your husband's father?

JE: Loveless Evans.

PV: Loveless. I'm trying to tie the family together. I've been interviewing some of the Baileys and other Evans'. () Oh look at that picture of him. That is such an unusual name. Where did that name come from? Don't know. Okay.

JE: Here is his mother Maude. That was in her younger days. And this is my husband. This is his sister. There is the two of them on that side of the Evans family, on this side. Here's the rest of the family come in, from Loveless on down.

PV: Okay. So he's obviously an Evans. Now were your, was your grandmother was a Turner, is that right? Is she buried in the Evans/Turner cemetery over on Old Apex Road, by any chance?

JE: No. She's buried over there at the church cemetery off of Kildaire Farm Road, over by Glenaire, at the church cemetery. We all belonged to, so that's where she was buried. And Evans cemetery is Turner and Evans, right up here.

PV: Yes, that's why I was asking you, because George Bailey took me over there the other day, and I noticed it was Evans and Turner.

JE: Turner and Evans, yes. So that's on their side. My grandmother was buried in the church cemetery, a different set of Turners. ()

PV: I don't even know where I got this information, but, and I don't know how accurate it is. But let's see. So then your father was Connie Reaves?

JE: Yes.

PV: Oh, I got that right. And so you were telling me, your mother was born here in Cary. Then your father was born in Moore County, but he moved to Cary when he was just real little.

JE: He moved to Cary a young man when he met my mother, and they got married. He was working on the railroad. And he met my mother here in Cary. They got together years later and they got married.

PV: So now, was you father, or were both your parents on the school board when they were building the black elementary school in 1937? That turned out to be Kingswood. Okay, so they were on the school board?

JE: Yes.

PV: Can you tell me anything about that?

JE: Well, one morning went around, my father, my mother and some old friends from church, they worked real hard to get a school in Cary still. Didn't have a high school, you know. We had to

go maybe about six miles to Berry O'Kelly. I don't know if you've heard of that or not, to go to school. So they worked real hard to get a school up there, Kingswood.

PV: Now there was a school back behind Cary Elementary School, there was a black elementary school, that burned down?

JE: Yes it was, and it burnt down the year that I was supposed to go.

PV: Does anybody know why it burned down?

JE: Don't know what happened. Some said it was set afire, I don't know. We don't have no proof. The same year that I was supposed to go as a little kid, it burned down.

PV: So you had no school to go to until they built Kingswood, what is now Kingswood?

JE: That's right. We had to wait until they built our school.

PV: So you were one of the first children to start at Kingswood when it was built? Do you remember starting?

JE: Well, I remember some of it.

PV: Do you remember your teachers?

JE: Yes, I remember most of my, Ms. Logan, Ms. Hope. Let me see, there's another if I can think of her name. They just had maybe about three teachers at the time.

PV: It was fairly small?

JE: Fairly small. It came on later, as the grades went up higher.

PV: As it grew? Was there more than one grade in a classroom?

JE: From the first grade to the, if my mind serves me right, to the seventh grade is when we went to Berry O'Kelly.

PV: So you probably went on to high school starting in the seventh grade?

JE: Well, if I'm not telling you wrong, before Kingswood came, we had another school to order, my parents there before they built Kingswood. Just one building for school on the same place

down below where Kingswood. This school was up from Kingswood. Just a one brick building. We all in a room, every grade. Just like the first grade, we were taught for a time, then other kids would come in, you know what I'm saying.

PV: So it was a one-room school?

JE: One room brick house ...

PV: with all the grades? And that's how it started.

JE: Yes. Right. That's the one I was in. I didn't go to Kingswood. I went to get one building until I got up to the seventh grade, or ninth grade and went to Berry O'Kelly. Because I was first at that particular time, they wanted us to go to Berry O'Kelly, you know we're small, and all of that. They kept on building the school. Maybe a few years behind, it was built out a whole lot.

PV: Because you had to wait until it was built.

JE: Well, I think that if my memory serves me right, they were working on that school before the building was burnt down, I think. Don't quote me on that, but I think it was. That's why it didn't take so long, less than a year for us to go in that school.

PV: Did you have older brothers and sisters who went to that school that burned down?

JE: Yes.

PV: Do you have any memories of what they told you about that school?

JE: No, I don't. It was the school for them. Because I had two brothers under me. And myself and my two brothers, we never get to go to that school. In the year that I was supposed to go, it was burned down. So I don't really remember too much about that one.

PV: Boy, Kingswood has really grown.

JE: Kingswood, when my kids started off going to school...

PV: That's where they went?

JE: Yes. But like those school, that's where I went, the one that my parents helped build.

