

Uncorrected Transcript of

Interviews

with

MARY CATHERINE CHAVIS

28 NOVEMBER 1995

and

NORA HARRIS PULLIAM

27 FEBRUARY 1996

by James Eddie McCoy, Jr.

Transcribed by Wesley S. White

The Southern Oral History Program
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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START OF SIDE A

**MARY CATHERINE CHAVIS
28 NOVEMBER 1995**

JAMES EDDIE McCOY: Today's date is November the 28th, 1995, I'm at 231 West Collard Street, I'm visiting with Mrs. Mary Catherine Chavis, her birth date is February 26th 1932, Mrs. Chavis will fill me in on the area she grew up in and her family and the education that the family and the parents struggled to send them to school.....Mrs. Chavis, did you grow up in uh, Granville County uh, up in this area, what parts did of the county, of the city were you raised in?

MARY CATHERINE CHAVIS: Yes I did. However, my first homeplace is located where the board of education is at this time. I lived there from the time I was four years old, eighteen after finishing high school. We were the only black family who lived in that area.

EM: Which is Collard Street?

MC: Uh-huh. Collard Steet, it was????????? Street at that time.

EM: It was the corner of Delacroix and Collard street?

MC: Uh-huh. Okay, you want me to give you the address at that time?

EM: Yes.

MC: It was 1003 Delacroix Street. And the only blacks that we came in contact with as far as neighborhood is concerned in that area was Marly Elkerson, who lived over near the nursing home, The Granville Nursing Home, and at that time, it was strictly a farming area, tobacco fields and the barns.

EM: Tell me about Mrs. Marly Elkerson, tell me something you remember about her?

MC: Uh...

EM: As a kid, did she have children she played with or did you go.....?

MC: No, she had grandchildren that I played with.

EM: Did you eat there?

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MC: No. At that time, you would have just a short visit, uh and you were not allowed to go into anybody's house, you didn't do that. Now that was during, basically during the summer months..

EM: How was Mr. Elkerson?

MC: Uh, the two of them farmed, and the if I recall they worked for Mr. Bob Watkins. Bob and Pete and Nat Watkins.

EM: Uh, did, was they, did they like children, Mr. and Mrs.??

MC: Yeah, they had uh, two sons and one daughter, and the daughter live down on this street from me. Lucy Elkerson Yancey.

EM: Okay, I interviewed her.

MC: You have, okay, uh-huh.

EM: Uh, what was the, the area that you was in, at one time it was a, it was a racetrack, I don't know if your parents ever told you, did you think, heard or remember someone saying it was a racetrack in that area?

MC: A racetrack? No, the only thing I can recall being there was a hospital across from us, and it was a store right across from the hospital that owned and was operated by Oxford logging. And one across the railroad track...

EM: Where the Tasty Freeze is?

MC: Where the Tasty Freeze is, and it was a house there, that was, at one time, I don't know if my aunt, my mother's aunt was the first on the mountain, but I know that house belonged, that piece of property belonged to them. To my great aunt, my uncle Hicks....

EM: They own the property where the bus garage is now?

MC: No, no. Uh, a portion of where the bus garage is now, my grandfather and grandmother Fred and Isabel Ridley own that, and was left to my mother and her sisters and one brother, that's where we grew up, where the board of education is now, all that around property, was a big tree there, and that's the tree that we played under, I can remember when they put the first uh, garage there for your school buses. Uh-huh, and across from us, lived Sterling and Junior Harrington who were excellent neighbors and they did have a dairy, they had a dairy.

EM: They was white?

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MC: Uh-huh, they was white. And my brother would get up early in the morning, every morning and go milk cows, for Sterling and Junior Harrington. Uh, my aunt did the diaper service, for the hospital, for the hospital.

EM: She worked for the hospital?

MC: Huh-uh, she would bring, I, we would go over and get the diapers, and bring them home and she would do the diaper service at home, when the hospital first opened.

EM: And y'all would carry clean diapers back?

MC: I don't know how they got back, but she did them. You know what I'm saying, I was young, real young at that time, and uh, it was never any racial tension, or anything, it was a good neighborhood, uh, everybody in that area knew us.

EM: It was a integrated neighborhood?

MC: It was just us. Uh-huh, they knew us, they.....

EM: Y'all played with...

MC: We played together, with uh, Bobby and Sarah Watkins, and they were the only children in the neighborhood, and they, it's coming back to me; you said something about a racetrack, it was a family that lived to the left of the hospital, I can't recall the names of the white family, but they did have horses and things back in that area.

EM: Uh-huh, that's what I'm talking about.

MC: Uh-huh, that much is true.

EM: It was a horse racetrack.

MC: A horse racetrack, they did have that.

EM: Uh, how many sisters and brothers did you have?

MC: I had three sisters. Uh, Charlotte, the oldest sister, Isabel, the youngest, and Fannie, next oldest sister, and one brother....

EM: And then you?

MC: Uh-huh.

EM: What's your name, Mary.....

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MC: Mary Catherine.

EM: Your brother, what was his name?

MC: My brother was the oldest child, William Thomas, named for my father's father.

EM: Was he the youngest?

MC: Huh-uh, he was the oldest. It was my brother, Roberta, Fannie, Mary Catherine, and Isabel.

EM: So there were four girls and one boy?

MC: Uh-huh.

EM: Uh, did he finish high school?

MC: Sure.

EM: Uh, where did, where did y'all go to elementary school?

MC: Okay, Orange Street Elementary School, and from there to Mary Potter, and each one of us had a choice to go to college. Uh, my brother, felt that he should go to work, because my mother and father separated and she was seven months pregnant with my youngest sister. And, he went to work, at Adams factory, uh, my brother went to Winston-Salem Teacher's College, for three and a half years. Uh, Fannie did not go to college, and I went to Shaw, and I finished Shaw, and my youngest sister was at Shaw, I believe it was either two, or maybe three years. But three of us went, two did not finish, and I completed, but each one of us had the opportunity, to go.

EM: We did too. Uh, did you have running water and everything in that area?

MC: No, we didn't, it was there, but we didn't have it, we uh, the????? and my family, the????? was a white family that lived up on that hill where the county garage is now, they had three sons, and Mr. Tippy, you might know him, he used to do some construction work,

EM: I've heard of him..

MC: Uh-huh, and his wife is over on Cherry Hill someplace, we shared a spring together,????????? and we would go there and get water, to, my, my mother and aunt at that time, taking in washing and ironing, and my uncle in law, when I, first or second grade, was the only blacksmith here in Oxford, or maybe before then.

EM: Who?

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MC: My uncle.

EM: What was his name?

MC: Peter Jefferson Owens. And that little place, if I can recall.....

EM: Was on Bank Street?

MC: Uh-huh, right behind the banks.....????? and I had a picture of him, but I didn't look for that picture, I can't find it.

EM: I hope you find it.

MC: Uh-huh, it's standing in front of the little shop.

EM: Please find it.

MC: I'm going to try.....

EM: Because I knew where it was, when you told me.....

MC: You did, has somebody told you?

EM: Uh-huh, I had it on tape.

MC: That was my uncle's husband, and he was just like a daddy to us, was my uncle Peter, my Aunt Mary, and my mother, those were the three adults figures in our house.