PV: Well, that's exciting. That must be a wonderful thing, for both you and your children who went there later. That's fantastic. So were your parents really active on the school board? Did they...

JE: They did what they could at the time. Dad, I guess Herbert told you, his granddaddy [Clyde Evans Sr.], he was on the school board, later on Kingswood. And they were working on this school too, the first school I was telling you about it. They all worked together. All of the work on that school, all of us pass now. That man too, Loveless, all of them.

PV: Loveless did as well?

JE: Yes. They all worked. Bun Ferrell, all of those. Clyde Evans Sr.

PV: And Bun Ferrell? He's probably no longer around, is he?

JE: No, but he worked on Kingswood with Clyde Evans, both they were on the school board.

PV: Do you know if Bun Ferrell has any children or grandchildren that are still living?

JE: I know all about Bun Ferrell, because my sister married, his son.

PV: you do know then. Do you think he'd remember very much about his father and what he.. Bun Ferrell's son. Would he remember?

JE: No, he don't have any sons living. All of them dead. But he'd have grandchildren, and they won't probably know no more than I can tell you.

PV: Well, I'll let you tell me then.

JE: I'll tell you what I know. His children's dead, but like I said, he had grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great.

PV: But probably too far back for them to have heard stories.

JE: Right. Now this school up here, they were going to name this school after Clyde Evans.

PV: The one across the street here, which is now the West Cary Middle School?

JE: West Cary, yes. That's where they had so much confusion, that they just named it West Cary. And Kingswood, they were going to name that Bun Ferrell. But since they had so much

confusion about this school, they just said to name that Kingswood. So they named a street after him () They were going to name the school up here Bun Ferrell School, and the Clyde Evans School. But like I said, there was so much confusion, but I've forgotten, it's been so long, they didn't want a school named after nobody. So they just decided to have this West Cary and Kingswood. () One school board, there was just so much confusion going on they just decided not to do it. Both of those men worked really hard to get schools out there too. And really, Bun Ferrell sold the land that school is on.

PV: Kingswood.

JE: Right. And one end of that street running across there is Ferrell Street, just like Evans Road. He got that. Told me the Evans down here, you know, that his name is through Evans Road. So he got this street named for Ferrell, so they couldn't do nothing about that.

PV: Were your children, did they go to segregated schools, or?

JE: Yes. My kids, my oldest daughter, she went to Kingswood.

PV: When it was still segregated?

JE: Yes, she went there. And from there, let me get it right now. They were building on this school, she went there. She went to Kingswood, then she went here. And then segregation came in.

PV: So she went to West Cary when it was a high school?

JE: High school. And then from there, Cary High.

PV: She did go to Cary High? So she actually got caught right in about the time that they were desegregating the schools?

JE: Yes. She didn't never go to Berry O'Kelly because when they left these schools around here, elementary school, they had to go to Berry O'Kelly, but all of that were gone by that time.

PV: When did she graduate from high school?

JE: Back in 1969, I don't know for sure. We had all schools were...

PV: They were all desegregated by that time?

JE: Yes, all in one. Because my neighbor girl, the one on the left, she went to the school up here, Northwoods. She did go to Kingswood just a little bit, but then Northwoods came. And then my granddaughter, she went to Northwoods. And then from there she went to West Cary, the high school. According to what grade you were in. I think this school up here now, it goes to the ninth grade. It's been so long since I've known, I think it's ninth grade you go to high school.

PV: Because it's a middle school now. Did they have a hard time?

JE: Well, I really don't think so. Because, you take kids going to be kids. Once they get to school, get together, I don't care whether you're blue, white, green or what. I think it was being bad at the time that I was coming up, might have, might not. Who knows. I don't know. Black and white, some of them always have problems. Problems today. I don't know. But I've never seen it, not be having that problem. As long as you treat me right and I treat you right, that's all that counts. I was raised around whites. They were my neighbors. And we were best of friends, they sat at my table, my mama's table, and I sat at their mother's table. The only trouble that I had, there was two of them. Cary () If I saw them up town with some of their friends, they pretend like they didn't know me.

PV: The white folks, your neighbors?

JE: The white girl, my neighbors. So when they did that the first time, they came on, I wouldn't go up there. And I told my mother what happened. So their mother came over, wanted to know why I stopped coming up to their house. My mother told. So she said, "You come on. This ain't gonna happen no more." Now I don't want you putting this down. () Two of them, even now, we are the best of friends. ()

It didn't bother me, in a sense. It did bother me when I had to go pass by the white school to go stand out there in the cold, get the bus, go about six miles to my own school, or seven miles.

PV: When you're right there at a school in Cary that you couldn't go to it.

JE: Right in Cary. That's right. We all had to do that. But them days are gone. Like I said, it will always be on both sides, here the same way. Don't bother me. You go to the Dorcas Shop, you ever been down there?

PV: Yes. Now you ran the Dorcas Shop for years and years, didn't you?

JE: I'm still there. I still do volunteer work on Monday when I want to, every Monday if I'm not doing anything. We all work together.

PV: Now tell me about when you got started at the Dorcas Shop. Was it brand new?

JE: No, we were there for awhile. But we started off in, () I think it was '69, or early sixties. But anyway, This lady, she's dead now. She just had a brain, to bring all the churches, black and white, together and put up a shop like we do have. For anyone that needed help, you know, didn't make no difference what color you are. So we started on Cedar Street, right beside the railroad. Cedar Street. We had a little building down there on the righthand side. So we started there. We stayed there maybe about a year. Then we went on Chatham Street uptown Cary.

PV: In the back of that little shopping center?

JE: We were on the main street for about a year, two years. Then we moved across the street in a tall building in a shopping center where it is now. And we stayed there, and we came back on Cedar Street in another building. Then we went on Chatham Street just before you get to the railroad, where Maynard is. We stayed there until we built the building where we're at now.

PV: When I moved to Cary about fifteen years ago, you were in the back of a little shopping center on Chatham Street near Maynard.

JE: That's where we were until we built where we are now. It's been so long. It's been over four years. I was there from day one. I was the manager there for fifteen years, and she was telling somebody else to take over. I'm still the day manager on Monday.

PV: Boy, you've seen it grow, I would imagine. So now what all does the Dorcas Shop do? Clearly, you sell clothing and other things that are donated to you.

JE: Well, we have a place in the shop where folks that need it, people need things like food, pay their bills or what-have-you and all stuff like that. We had that basically from day one. We didn't know where the money would come from. But back then, we didn't have the needs we have now, but the Lord, right on time, if it's \$25.00, \$50.00, it was there. We just kept going, this lady just kept going and going and going until where we are now. We're getting ready to move now.

PV: I've heard that you're going to move into where the bowling alley is on High House?

JE: Yes, we took over that whole place. It will about 2010 or '11 before we move because where the furniture place there, their lease is still not up yet. We're waiting to put up, sell our place, but it won't be long before we be in there.

PV: Well, I'm sure you'll be able to fill it up too. You've gotten so big, but that will be great.

JE: The problem we have is not having enough room for people to park. Now we had, if they did, I call them IBM men. We had a lot of men down there working. They didn't do what we wanted them to do in building this building we have now. One, we had the land from 54 clean up to where we are now. And we had enough land for them to build it like we wanted because we got on that board. Where people could come in and drive right around the back where we are, drop off their things, continue. But they said it would cost too much. We said, anything you try to do it right, it's going to take the money. And you've got to trust in the good Lord that's paid for. But they didn't go the route they did. So it come like we are now. And we had somebody come in to see what they could do to help. They said, it's beyond the working (), because what they did is, they didn't know what they were doing and they were sitting right in there. Oops. So it weren't too long, about two or three months they left. But we're doing go, really good. That place is really making money to get up. But

we are really not there to make money, we're there to help. Anyone, I don't care if you, me or anybody that need help.

PV: So you distribute food to people that need it?

JE: See, just like different churches, they send food, canned food and everything down there. We go to the, we don't take in like chicken, stuff like that. They go to the food bank and get those items like that. because, we've got refrigerators, but we don't want to keep stuff too long. So in a can, food like jelly, peanut butter, all stuff like that brought in, any non-perishable stuff, they come in. And we're doing real good.

PV: That's great. How many people do you think you help in a month's time?

JE: Oh, right now, everybody's coming in.

PV: In fact, I saw a sign, I drove by there the other day. It looked like you're even staying open longer hours right now?

JE: On Thursday, we're open from 9:00 until 7:00, I believe. Because things are getting tough for everybody. And like toys, children's clothes, some of their clothes we can't take them in anymore.

PV: Yes, because the toys that come from China?

JE: Right, and clothes. Well, we have the whole while. So that's all lost, we hope we can get those back sometime. They help a whole lot, this hurts us a whole lot. Of course, during the holidays, or what-have-you, parents come to buy the toys, and the clothes. So we don't have children's clothes. So that they start from twelve on up.

PV: But you don't have little children's clothes at all?

JE: Can't have them.

PV: Oh no, I didn't realize that.