EM: Okay, was, name the brothers and sisters on your mother's side.

MC: Okay, she had one brother, Claude Ridley,

EM: Okay, spell the Ridley.

MC: R-I-D-L-E-Y, and he married Georgia Burwell. B-U-R-W-E-L-L. The daughter of the man whose house, who burned up on Granville Street. I know somebody told you that, a little green house, that was my uncle's in laws. Okay, he left Oxford, before I was born, he lived in Winston Salem.

EM: This was your mother's brother?

MC: My mother's brother Okay, she had a, her, the oldest sister living was Jemima, I'll have to spell that to you, J-E-M-I-M-A Pratt. Jemima Ridley Pratt, P-R-A-T-T. She

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lived in uh, Raleigh. And, she had another sister, Hannah, H-A-N-N-A-H. Ridley. She died before, uh. Then a sister Mary, Mary Louise.

EM: That's one, two, three, four, five.

MC: Uh-huh, I can't, it was nine of them, but we only, only two of us were living....

EM: That you knew?

MC: Uh-huh, at the time....

EM: Oh, so you are just naming the five that you had seen?

MC: That I, uh-huh.

EM: Alright, what about your father's side?

MC: Okay, on my father's side, that's a big family, now. Uh, let's see, I have a uncle Alex, Alexander, Pantry, Roosevelt, Uncle Judd, and Uncle R. T. And you go back.....?????? Five uncles, and I saw every one of them. Okay, Maggie, Cora, Viola, Lina, Ester, go back again.....

EM: Name em all.

MC: Uh, Cora, Estoria, Aunt Viola, Aunt Maggie, Aunt Ester, and Aunt Lina.

EM: That's eleven. Five boys and six girls.

MC: Uh-huh. And only two living now.

EM: Two who, the boys or girls?

MC: Two girls, Aunt Maggie, and my aunt Estoria. And all my mother's family passed.

EM: What did Maggie and Estoria live?

MC: Here in Oxford. Uh, Aunt Maggie on Baker street,????????????, we are first cousins, it's a small world isn't it? And Ester, my aunt Estoria live.....??????????

EM: Okay, let's try to go back now, let's take your mother's side. Every, most everybody could read and write?

MC: Everybody in my mother's family, that I met, would excellent readers.

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EM: What is it, you think the landownership throughout your family on your mother's side was over a hundred years old?

MC: I know.

EM: So, every, so your mother's side was free?

MC: Yeah.

EM: They was free, so they.....

MC: I would think so, yes.

EM: Because the could read and write?

MC: They could read and could write well, and my aunt Jemima, I recall her saying, she went to the fifth grade, she had at least a fifth grade education. But she could read any book placed in front of her, I never made to understand that.

EM: What about, uh, your aunts and your mother and all them, as far as you can go back, what about grandmother, did you ever see her?

MC: No.

EM: On your mother's side?

MC: No, I didn't see my grandfather or my grandmother on my mother's side.

EM: What kind of storied did they tell you about them?

MC: Uh, my grandfather, would do what you call plastering. And, I'm, I'm almost certain that he built the house that we lived in, or did most of the work, because it was a two story house, uh, at that time, we had the living room, it was based on, had living room on one side, bedroom, a huge hall, and this uh, door, I wish we had now, with the door bell, the bumble door, the door bell, uh, we had two big bedrooms upstairs, big hallway, and then right behind this hallway downstairs, I don't know why he built it, it was something like a little sun porch, so my from that it would seem to me, it was screened in, and then you had the dining room, and I always remember the dining and everything in it, another pantry, another bedroom, and a kitchen.

EM: So, granddaddy lived on his own land?

MC: On his own land.

EM: 'Cause y'all lived right on Raleigh Street. You didn't live out in the country.

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MC: Huh-uh, no no no. We never lived in the country.

EM: Okay, so that's why they could read and write, and somebody's been freed because you always owned land and

MC: My mother went to uh, my mother taught here.

EM: I was going to ask you...

MC: Uh-huh, my mother, she was the youngest, and I know at that time, she went to Kittrell, and from Kittrell to North Carolina College, make uh, during the summer, you know how they would do summer work, but she taught here, I guess up until my birth, 'cause she, uh-huh, gave birth to me, uh, and when I was in Orange Street School, she used to do some.....???? work.

EM: Did your mother come from out the county, was she born out the county?

MC: Huh-uh.

EM: In town too?

MC: In town.

EM: She was a Ridley?

MC: She was a Ridley, uh-huh.

EM: Where did she say she taught school at, Elementary or whatever?

MC: I know she was out in the Berea area, and look like Milley Creek area, 'cause she used to live with the Harrises, Mr. Cliff Harris. That's where she used to, she roomed with them, and she taught, she lived with the Webb's, Teansey Webb, wherever they lived, she used to live with them, when she was teaching. She was teaching, and I think that's when she met my dad, 'cause he came from out of the Berea area. See, they grew up back out that way.

EM: Okay, that's when they met.....???????? Your father, Chavis?

MC: Uh-huh.

EM: How good was your father at reading and writing and stuff like that?

MC: To be honest, I can't truthfully say, I do feel that he could read some.

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EM: It wouldn't no excuse to read....

MC: He could, uh-huh, based on, uh, on account of jobs, because he always held a good job, worked for the railroad company, in Richmond, but now, I wouldn't, I don't think they had as much formal training as on, on my mother's side, uh-huh.

EM: Uh, your mother uh, she taught out the county before she started having kids?

MC: Uh-huh.

EM: Did she tell you why they moved in town, or was your father living with his parents, and they didn't?

MC: No, look at they had a, 'cause he was three, before I came along, I know when she gave birth to my brother, she was in Berea. 'Cause they was just extremely???????? and I can't remember, and I've always heard them say, that she gave birth to all of us, except my brother on that bedroom suit, which is more than a hundred years old.

EM: That's nice.

MC: Uh-huh, so, that's all I can say. 'Cause I knew my father's people were the ones that were closer.

EM: Uh, did y'all have a midwife or what?

MC: We had a midwife, Laura Daniels, I remember that, big????????

EM: Where did she live, you don't know?

MC: Uh-huh, yes I do too, uh, Mrs. Laura Daniels, do you remember where.....???????? church is?

EM: Uh-huh.

MC: She lived uh, back over in that area. And we had Mrs. Abernathy

EM: Abernathy?

MC: A-B-E-R-N-A-T-H-Y live right up here on Goshen Street where they have this little place that you buy little tubes and, her house was in there somewhere, and those was the two main midwives, but Mrs. Laura Daniels was me when my mother, and Mrs. Abernathy was with uh, my youngest sister, when she had my youngest sister.

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EM: Uh-huh, they decide, I was told this, that the midwife decide how long the lady stay in the bed after giving birth to a child, three or four, if it's a week, two weeks, and people will come in and out and help them, as they need help.

MC: I guess so, but we were always a close knit family, I guess that's why I'm so close to my sister and her children, because when my father walked out, I didn't have to worry about a thing, my mother and sister just picked up.

EM: Picked up, uh-huh.

MC: And I do, yeah, my uncle, I do remember the story that??? parents went all the way to Raleigh, to get penicillin to save my mother's life, when she was carrying my youngest sister, she had some complications. And, he told them if they would give him, I believe look like the amount was 35 or whatever it was, the money to purchase the medicine, he would go get it and bring it back. That was the kind of, that was.....??????

EM: That was the kind of relationship.....

MC: That's the kind of relationship we had, and he went and got that money, he went and got the medicine, and uh, brought it back.

EM: That's the closeness and the friendship....

MC: Uh-huh, the friendship that we had, uh-huh....

EM: In the community....

MC: In the community, yeah.

EM: So, you never had no problems versus white and black, you didn't know what it was?

MC: I really didn't know what it was. Uh, when I was ready for college, my mother said, that was in 1950, said it was time for them to move, because times were changing, and that we were growing up, and uh, looked like we were having a new group to move in, and that's when they sold their property, and came here.....

EM: Your parents decided.....

MC: Uh-huh, my mother and my aunt decided, it was just the two of them living there, that it was time, 'cause it was no men other than my brother, and he was young, and I guess the idea here, you have four girls, you know, growing up, you never know what to expect, but now we walked that railroad track on First Baptist church, the school, and when I got ready for Mary Potter, I went down Collard Street. Uh, the school.

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EM: How about your friends that you went to school with, as you got in high school?

MC: Okay, well, now on Sundays we would always come this way, because my mother's aunt owned this property, and next door, that belonged to my first cousin, they sold that.

EM: So, land has always been in your family?

MC: Always, uh-huh.

EM: As far back as you can remember.

MC: As far as the only time I can recall paying rent is, when I went to Shaw, that's true, uh-huh, uh, we didn't have to, now it might not have been the finest home in the world.....

EM: But it was livable....

MC: It was livable...

EM: You had food...

MC: Oh, plenty of food.

EM: To give other people.

MC: To give other people.

EM: And when y'all come home from church, what did y'all do, everybody come to who's house, or would your family play or the girls or what?

MC: Uh, they usually come back to uh, my, our house, or we would go to the Martin family, they are all dead now, you don't know them, over on Smith Hill, uh...

EM: Tell me something about them.

MC: Okay, it was Henry and Lisa Martin, your momma probably remember the sisters, and she had two boys, and four girls, and her two, the two boys and two youngest girls were our age so you would visit there, or they would visit us.

EM: Give me their names.

MC: Uh, Cleo Martin, and I'm trying to think of the child's name that's dead, Mary Liza Martin...

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EM: What about the boy?

MC: Uh, James Martin, and William Henry Martin.

EM: Why did that family, it came to and end, or why did they leave?

MC: Okay, uh, as the children grew up and finished high school, uh, they left, one girl left, married and went to Detroit, uh, Mary Liza was a beautician here for a while, that's where, she left, married and left, and uh, just that they got jobs and moved away, but the mother and father stayed here, and the daddy worked at the orphanage up here.

EM: As a carpenter?

MC: Uh-huh, did you know that, until he retired.

EM: Everybody called each other's name.

MC: Uh-huh, and then, it was that family and the Jones family. Uh, Mrs. Susan Jones, Mary Allen Jones, Mrs. Susan Jones, we was, my mother's friends, we would go there, just that you would trade Sundays eating dinners, and having..... Yeah, we were close, me, Ruth, Virginia, Lucille, Mary Allen, that's when, if uh, we left a church and Sunday school, and my mother didn't take us there, they would come to us. You didn't invite each other, it was just, what you expect to do, and I'll tell you somebody else we was real close with.....????? 'cause I can remember when Ruth's mother passed, close friend.

MC: Your mother didn't ever have any problem with y'all visiting each other and stuff like that?

MC: Huh-uh, because, if you did something wrong, wherever you, the house you went, they could correct you and nothing was said. You know what I'm saying?

EM: Yeah.

MC: Uh-huh, uh-huh, and uh, that's just the way....

EM: That was just rules...

MC: That was just rules...

EM: And everybody knew the rules?

MC: Everybody would know the rules.

EM: Cause the rules said, everybody has the same set of rules.

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MC: And I'll tell you something else, my mother and two aunts saw that we had everything that we needed, I said needed now, and whatever we were involved in, in school, we had, and they were there, and there were no cars.

EM: They walked.

MC: They walked, the same thing for church.

EM: Rain didn't stop them?

MC: Rain, snow, we just didn't stop, piece of paste broke in your shoes, you still.....

EM: Got two pair of shoes?

MC: That's right, uh-huh, you still, that's it, you uh, still went on, I can remember when uh, the man used to come around on his horse, with milk, and I believe he was related to Hubert Cox.

EM: He was selling milk, he was the milk man?

MC: That's right, he was selling milk.

EM: But the milk came directly from the dairy from him, didn't it?

MC: I'm afraid to say yes or no, because as a child, I, but I can remember seeing that, uh-huh.

EM: What about a rag man?

MC: Uh-huh, we called 'em tramps at that time, and see, right there where the board of education was a railroad track, and that's where the tramp, you would let a tramp would come through, and gypsies too. I don't know....

EM: Gypsies?

MC: Yeah, they would have people that would come through with these long dresses and things that, by that railroad track, that we refer to as a Gypsy, you know, tell your fortune, or, uh-huh, yeah. You know it's really something when you go back and just think, when you go back and just think, uh, what else have I missed?

EM: I'll tell you what I'm going to ask you. How did parents in that day and time, prepare girls when they was going off to college about personal hygiene and taking care of themselves, than the way, did they know how to say that?

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MC: Uh-huh, now Eddie, I'm happy you asked that, don't be ashamed, your parents loved you, but certain things, I wouldn't even let my mother know I was thinking, you follow what I'm saying? Like the time when your cycle starts, well you had nobody, well, my mother didn't, and I don't think she called us, she didn't prepare you for that, or, when I got ready for college, I, my aunt gave me a trunk, that I wish I had now, because it wasn't just a flat thing, it was upright like a wardrobe, got it from Granville Furniture store, was in Granville at that time, and she saw that I had all the proper clothes that I need, 'cause they send me a list thing, and she, this is what they tell you then, I'm sending you to college not to get married but to get an education, but as far as hygiene and how to take care of yourself and all of that, no, but we, I don't know how we did it, I guess, and your teacher didn't do much, uh-huh, on that line, but uh, they were clean now, and you had your special clothes, we had our socks for Sunday, we had special clothing and all that for different, for church and special things for school.

EM: You think they depended on the older one to hand down to the next one, or your older cousin or somebody that's, you know, just talk out of line a lot, uh, because I asked that question.

MC: No, I believe from the depths of my heart, they felt that in time it was something that you would discover in the right way on your own, now how you were going to do that, for the longest time I used to wonder, and I was a big girl then, how in the world did they have a baby. You follow what I'm saying, you just did not uh,.....

EM: They came in trunks, suitcases. That's right, you know they send their children away from home.....To they stay with their cousins or something...

MC: That's right, yeah, I'm glad you said that, 'cause when Lu was born, my momma, Mrs. Abernathy went her, we was upstairs and we was downstairs, and she sent for us after everything was over, and said, look what the stork brought us.

EM: Look what what?

MC: A bird or something, she said brought us a new little baby. Over there, but you didn't ask any questions, No you didn't ask questions, and I'm going to tell you something else, and when grown people stop in, you had to leave, you couldn't hang around.

EM: Uh, a lady said when they came home, told them that they come from under a tree, tree stump, and said they dug up every tree in the yard, trying to figure out which one of them stumps that baby came from.

MC: But you know, even though Roberta, older than I was, they still didn't.....they kind of looked like they mothered me and kept certain things away, and I did the same for.....??? Uh-huh, I just don't, and I haven't figured out, it was, that was just the trend during that time.

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EM: I asked, ladies that you know, can explain that, that's not, and they understand, and they said it's a hard thing to explain because you just felt

MC: Okay, your parents had a way of protecting you from things they felt you didn't need to be involved with, they would keep you from being a child, like sickness, and when my uncle Peter had his stroke, I doubt we say him three times, and he was right there in the house with us.

EM: Isolated.

MC: Uh-huh, and uh, and if they had any money problems, anything of that nature, you didn't know, all you know when you know, all you knew when you came home from school, you had your hot meal waiting for you.

EM: I want to ask you a question, and you can, where did strength come from in people back then, how did they was so strong, they was the only???????

MC: Eddie, I believe from my experience, that your strength came from, of course God, and togetherness, that family structure, and it didn't mean it was a man and a woman, husband and wife, even though that's a proper thing.....

EM: You had the whole bonding system.

MC: The whole bonding system, because.....

EM: Like you said, your uncle stayed with you, and somebody had to relieve you....

MC: To relieve, and when I was at Shaw, and my mother thought my tuition, you know like you pay the second semester, you could pay for the first one,??????? thirty five dollars a month, I had to come up with five hundred and some dollars, my freshman year, I got on the telephone, I called my aunt in Raleigh at 9:00, and by 12 she was sitting there with her gloves and hat and suit, well dressed, and wrote a check for five hundred dollars, for my tuition, and left me spending change.

EM: But your mother and uncles and them had to send everybody to school that wanted to go and didn't send, and you knew they didn't have the money, how could they sacrifice so much, why was it so strong?

MC: Love, unity, togetherness.....???????????

EM: Why we don't have strength like that?

TAPE IS MALFUNCTIONING AT THIS POINT.

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MC: And my sister Isabel, and I told him I needed to borrow money for sister's tuition to got to college, and you know what he asked me, he said what's your name, where you live, do I know of your people. And I told him, who my momma was, and who my granddaddy was, and I didn't have to say nothing but Fred Ridley, and he said you will be a fine a person as Fred Ridley, and he wrote the check out, and gave it to me, that's what I'm saying.

EM: Uh, what was the name of the hospital when you was a kid up there.

MC: Brantwood.

EM: Did blacks could go to the back door, or whites could, did....

MC: Oh, no, blacks did not, no, no, you had the little hospital on Sycamore street.

EM: Susie Cheatham?

MC: Susie Cheatham. At that time, no, the only time we could go in that hospital was going to get those diapers, for my aunt to do.

EM: What about Grandma? You didnt' have, did you grandma.....?????????
Was she strong?

MC: Yeah, the little bit that I can recall, I think so, she was so quiet.

EM: Who did, why sacrifice, since we talking about strength.....????????????????????

MC: We were growing up, I don't know, I guess it was the closeness, now personally I can see and recognize, and???????????? I would never ask for more than what I really needed.....???????????? so that's what I'm saying, I was never, some things.....???????????? but still, she had a way of making the sacrifices too. We knew how far to go, you know what I'm saying we knew what we could do, and what we couldn't do.

END OF SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

**NORA HARRIS PULLIAM
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JAMES EDDIE McCOY: Today's date is February 27th 1996, I'm at 114 Warren Avenue, I'm visiting with Mrs. Nora Harris Pulliam. Her birthday is February 6th 1911. Mrs. Pulliam, will you give me your street number and today's date.

NORA HARRIS PULLIAM: 114 Warren Avenue.

EM: Today's date?

NP: Today's date is the 27th.

EM: Of February.

NP: February.

EM: What's your whole name?

NP: Nora Harris Pulliam.

EM: Okay, uh, where were you born at?

NP: I was born in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

EM: Your mother and father too?

NP: My father was born in.....

EM: Your mother and father was born in North Carolina?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Uh, do you know about where they was born at?

NP: My mother was born in Creedmor.

EM: Okay, okay.

NP: My father was born up in Berea.

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EM: Okay. Uh, your mother, what was your mother's whole name, what was her maiden name?

NP: Her name was Betty Glenn Bowling.

EM: Glenn?

NP: Uh-huh, she was a Glenn.

EM: How you spell that?

NP: G-L-E-N-N something like that.

EM: Last name was Bowling?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: She uh, she came from, between, somewhere between Creedmor and Stem, down in that area....

NP: Uh-huh, down at Creedmor they told me.

EM: Okay, and your father came from Berea?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: That's where the uh, Harrises is from. Uh, did your mother go to school?

NP: I really don't know, I imagine she did, you know.

EM: How old were you when your mother passed?

NP: I was just a little bitty, you know, just can't remember hardly....

EM: 'bout three.

NP: 'Bout three years old.

EM: You was about three?

NP : Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, where was your, where was your parents living at then?

NP: In Virginia.

EM: Uh, they moved from North Carolina over into Virginia?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Did they have relatives over there?

NP: Not before they moved there, after they moved there, then the raised up a gang, the grandparents raised a gang of children after they moved.????? on my daddy's side, and some was born after they moved.

EM: Okay, now which, which, were your mother and father married before they moved to Virginia, did you ever know that?

NP: No, they was married after they got to Virginia. After.

EM: They was married after they got to Virginia?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, uh, what was your birthday?

NP: My birthday was February 6th 1911.

EM: And you are how old?

NP: 85.

EM: Okay, uh, your father's father was a farmer too?

NP: Yeah, all of them were farmers.

EM: They was half, or tended sharecropping with somebody or they had his own....

NP: They had his own farm, both sides, my mother's people had their own farm, they left here, and went over there and bought.

EM: Uh-huh.

NP: And raised tobacco. Both had their own farms.

EM: Okay, so uh, did you know your, we, we are going to talk about your mother's side now, did you know her brothers and sisters?

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NP: Yeah, she had, she didn't have but just three brothers, Luther, McCoy, and Banks, was her three brothers.

EM: Any girls.

NP: Huh-uh, nobody but her.

EM: Were the boys older than she?

NP: One of them was, the oldest boy, Luther was the oldest.

EM: You always knew them, her brothers, her brothers because they live long enough 'til you got grown?

NP: Yeah.

EM: Um, did any of them go to the service?

NP: No.

EM: Did they stay over in Virginia, or they stayed over in North Carolina?

NP: They stayed in Virginia.

EM: They did?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Uh, did they still live there as you moved, did they ever move away and come to North Carolina?

NP: Well, two of them went to Chicago, that's where they died, and one died in Virginia, the oldest one, he never did leave.

EM: What was his name?

NP: Luther.

EM: Luther?

NP: Bowling.

EM: He was a Bowling?

NP: Uh-huh, Bowling.

EM: Okay, so Luther was the one that stayed?

NP: Yeah.

EM: And the other two moved to Chicago?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Did you ever go visit them in Chicago?

NP: No.

EM: Did they come home often?

NP: No, they didn't come home often.

EM: Uh, what, what relationship did you have with Luther, were you close to him?

NP: His children, yeah.

EM: His kids you was close to?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, you want to name the kids, because you was close to them?

NP: Well, let's see, he had....

EM: About how many was they, you don't have to name them?

NP: He had nine.

EM: Okay, did he uh, alright, now what about your father's brothers' and sisters, how many did he have?

NP: He had ten besides hisself.

EM: Do you know the, can you name them by first names?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, let's do the boys first.

NP: George, my daddy was named Luther, Graham, and David.

EM: Okay, now let's go girls.

NP: Dela.

EM: Dela?

NP: Uh-huh, Essie, Jenny, Vovella.

EM: Novella?

NP: Vovella...

EM: How, you, how you spell....

NP: Maggie, and one died, I forget her name.

EM: Okay. That was it. Okay, one, two, three, four, five. That's right, six boys and five girls. Good day in the morning. Uh, what about your father's brothers and sisters, you say they was nine of them, total?

NP: It was uh, my father, it was eleven in all...

EM: Of his brothers and sisters? He had eleven children?

NP: The granddaddy had eleven, and the other one, you confused with the other, on my momma's side, but on my daddy's side, the granddaddy had eleven.

EM: Granddaddy Harris?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, what was his name?

NP: William.

EM: Do you know, do you know, can you name, your brothers, your uncle's, your father's brothers and sisters, his, your father, your granddaddy was named William uh Bowling, or Harris?

NP: Harris, on my daddy's side.

EM: Okay, uh, that's your granddaddy, how many, do you know your daddy's brothers and sisters, did you ever see them?

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NP: All of them, except one.

EM: Okay, what was their names?

NP: I named them, Luther.....

EM: Okay, I got them all, okay, this was, okay. Good day in the morning. All of them moved from, all of them came up, left North Carolina and went into Virginia?

NP: Well, that's where they was born at, most of them.

EM: Oh, okay, Oh, okay, and your father left Virginia and came to Creedmor, and then left from Creedmor and went back to Virginia?

NP: My mother was from Creedmor, my father, he was from....

EM: Berea.

NP: Berea, that's where they used to live.

EM: Uh-huh, what Harrises were they related to in Berea? Cliff Harris and them?

NP: No, I don't think so, I never really known. I know they used to go back up there, but I, you know, I didn't know.

EM: You don't know no Harris that claim kin to you, from up there?

NP: But my mother's folks was?????????

EM: Oh, okay.

NP: You know the????????? don't you?

EM: Yeah, yeah, they are very, all of them went to school and everything, they are a real large family. Uh, her cousins were Tillies?

NP: Uh-huh, yeah.

EM: What, on her father's side or on her mother's side?

NP: Let me see, on my mother's side, uh-huh.

EM: Okay, 'cause her father was a Bolick?

NP: Her, yeah.

EM: Okay, and your mother uh.....

NP: She was a Glenn.

EM: She was a Glenn?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, and the Glenn's were related to the Tillies?

NP: That's right.

EM: Okay, and who else, the Tillies and who else was she related to?

NP: That's all I know from out that way.

EM: Uh, did they say your mother could read and write?

NP: Yes, uh-huh.

EM: Okay, on your mother's side, did your father, any of her brothers and sisters say they was ever in slavery?

NP: No.

EM: They was never in slavery, they was always free?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, what about on your father's side?

NP: Same thing, they was free.

EM: Okay, no, they was always free blacks?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, do you know uh, have an idea how long did the land stay in your family over in uh, Virginia or is it still in your family?

NP: Let me see, there side, he sold all of his, and the other side, I really don't know what happened to that, on my mother's side.

EM: Did you know about how many acres on your daddy's side that you had?

NP: About a hundred and fifty acres I'd say.

EM: Did he farm all that hundred and fifty acres?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Good day in the morning.

NP: Sure did, and we worked on it.

EM: You worked on it?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Did, uh, y'all raised, y'all had cows, pigs?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Horses, mules?

NP: That's right.

EM: Uh, chickens everything?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Um, you grew all vegetables and all that stuff?

NP: Yeah, grew all that stuff.

EM: You didn't go to the store?

NP: Own wheat you made that, and the corn for the meal....

EM: You carried the corn to the meal and had it ground?

NP: Yeah, had all of that.

EM: Uh, did you have a little sugar cane, or y'all had to buy that?

NP: Yeah, we had that planted, and then they had a thing to get that out and make molasses.

EM: How did they do that, what did, how did, they had a mule go around in circles?

NP: Uh-huh, and then a man would cook it, certain....

EM: Explain that, what it would be a pot a bucket under they catch it first, and then you...

NP: It would be like water, in that cane that juice, they have something that will catch all that, and then, this particular man would take it, and I don't know what he would do with it, he would make it into molasses.

EM: Was it something like a wash pot getting hot while they were, while that was being....

NP: No, they didn't have to get it hot, just had that that would catch it, I remember that.

EM: And they carried it off somewhere?

NP: For this man to cook it.

EM: Uh-huh.

NP: Them was some good molasses, um...

EM: Y'all had every, the only thing y'all had to buy was coffee?

NP: Coffee, sugar, and cheese, and stuff like that, and raise hogs and stuff, cows, cure cows and eat that, put that up, see winter then was all the same, real cold, you didn't have no, you didn't have warm days like we have now. You put this meat in the smokehouse, it would stay salted down, never spoil.

EM: What about ice?

NP: We didn't know what ice was.

EM: Y'all didn't have a ice house?

NP: Huh-uh.

EM: You didn't have an ice house?

NP: No.

EM: What about uh, did you have, you stayed with your father until you got how old before you moved with your other relatives?

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NP: When my mother and father died, I was a little bitty thing then, I stayed with their people.

EM: Who died first?

NP: My mother.

EM: How old were you when your, when your father died, were you old enough to know him any?

NP: I was, I tell you, let me see, I was about six years old, I'd say.

EM: You was that young?

NP: Uh-huh. I remember,????? 'cause I had a uncle to die in that.

EM: You had a uncle that was in World War One?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: What was his name?

NP: William. He was named after his daddy, he died in????, he had the flu.

EM: William Harris?

NP: Uh-huh. He had the flu. And took a bath and went out. And he doubled back with influenza, he died and they sent him home. I remember.....

EM: Sent him home from where?

NP: From Ohio, that's where he grew up.

EM: He got out the service and wanted to live in Ohio.

NP: That's where he was stationed.

EM: Okay, were he born in North Carolina or Virginia?

NP: Virginia.

EM: Okay, uh, you remember him coming home and everything.

NP: Uh-huh, it was a week before he got home, sure was....

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EM: Uh, so he was in World War One?

NP: I imagine I was about seven years old when that war was.

EM: Now, what about your other brothers and sisters, all y'all went to stay with your granddaddy, and grandparents, children?

NP: The girls, but the boy was with his, my daddy see, was married twice, after my momma died, he married another lady, this boy was by her, the place that he stayed, he stayed at another place in Virginia. Okay, he's dead too, there's nobody living but me.

EM: You the oldest one living, and that will be the end of your family?

NP: Sister and brother, yeah. I had one sister you know, died in Richmond died at age two.

EM: Uh-huh, is there many grandchildren left?

NP: Well, on, my sister didn't have any children, my brother didn't have any, so nope.

EM: It's about to go out.

NP: Uh-huh, in that sense, but, on the other hand, my daddy's folks, there's a lot of them living. Cousins and things over there now, first cousins. I got a cousin live in?????, you may have heard of the Harrises, the undertaker....

EM: Uh-huh, yeah, I know them....

NP: Well, that's my cousin. She's a Harris and married a Harris. Yeah, they gave them a appreciation service last year, at the funeral home, we went over there, very nice, but it's so hot.

EM: Uh, you favor, all your brothers and sisters favor your parents? On your mother's side or on your father's side?

NP: I think my sister look more like my mother. I don't think we favor our daddy's side much most of us look like our mother.

EM: Uh-huh, so your parents never farmed for nobody but themselves?

NP: Huh-uh.

EM: Okay, uh, when you was a kid, did uh, did ladies eat red dirt and starch?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Tell me why. Tell me about red dirt.

NP: It was just a habit, I didn't never eat none, but I used to see them eat it.

EM: You did?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: I used to have to go get it for a lady too. Uh,????? starch, I tried it, but I didn't like it, did you ever try it?

NP: Yeah, I tried that, and then somebody told me what it would do to you, give you tumors and things, so I, I stopped, I stopped eating it.

EM: But wasn't it a craving for most pregnant women, or just everybody?

NP: If anybody wanted to eat it.

EM: Did you, did your uh, did you travel back and forth to North Carolina often? Before you moved?

NP: No.

EM: You didn't, you didn't know anything about Oxford?

NP: No, not until I came over here.

EM: Did you, 'cause you, did you know, 'cause you, did you go to Creedmor did you know your mother, did they have people, the Tillies still down there.....

NP: Yeah, I been down there once, after they moved from the mountains up there, and they camp, 'cause they had to move to Creedmor, that's where they went and bought a house, momma's first cousin, they bought a home in Creedmor, and the church was moving.....???????????

EM: Was moved from where?

NP: Up at the mountain, where they camp????? I went there one time.

EM: To their house before they moved?

NP: After they moved, well I went up there once as a child, but I don't know nothing about that.

EM: You can't tell me anything about how it looked?

NP: Huh-uh.

EM: Wasn't they school teachers?

NP: Yeah, Addie May, I think she recently died here lately, but she was friends to Mabel River and them, Mrs. Shepherd, she was a school teacher, and she had a sister named uh, forget her name, she lived in Durham, and the other one was a teacher she lived at home, the baby girl, she never married.....

EM: She was Alice?

NP: Uh-huh. You knew her?

EM: I interviewed her back in '81.

NP: You did?

EM: Yeah, so that's how I know her. Yeah, I know her, yeah.

NP: I went there one Saturday with my first cousins from Virginia, and they was cooking some peas, and they smelled so good, and I wanted to stay and eat, but they had to get back 'cause they was going to a singing they said, that Saturday night, I surely wanted to stay, so we stopped at Kentucky Fried Chicken and eat, then they went on back to Virginia, well, one of them girls, it was her and her brother, lived with my first cousin, she died since then, I went to her funeral, over at???????

EM: Uh-huh, did you, uh, what about your nieces and nephews that was older than you and your sisters, how far did they go in school?

NP: You mean my cousin, 'cause I didn't have no nieces.

EM: Uh-huh, your cousins, how far did they go?

NP: Most of them just finished high school, that's all.

EM: How far did you go?

NP: I went to the seventh grade.

EM: Uh, what happened, why did you move from Virginia to Oxford?

NP: Because my sister was over here, and we just wanted to leave home to town, getting tired of farming.

EM: Y'all was tired of farming?

NP: And the grandparents was strict, yeah, they was strict old folks.

EM: They was?

NP: Yeah.

EM: They make you go to church every Sunday?

NP: Oh, yeah. If boys come to see you, they find out who you were, question him, and then when he leave, that boys granddaddy done so and so, just like he had done it. They didn't want you in no, bad family, you know. Don't want you in bad families. Yeah, usually...

EM: They set in the room with you?

NP: Not with us, I have known that to happen, but they call bedtime after nine o'clock, and stay, nine o'clock was the limit, got to get up in the morning and see about that tobacco,????????????

EM: Well, you know, I understand what you are saying, but, they forget to realize, they wasn't the best of, you know....

NP: They????????? tough on then, it ain't like it is now, but now, I think about it, about being raised, some things I never forget that they told me, old people. I never will forget them, when I went on to come up today, no way, 'cause these children are pitiful, parents down there, that's pitiful. I wasn't allow them in school, I'd stay them home.

EM: Where are the parents at?

NP: Down here. That little passed here, and showed his whole crack one day, and looked back and laughed at the other one, that's pitiful. They don't have no future, they going to die young, ain't going to get along, you see that's happening, killing each other. It's a pitiful world...

EM: It is. Were, were y'all taught, uh, did, did they, who told you about your, a girl, your parents, your cousins and nieces had to let you know when you are changing, when girls changing and mature?

NP: Grandma's told you.

EM: They did?

NP: Uh-huh. That's right.

EM: What, they will call you aside, and let you know about your body, and what goes on.

NP: Uh-huh, sure would. 'Cause my granddaddy always said if anybody had a baby, he would have got a beaten. Lord yeah, and ain't married.

EM: He did?

NP: Sure would, and some of them had children, and you couldn't go to certain houses, if you weren't doing right, so my sister slipped off and went to a party at a house, with a woman, one of my cousins, she, you know he went after her that night, and his daughter was in it too, marched them on home, and then he, 'cause he never come upstairs, and he come upstairs, and I tried to get her not to go, I wouldn't go, and he asked me where I was then, and I told him I didn't know, and I caught most???????? than they did, see I lied, 'cause I told him, he said you knew where they were, and uh, he marched them on home, party just had started, he come in.

EM: How was the preachers back then, was they, did they do the best they knew how to do?

NP: Uh-huh, didn't have no education, you know. Just once in a while you see one, do better than the others. Most of them had preached an honest person.

EM: Well, they took advantage of people.

NP: Yeah, get everything they could get their hands on. Even preacher will eat a whole lot longer, you know, come to your house, you always have them for dinner....

EM: What y'all have church once a month, and uh.....

NP: Uh-huh, and then have revival in the daytime. Have dinner everyday, they done laid the crops by then, everything, they done rushed up and laid them crops by, they called then.....???????????? And have a good time at revival, and I was scared, 'cause I was scared of them folks shouting.

EM: When y'all weren't going, what was the name of the church in Virginia.

NP: New Light.

EM: huh?

NP: We went to New Light Baptist church.

EM: New Light?

NP: Uh-huh, it's still over there now, I went over to settle a funeral.

EM: You did?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: And what other church did y'all go to, when y'all weren't having church?

NP: Rocky Mount, Blue Stone, uh, I don't know, several of them, they used to have Unions of fifth Sunday's, go from one church to another.

EM: Could your family afford a car?

NP: Yeah, I remember the first car, one had a Nash, other one had a Studebaker, and the Nash had those seats you pull out of the back, they was like buggies then, and they had cars.....

EM: How far did you have to walk to school, how many miles.

NP: 'Bout five miles, through the woods.

EM: Through the woods? What would it have been if you hadn't walked through the woods?

NP: See, you had to do that to get there, ice would be on the ground, but we walked.

EM: How many rooms was in the school?

NP: Four rooms.

EM: Four room school?

NP: Uh-huh, country school.

EM: You know the teachers?

NP: Yeah, I had one teacher, Mrs. Uh, I had two from Norfolk, the only city teachers we ever had, and they were good. The others all country women.

EM: What they had been eighth grade and started teaching, or they had been the school for some training?

NP: You know they just finished high school then, and went to teaching.

EM: Did they know much?

NP: Well, I don't know, maybe so, you know. 'Cause my uncles wife taught us, while she had finished high school, and I didn't want to be under her 'cause she was his wife, I reckon.

EM: Right. But did you, how many years were you, under her?

NP: I was just under her a while, she was just doing it because somebody was out, sub teaching.

EM: Uh-huh. Do you know what year y'all moved to Oxford?

NP: I can't.....

EM: 1930? Was it 1935?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Who came with you, who moved over here with you?

NP: Nobody but Ester and I.

EM: Okay, so you married in uh....

NP: Virginia,?????????

EM: What was your families name over there?

NP: Pulliam.

EM: Do you still have a lot of them over there in Virginia?

NP: Oh there's a lot of them over there.....????, in Durham...

EM: Who your...

NP: Husband.

EM: Your husband was?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Uh, how many brothers and sisters did he have?

NP: He had two boys....

EM: And one girl?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Did they farm too?

NP: Yeah, they had a big farm too.

EM: They own their own land?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Uh, how did they get money?

NP: I don't....

EM: To buy land and everything?

NP: They raised that tobacco and sold it, tobacco was high then.

EM: Uh-huh.

NP: I hear them say, we go a dollar a pound, I was a child, that was something then.

EM: Where did they take it to? Petersburg?

NP: No, Chase City, we was living between Crawford and Chase City. Both of them had tobacco markets.

EM: Oh okay.

NP: As now they have. Crawford got market, and Chase got a market. Danville, uh, south.....

EM: Yeah, Danville did have a big one in South...

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: And uh, you separated before you came to Oxford?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Where did you live at when you first came?

NP: In Brown Town with my cousins, all them living over there.

EM: Who is your cousin?

NP: She was a???????

EM: What?

NP: Hardy, she's dead now.

EM: Hardine?

NP: Hardy. H-A-R-D-Y

EM: Was she real nice?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: And that was your aunt?

NP: My cousin.

EM: Your cousin?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Where about in Brown Town did y'all live at?

NP: There on the railroad on uh, Mr., uh, what's the man's name that died, run the cafe, over her his house?

EM: Brady Green.

NP: Huh-uh, no, that was before his time. Uh, no, I forget the man's name, but anyway, that house right on the railroad, on the left hand side, going across the railroad.

EM: Was he a Kingsburr?

NP: Huh-uh, he used to have a cafe down town there. I can't even call, I don't believe he was a???????

EM: Uh-huh, you think it was Gregory?

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NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Persey Gregory?

NP: Uh-huh, lived in his house.

EM: Uh, I know where Persey Gregory's house is at.

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay, so uh, what was his cafe at?

NP: Down there on the end you know, on Hillsborough down there.

EM: Where did you, what kind of work did you do when you came to Oxford?

NP: Worked in service and then the factory.

EM: Uh, what do you mean by worked in service?

NP: Different people hired you, cooking, cleaning.

EM: For white people?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: And that's what you call working in service?

NP: Yeah, then from that the factory.

EM: Did your daughter go to school in North Carolina?

NP: Uh-huh, she went to school in Oxford, Grady school, and then from there, Mary Potter.

EM: Y'all was living around town when she went to the Grady school?

NP: Huh-uh, we was downtown here.

EM: Where about down town did you live, had you moved to?

NP: I was living over there on Front Street, when she went to Grady school.

EM: Where was that at, on Front Street?

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NP: Over that at Ellis Taylor's house, we lived with him.

EM: Y'all some kin to Mr?

NP: Huh-uh, we was just friends, we lived there until we started, you know, I moved uptown....

EM: He didn't have no children then?

NP: Yeah, had all, not all of them, 'cause I left before the last one was born...

EM: Did they have Emma Gray when you was living there?

NP: I don't think so.

EM: Mary Jane...

NP: Mary Jane and the other one was there.

EM: Yeah, okay, and Joe, and...

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Okay.

NP: Then we moved uptown and uh, Ester started going to Mary Potter, and she finished over there in '44.

EM: Uh-huh, and did she go to school in Durham or anywhere?

NP: No, she went to work at Butner, in fact she was working there before she finished, at the.....???????

EM: What for, for Murdoch.....for the

NP: Soldiers, you know, soldiers was out there then.

EM: Uh-huh.

NP: It was a camp.

EM: Uh-huh.

NP: And she worked in the???????? until the camp went out. Then she went to the factory just like I did.

EM: Uh, tell me about the factory when you went, what did you start doing, what department did you start working in first? Did you ever work in stemming?

NP: Uh-huh. Pulling stems.

EM: Was that a hard job?

NP: Uh-huh. That was at Imperial, then I went to uh....

EM: Okay, you worked the Imperial factory first?

NP: Yeah.

EM: Did you ever work at?????

NP: Huh-uh, I went to????????, and from there processing back to the Imperial.

EM: What about American Tobacco Company?

NP: I didn't ever work there.

EM: Did you know where that was?

NP: Over there on the corner....

EM: Uh-huh, of Goshen and Cherry streets?

NP: Yeah. No, I didn't work none of them places. Worked at the Imperial....

EM: Did the Imperial pay more money than Adam, or that's just where you got a job at?

NP: That's where I first got a job, all of them was about.....I worked at Penns Factory too, little factory over on the railroad.....

EM: Penns Factory?

NP: Uh-huh, got burned up....

EM: Never heard of that one...

NP: Giving fifteen cent an hour.

EM: Fifteen cent an hour? You were rich weren't you?

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NP: Well, everything was cheap...

EM: What did, what did y'all do in that factory?

NP: Hung tobacco on sticks.

EM: Penn was a, a tobacco factory too?

NP: Uh-huh. Export, then uh, John's Processing, the last one I worked over here, this new plant, I stopped in,????, doctor stopped me from work.

EM: The total amount of years you put in the factory, and hard work, uh the factory was rough, wasn't it? It was hard on you.

NP: Yeah, it was hard, standing on your feet all day, ten hours.

EM: Was they paying more down at, uh...

NP: Nowhere more. And I left, I believe we was getting three dollars and something an hour.

EM: You worked for fifteen cent an hour?

NP: Uh-huh, when I first started, then on up to twenty, twenty five, thirty, sixty, on a dollar, we got up to three dollars and something, and that's when I left.

EM: Fifteen cent an hour was a lot of money.

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: And you went from fifteen to thirty cent an hour...

NP: yeah....

EM: Ten hours a day...

NP: Yeah.

EM: Shaking that tobacco.

NP: Shaking and hanging.

EM: What, all right, did you know Mrs. Meady Crews and them?

NP: Uh-huh.

EM: Tell me about her.

NP: I just knew of her, you know, seeing her.

EM: Did she run a boarding house or a restaurant?

NP: Meady Crews, I don't know, she had a, ran rooms out there, after her momma died, Mrs. Uh, what was her momma's name.....

EM: Mrs. Turner?

NP: Uh-huh. I didn't, I just see 'em, I didn't know much about them.

EM: Did you ever go to Joe Louis Inn?

NP: No.

EM: Where did you go?

NP: What do you mean...

EM: When you was

NP: Went to Penn Inn.....?????, and Henderson. Most of the people was going over there.

EM: You was going in Henderson.

NP: Uh-huh, they didn't have nothing much here, I didn't go to that Inn up on Granville street, there was some kind of Inn up there.

EM: Where?

NP: Up there where.....????????? live, up there, Silver Moon or something up there. Folks were going in there, they were kind of rough.

EM: And you don't have no relatives over in Oxford now?

NP: Huh-uh.

EM: You, uh, you in the Methodist church?

NP: Yeah.

EM: How many years you been in there? Ever since you came to?

NP: No, in the sixties, in the early sixties I joined there.

EM: How did you like it?

NP: I like it all right.

EM: We just talked about your mother, she worked hard to help you send you to school and everything, and, where did, uh, where was you living at when uh, you was going to school?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Well, first, I was in elementary school, you know, here in Oxford, my first grade teacher was Mrs. Hicks. And then on into the seventh grade, which was Rev. Hall, and then from Rev. Hall to Mary Potter. And I finished Mary Potter in 1944. But during that time, my mother was working, when she wasn't in the factory, she was making five dollars, three dollars and a half and five dollars a week, doing domestic work...

EM: With these white people?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: With these white people, trying to send me to school, and when I graduated she had to borrow the money to buy me a class ring, because of the fact we wasn't able, she wasn't able to uh, buy me a ring. And I had a aunt that lived in Richmond, she helped as much as she could, she was the one that bought it for us.....

EM: They don't take advantage of.....

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: They don't take advantage of anything.

EM: Okay, give me your whole name, and what year you was born.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Uh, my name is Ruth Ester Pulliam, I was born Aug. 12th, 1926.

EM: Uh, your mother said you went to work out at Camp Butner too?

RP: Yeah, this was during the summer months when I was going to school, I would go to uh, Butner, and work out there, I was uh, I used to check out the soldiers clothes, I worked at a laundry, and during that time, I worked with Mrs. Patsy, a lot of teachers worked in there during the summer months. Mrs. Patsy Ridley, and Mrs. Davis, and several, Mrs. Elsie, Mrs. Elsie Holman, several of the teachers was working there during that time.

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EM: Oh, Okay, I didn't know that, nobody ever told me that, and uh, you ride with them?

RP: Yeah.

EM: And the age didn't make no...

RP: And Mrs. Gibson, I would ride with Mrs. Gibson.

EM: Mrs. Gibson?

RP: Uh-huh. Yeah, Mrs. Gibson.

EM: Did you ever know her husband?

RP: Yeah, he used to take pictures up there, James Gregory, in front of James Gregory's cafe.

EM: What do you mean take pictures, explain that.

RP: He was a photographer, like, he would take your picture.

EM: I didn't know that.

RP: Uh-huh. And, this girl Plunk Minor, she worked with him.

EM: Who?

RP: Plunk Minor, did you know Plunk Minor?

EM: Yeah, walk around there....

RP: Uh-huh, she would stay there with the pictures.

EM: Helping him develop them?

RP: Well, he would develop, but she would help sell, you know, what not, and was right in front of James Gregory's cafe. He had a little spot there, like uh, Paul Will had a barber shop there, and there was another little spot that he had, and he would take pictures. Mr. Gibson.

EM: And that was, he did all the taking, all the pictures? If you wanted pictures made you go to him?

RP: Right. Uh-huh.

EM: Uh-huh, did you know Plunk's brothers and sisters?

RP: I knew one of them, a girl, her name was Ester Gregory.

EM: What Gregory family did she come out of ?

RP: This was A??? Gregory's daughter.

EM: Okay....

RP: You know the Gregorys, Edward Gregory?

EM: Uh-huh.

RP: This is his sister, he married Edward Gregory's sister, he name was Ester, but she passed, she's passed.

EM: Oh, so, oh, that's why my, okay, so Plunk, that's what, did you ever see her father and them, her mother and father?

RP: Who, Plunk?

EM: Uh-huh.

RP: No, I didn't know her mother and father.

EM: She still have two brothers.

RP: Yeah, I didn't....

EM: They live up north somewhere.

RP: Uh-huh, one of them, I can't think of his name, but he married the Gregory girl.

EM: Uh-huh.

RP: She passed, and I think he's passed.

EM: 'Cause Olivia told me she got brothers that live somewhere, that looks after... Uh, so uh, the, so y'all worked over there in the summer for the soldiers?

RP: Yeah, during the summer months, for a summer job.

EM: Uh-huh, how much was they paying? 'Bout fifty cent an hour?

RP: Yeah, I would say that.

EM: That was a lot of money too, weren't it?

RP: Yeah, it was a lot of money considering that during that time.....I can't remember exactly what we got, but it wasn't nothing to write home about.

EM: Uh, tell me, okay, tell me your friend was Mrs. Mabel Royster and uh....

RP: Marie Hawkins.

EM: Who's Marie Hawkins?

RP: Well, she was Marie Hawkins Brown, she married insurance agent Brown, he died, she lived behind Coopers store, you know that house?

EM: Okay, I know where you talking about.

RP: Now she is in Chicago, she married a Gregory.

EM: Okay, uh-huh.

RP: And she moved to Chicago.

EM: I know...

RP: We were friends, we all went to school, all through school together. And uh, Josephine Gregory, Bertha Parker, all these are my school mates, and uh.....

EM: What about Bay Crews over in that area, did you go over to that street...?

RP: Bay Crews, she was younger than I was, you know I didn't associate with uh her. Dot Mallory, which is uh, the Mallory's that live, the sister....

EM: The one that live in New Jersey?

RP: Yeah, live in New Jersey, we all were friends. Oh yeah, I was in school with Carrie, uh Bass, was classmates, we graduated together. And Mrs. Sheppard graduated with us.

EM: She came back and got her...

RP: Got her..

EM: Did you want to go on to school when you graduate?

RP: I wanted to, but I wasn't able. I didn't push it for one thing, I'll put it to you like that. I could have gone to Richmond and went to Union, I started working at Camp Butner, when I finished my mind toward school.

EM: You was smart, you just didn't push yourself.

RP: I just didn't push myself, now I wish had of, but it's too late now...

EM: Yeah, I understand, 'cause you could have gotten a easier job, if nothing else. I uh, its' amazing that your mother and at her age, how smart she is.

RP: It is, she is very, very apt, she's good with figures, she can remember.....

END OF SIDE B