JE: Yes. So we don't know how long it's going to last. I said, what's the difference over there in the dollar store, buying? Of course, they always say it's brand new. That was the basis of donated...

PV: So that's a lot of people that could have gotten help.

JE: Yes. Like I say, we are helping a lot of folks now, with food, plus clothes, for adult clothes and children over twelve, furniture and what-have-you.

PV: Do you even help people, help them pay their bills if they need it?

JE: Yes. Now the way that we do that, you know some folks try to use you, I don't care where you go, what you do. They don't know we gonna check them out before we get there. And it's funny, because when we first started, years ago, we had a woman that came and said that her mother was at Duke Hospital in Durham, and she needed help. Blah blah blah. Like I said, she didn't know we were going to check her out. Come to find out, her mother weren't in no hospital. See, you have folks doing something like that, so we check you out. We have social service, we're called. We have a lady in there to take that. We've got maybe about ten or fifteen to come in and help. So we check you out. We may pay your light bill twice, show you want to do. Don't wait till the last minute because they tell us that your lights going to be cut off. Let us know ahead of time. Try to show you how to do each month. Stuff like that, we pay. You get behind in your house bill, want that, help you pay it once or twice. But don't look on here every month. We're not going to do it. Like I said, we have a lady that tells them how to do it and what to do.

PV: That's great. Now do you also support the Caring Place?

JE: We're the ones that started it. Yes, it was a small thing. After they got up, we help them but not like we used to.

PV: But you're not running it anymore?

JE: No. It's entirely different ones who are running it. But we are the ones started the Caring Place. I still go there. I have to go away next Thursday, we go there, feed the family that come in, to help folks get homes or what-have-you. And then we take dinner over there and feed them. They love Cary First to come because they know they're going to have a good dinner. It's all the fare that the church have anyway. Sometimes they might have a family of ten or five that we help them. I enjoy it, have a good time, () So Cary's going on real strong.

PV: So you're helping folks not only through the Dorcas Shop, but also through your church? Cary First?

JE: Yes. We go there maybe, I think it's maybe four times a year and feed the families. You know Good Shepherd? We work together. We get over there every fifth Sunday. Just like this past fifth Sunday we were over there at their church. Then the next fifth Sunday they'll be over here.

PV: That's so good. Carolyn Sampson was telling me about that, and how the two churches...

JE: Yes. We've been doing that over twenty-five years or more, since they started it, before they even had that church. They had it at the school, not this school but the school over there.

PV: That's fantastic. So you have a really tight relationship with each other.

JE: Yes, and that's the way it should be.

PV: Absolutely. You all get to know each other and become a community.

JE: Habitat, and they do together, both churches go help, work over there. Go out of town, different places they do. So they have a nice time. I was the type, I love to help folks.

PV: Obviously. You've been with the Dorcas Shop that long.

JE: I do what I can. It's in my bones. I get it by my mother being a missionary. When I was small, everywhere she'd go I was right behind her on her coattail, doing what I could to help someone.

PV: She was a missionary just in this area, or did she go...?

JE: Just in the church.

PV: So she didn't go to China or anywhere?

JE: No. She was around the neighborhood, what-have-you. If anything was going on in the neighborhood or church, a visitor was there to help. We don't have them now like we used to.

PV: Well, just being donated in very different ways. () Well, can you think of any stories about living in Cary and growing up here?

JE: Living in Cary, you know Cary like you know won't nothing, just a little one-horse town, one policeman, one stop light and all dirt roads except the main street up there in Cary. Even though, we really didn't have no problems, black or white, because we all knew one another. My parents grew up with folks in Cary, and as we came along, we grew up with their kids. Like I said, I stayed beside whites. We got along fine. If something happened with my parents, they were right there. And the same way if something happened to them. I wouldn't say all of them, but we didn't have no problems. We really didn't. If one hurt, everybody hurt, if they knew you. I guess it was probably worse for when my parents were coming up. They didn't talk about it too much.

But when I came up, I know it hurt a whole lot. Just like Ashworth Drugstore now, we couldn't go up there and sit down like we can now. We had (). And my parents told us they had another place to go get a hot dog, but you had to go around the back and knock on the door. She said, "If I ever catch you doing that, won't be good for me, because I can make you a hot dog here and you don't have to go to nobody's back door because you couldn't go in the front door."

PV: So that was a restaurant up in Cary, up on...?

JE: That was, no, it was up here on 54. It's torn down now. After you go under the bridge on 54 going to Raleigh, it was a little place up there. But you couldn't go inside. You had to go behind.

PV: And you were allowed to go to the lunch counter at the drugstore?

JE: No. Just you go in and buy anything you want, but you couldn't sit down.

PV: So you could carry it out but you couldn't sit down and eat it?

JE: Couldn't sit down and eat, yes. Couldn't do none of that stuff. Things were so, we know what we could do and what we couldn't do, so. And you go to the church. If somebody you know that died, you had to go upstairs or in the back row, if you wanted to stay, but you couldn't sit in the front like you can now. Those days, they existed there when I was coming up, but I didn't pay it no mind, I just know what I couldn't do and know what I could do.

PV: What about grocery stores, or regular stores?

JE: Well, we could go in there and buy what you want. Yes, you come by like anybody else. They didn't have no place for us to sit or nothing. But you go buy anything you want, as long as you had your money, that's all. If you didn't have your money, you charge things, as long as you pay for them on your bill.

PV: So there were some grocery stores that you could charge things?

JE: Yes. We had at least two grocery stores in Cary at that time and they carried us on up. We didn't have no problem with that. But like I said, going to school pass by one school and all of that. We just couldn't do things like that. Well, not only in Cary, it was just all around. To be honest with you, might as well tell the truth.

PV: So, they had school buses to pick you up in Cary to Berry O'Kelly?

JE: Yes. It came from Apex, whatever, Morrisville Road driving the bus. We had to stand out there in the cold and wait for the bus.

PV: Right out by the white school? Is that where they picked you up?

JE: Well no. For myself, right on 54. You know where Grocery Boy Jr. beyond 54? Well, it was right down on the corner from that. We had to stand there and wait for the bus. It all depends on where you're located. I was on this side and others were on the other side, there was no... I had to

walk maybe about, it took me about five minutes to get where I had to go, if it took about that long to catch the bus.

PV: To go all the way out to Raleigh. So your father was, he worked on the railroad? His whole career, is that what he did? What, did he work...

JE: Well, whatever they were doing on the railroad track or whatever.

PV: So he was building the railroad tracks?

JE: Yes, all of that, whatever they were doing.

PV: He wasn't riding on the trains or...?

JE: No. Just whatever you had to do, that's what he did.

PV: What about your husband, what did he do?

JE: My husband, he's a plumber. He worked for () Plumbing and Heating until he retired. He had a heart attack in 1980. He has Alzheimer's now. He's in a nursing home. You know where Old Carolina, off of () Road? It's a nice place. Still, I hate for him to be in there, nice or not nice.

PV: Are they taking good care of him?

JE: He's doing good. But still, somebody has to stay on top of it, everywhere you go, and how nice it is. But they treat everybody nice. It's a beautiful place, like I said. I just come from there when I told you to be by. I go every day except Monday. If I have to go, I'll be there, but I go Monday, I go Tuesday, Thursday, sometimes Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Just about every day, some days. I kept him here as long as I could until he, every afternoon around, between 5:30 and 6:00 in the afternoon, he's leaving home, going home. We used to stay right up there before we moved. Then we've come down here.

PV: So you were living in a house up the street?

JE: No, we tore down that home there we used to live in. My daughter stayed in there for awhile before she sold it to the folks who built the house right up there. Because he bought from,

almost from 54 down here. Came across the, where the school is. Do you know how much he paid for all this land we have down here? \$500. You can't believe it, can you?

PV: No. All the way from 54 all the way down Evans Road.

JE: Across the school, not all the way down Evans Road. Just below the school and right down here, not too far from here. That's all. Land was cheap back there in the thirties, twenties to the thirties. Can't do it now.

PV: He was very wise to buy it.

JE: I'll tell you. But other than that, my life in Cary really, no more than what I told you, I didn't have no, had a good time. Like I said, everybody knew one another because Cary was so small. You could rollerskate on 54. Every now and then a car might come by, with my Cary friends. I have seen Cary, well, tell you the truth now, Cary was graded. Every place now they wanted to buy ... Taking up everything.

PV: I know. They have just gobbling up every town around, aren't they? It's true. It's gotten to be so big. It used to be tiny.

JE: I know it. I call this "small New York." Now you don't know nobody, like we did. When I was coming up, we knew everyone. Like I said, my life wasn't all that bad growing up.

PV: hopefully things were a little easier for your children by the time they came along.

JE: Oh yes, it was. Like I said, when the schools were all integrated together, everything's fine. That's true. They had it better than I did, because they didn't have to go way out of town to go to school or what-have-you. So they'd get by.

PV: Well, I really appreciate your taking your time for us.

JE: I've run my mouth, I hope I gave what you want to know.

PV: No, you did. You gave me a lot of good information that we didn't know before, so I really appreciate it, and the town really appreciates it. So thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW