

**Octavia Freeman Beddingfield**  
**Ronnie Beddingfield (Octavia's son)**  
**Joyce Corn Beddingfield (Ronnie's wife)**  
**Interview Recorded: January 23, 2008**  
**Interviewer: David Schenck**  
**Transcriptionist: Cathy Mann**  
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David Schenck: This is David Schenck and I'm sitting at Octavia Beddingfield's house and talking with her and with her son Ronnie. And if y'all will just say who you are and we'll put this out on the table and we'll start talking.

Ronnie Beddingfield: Okay, I'm Ronnie Beddingfield.

Octavia Beddingfield: I'm Octavia Freeman Beddingfield.

DS: And we're here looking at family scrap booking history that Mrs. Beddingfield has been working on you said for fifty years?

OB: At least fifty years.

DS: At least fifty years, and a lot of it is your Freeman ancestors?

OB: It's all Freeman.

DS: All Freeman?

OB: All Freeman.

DS: And you've collected family pictures and papers? What's in here?

OB: Actually it's a collection of all the material I have found about my family over the last fifty years. I began with 1800 when my great grandfather was born.

DS: Was he born in the valley?

OB: No, I don't know exactly where. We think in Rutherford County. As far as we can tell, he came to Henderson County about 1820.

DS: And he had a large land holding you told me last time I was here.

OB: At his death he had a thousand and nine acres. We think he got most of that property through his father-in-law, James Murray who owned five thousand acres, but I don't know if all that was in the Green River area. But the Murray family had come much earlier and her grandfather had the old Murray Inn & Tavern over in what is now Fletcher, North Carolina. But her father James Murray lived in the Green River area. In those days, my mother told me about all this, in those days there was just his house on this thousand acres and a house about where the Tuxedo Baptist Church is now, and then a house or two in what is now the bed of Lake Summit.

DS: Right and that was all there was in this area?

OB: That was all there was in that particular, that thousand acre, that particular area until the mill came.

DS: Right, did his property go all the way down to the lake, to where Lake Summit is now?

OB: No, it didn't. It went to about not quite to where the mill is.

DS: Okay, yeah, okay. And the biggest piece of that that's now in the family is how big?

OB: I expect that my nephew owns six acres over here across the creek and we have six acres. I guess we have about seven acres, don't we?

DS: So one of the huge changes is the fragmentation of big property.

RB: Pretty much gone.

OB: There's another couple of spots, you know. Rusty's wife has some and Duff has some.

DS: And the old mill site, was that?

OB: That's this Duff that I spoke of. He's one of my first cousin's son and that was where our grandfather had a grist mill.

DS: So that would have been the son of this man we're talking about?

OB: Great, great grandson. See this was my great grandfather. It would be his great, great grandfather.

DS: Right. So did he start the mill? When was the mill started, do you know?

OB: You're talking about the cotton mill?

DS: No, the grist mill, I'm sorry, my fault.

OB: It was in operation in the early 1900's. I have pictures that were made there in 1916 and I don't know exactly when it was started. But he also owned the property back on the mountain here that was a zircon mine. There's a big history of the zircon mine.

DS: And that was on his property?

OB: Yes, he owned it.

DS: Can you tell me something about that? I've heard some about that from different people.

OB: Did I give you a series of newspaper articles?

DS: You did, copies, yeah, and you told me a lot about it last time but the people that are listening to this don't know the story.

OB: Well, my dad was still living in 1964 when a series of newspaper articles was done about it and he gave this man a lot of information and there was only three men still living that

had worked in the old mine at that time. But I think the zircons were actually discovered about 1880 and the mine was in operation for several years and then it opened again about 1910.

DS: And Thomas Edison was involved in that second opening?

OB: Yes, he hired a Mr. William Earl Hidden to come here and be in charge of the mining operation and at the same time two other mineralogists came, a Mr. George Litchworth English from Philadelphia and A. G. Ogleby from Bedford, England. My father was named for this Mr. Ogleby. In fact, the Freeman's named three little boys for those men during that twenty-year period.

DS: Right, right and you showed me some zircons when I was here before. They're little sort of crystal nugget things and Edison was interested in them as I understand it because he made light bulb filaments out of them before what you say he moved to tungsten?

RB: I think tungsten is what they finally settled on. I got a jar somewhere of the ground up ones that they sent back. They look like grains of sand.

OB: It's almost as fine as talcum powder, isn't it?

RB: Yeah, it looks like real fine sand like you find at the beach once they ground them up and then how they made the filament from that ground up part I don't really know. I imagine it took some kind of heat to melt them and maybe they mixed them with some kind of metal or I don't know what they did.

DS: For a while that drew people in from all around.

OB: Yes, they hired a number of men from the community as well as they had a large family of boys so they all worked there.

DS: Right, right, and that was on the Freeman property?

OB: Yes, over on one of these mountains right back in this direction.

RB: That mine actually goes all the way through the mountain and comes out up in Zirconia. They found them up there too.

DS: So that, what do you call it? I was going to call it a stream but that's not what it is, that little layer of rock.

RB: It's a vein, yeah, a vein of minerals and actually, you know, they mined it on this side of the mountain but actually they found them on the other side of the mountain.

DS: Right, so they could have come in the other way as well.

RB: So, you know, actually it went all the way through the mountain.

OB: There's a real high falls back here on the mountain and they built a wooden trough from those falls over to the zircon mine over on the other mountain, six thousand feet I believe they said., to wash those zircons.

DS: Right, right. Somebody told me, I think it was Robert Morgan, in fact about, I mentioned this when I was here before, finding them in the fields when he was a boy, they would come across them.

RB: You can actually find them. Not long ago my wife found some down here in this creek.

OB: Oh, really?

RB: Yeah, she was down there in a little seam in the rocks, you know, at that little upper falls down here, and she got to just digging around in the sand and she found some. So they're actually, I mean the main vein was probably over here in the mine, but actually the whole mountain must have a certain amount of them in it. And at the time they were getting pretty big money off that each day.

OB: A hundred dollars a day I heard.

RB: Hundred dollars a day in the 1800's was—

DS: That's pretty serious.

RB: That's pretty serious money.

OB: At that time it was quite a bit of money.

RB: Of course, I guess the operation, they had quite a few people hired and don't know about the mineralogists, whether they were paid or.

OB: I don't know about that. I think the Mr. Ogleby who came from England was just, he was a scientist that was just interested in that. I don't think he was a paid employee.

RB: Well, Mr. Hidden, you know, there is a town—

OB: He was hired by ( ).

RB: There's a town, Hiddenite, in North Carolina where he actually found a mineral that was named after him. Yeah, because it's similar to an emerald, it's much lighter green color, and he actually had a town. When he left here that's where he went.

DS: To his town to go find a mineral?

RB: Yeah, he was hunting minerals and he actually found that mineral, which it is a gem actually and it's fairly rare. It's not found anywhere else and it's similar to an emerald, only a lighter green color.

DS: So before we look at this book a little bit more I know you were, Mrs. Beddingfield, you were the postmaster for a long time.

OB: Yes, fifteen years.

DS: And I know you've done some work with the Historical Society. Could you talk about both of those things a little bit because that will help people understand how it is you came across a lot of this knowledge that you've got here.

OB: Well, first of all, we're talking about Meredith Freeman and his home. It was also the first post office in the area and he was the first postmaster. The post office was in his home and it was stagecoach style.

DS: Now there are pictures of that in here, right? We looked at those.

OB: Uh-huh.

DS: I'm sorry I interrupted you. So it had the post office in it and it was stagecoach style, so I guess the mail came on the stagecoach.

OB: It came on the stagecoach at that time. And I don't know when the railway came through but after some years it began to come by train. When I first went to work in the post office in 1942 we were getting mail by train. And we had this wonderful old gentleman that hauled the mail up there. He took a bag of mail up every morning and went back and got our incoming mail every afternoon for fifty years and never missed but one time.

DS: Fifty years? And was the railroad in Flat Rock?

OB: Zirconia.

DS: Oh, it was in Zirconia?

OB: Zirconia. There was a depot, a building actually there.

RB: Yeah, there was a building.

OB: At one time, I don't remember when they tore it down.

RB: It was about in the late '50s I think or maybe the early '60s. You know, probably shortly after they tore it down they started restoring a lot of them. (Laughter)

DS: I remember.

RB: Yeah, they actually saw that they needed to restore them but that one.

OB: They did a wonderful job of the one in Hendersonville.

DS: Yes, they did.

RB: We had a teacher, a Miss McDonald, and she was realized I guess how things were going and she took our class, which I was in the seventh grade, and she took our class up there and took us on a train ride from Zirconia to Hendersonville because she knew they were going to quit the passenger train business. She knew it was a thing that was going away so she had the foresight to take us.

DS: When I was a kid in school they took us the train from Greensboro to High Point and back and the same thing. I mean, there's no, you know, that's been long, long gone.

RB: Well, we didn't ride back. You know, they sent a school bus to pick us up and haul us back because I knew we might have had to stayed up there a half a day waiting on one to come back. Yeah, you probably had more trains running.

DS: Probably did but they're all gone now everywhere.

RB: Yeah, about all the trains are gone. You know, they don't even run this track up here anymore. It's not been used for what, ten years I guess.

DS: They run through Saluda sometimes but I guess this would have been a track off it.

RB: Well, I understand they've torn a bunch of it out down there on that Saluda grade. They're redoing it.

DS: I didn't know that.

RB: You know the government actually I've heard that the government makes them keep the tracks where they can use them for like defense purposes and security and all this if they happen to need it.

DS: So the old, there was a stagecoach and the stop and the mail, the post office there at his house?

OB: Right. This picture that you see out here of the house, he built the house about 1830 and his great granddaughter painted that picture when the house was a hundred years old in 1937.

DS: So it was a family tradition to have the postmaster in the family?

OB: Well, I don't know another one that was a postmaster, another Freeman that was a postmaster.

DS: But they had the post office in the house anyway?

OB: Yeah, there was a slot there where the mail was dropped in. When we were children we used to play with it.

DS: So how did you become the postmaster in Tuxedo?

OB: Well, after I graduated from high school I wasn't going on to college and I knew the girl that was in the post office was going away and she was going to leave the job. So I just went and asked for the job and the postmaster told me that he thought his wife was going, at that time you know they were family affairs, he thought his wife was going to do it. Well, she worked a few days and she didn't like it so he came after me and I spent thirty years, nearly thirty-one years there.

DS: Well, the post office in a town like Tuxedo you must have known everybody.

OB: I did. I said by the time I left I felt like everybody was my family. And I was very happy on my job. I really liked every day of it.

DS: Not many people can say that I don't think.

OB: Not really. So was it about 1910 that the mill was built and the lake was backed up?

RB: It was in the early teens I think.

DS: This is the textile mill now that we're talking about, right?

OB: It was the cotton mill. I think that at the time I went to work at the post office there must have been about two hundred people employed there. I don't know how much there was in the beginning but my mother told me the story family about the Bell family did that.

DS: Started the mill?

OB: Uh-huh. And my mother told me that Mrs. Bell was a teacher and there was no school in the area. There might possibly have been a one-room school on Green River or Mount Olivet, but there was no school in this area and she taught the children. She used one of the empty houses and taught the children free of charge for several years until they could get a school established.

DS: But she knew that was important.

OB: Uh-huh. She was a wonderful teacher.

RB: They actually give them land for the Tuxedo School.

OB: For the school.

DS: The school that's over there now?

OB: Uh-huh.

RB: The one that's there now they gave the property for it. I don't know actually who built the school. I guess the state built it but they actually give the property for it.

OB: When I was, I loved school and when I was in the second grade my dad took me to school one day and the school had burned, one end of it had burned.

DS: You were disappointed?

OB: Oh, I was very disappointed. We had to go to school the rest of that year in the old community building and we had the big wood heaters and outdoor toilets and it was just different.

DS: So I'm looking at the first part of this book, which I didn't see the last time. I mean we're starting here with the Mayflower.

OB: Well, I have another book. This one I started with 1800 because I knew we had a lot of family information from there and I knew that it was near correct and back of there I wasn't sure. So I just started this one with 1800 when he was born.

DS: Are there some things we should turn to and look at in particular?

OB: Well, they did come from up in Massachusetts, the Mayflower country. Here's Meredith and I have a huge picture about this big that hung in the old Freeman house for about a hundred years.

DS: Portrait of him?

OB: Uh-huh.

DS: He's a serious looking guy.

OB: He was also one of those first fifteen justices of the peace when this county was formed from Buncombe County. That was in 1838 and he was one of those justices of the peace. He was a right prominent man in the county.

DS: Sounds like it, major landowner obviously. I think we talked about this, how many of those photographs, the old photographs, people looked very, very serious, although she's actually smiling a little bit.

OB: They do. She is Julia Ann Mansel, his third wife. He was married three times, he had three families, and the third wife was my great grandmother. She came from Pickens County.

DS: Down in South Carolina?

OB: Uh-huh. And I've just written a little bit about him in here, what I knew at the time. His first wife died, they had four children and she died and then a few years later he married her first cousin. And they had five children and she died. And then a few years later he married the one that was my great grandmother and they had five children and their son Edward Hamilton Freeman was my grandfather. He's the one that had the grist mill and he lived and raised a family of twelve in the old house.

DS: In the original house?

OB: In the original house, uh-huh.

DS: So Meredith had fifteen children?

OB: Fifteen children.

DS: By three different women.

OB: Uh-huh.

DS: So there must be a lot of Freeman's around here.

OB: Oh, the country was full of them when I was growing up but there's not any left.

RB: There are not many now.

OB: They're all gone.

DS: And he lived, I'm looking at this, it says 1800-1869.

OB: He died, he lost his son. He didn't get killed in the war. We think he died in a prison camp up North and one of his daughters died while her husband was in the Confederate Army. And another daughter ten years old died and he started this beautiful little cemetery back



behind Roscoe Green's place up on the hill overlooking the Green River Valley. And he carved a great many of the stones that are in the cemetery.

I have listed each wife and her children and I sent to the archives and got the information about the son that died in the war.

DS: Which archives?

OB: The national archives. This is a copy of one of his land papers. We think it may be the first three hundred acres that he acquired.

DS: Out of the thousand that he had?

OB: Uh-huh. It's hard to tell. It's really hard.

DS: Hard to even tell where it is, isn't it?

OB: Yeah, it's hard to read it.

RB: It's hard to read their writing back then.

DS: That's true.

OB: This is familiar to me because I know that this is where the house was, this little drawing that they had made here.

DS: This is two creeks?

OB: No, I think this is actually the line. I don't know why.

RB: No, he's talking about these. I believe those are.

DS: Those curvy ones.

RB: It's either Green River or.

OB: The Freeman Creek is right here.

RB: Yeah, it might be this creek and the one in the next valley over.

OB: There's one over there they call Vernon Creek.

RB: They call Vernon Creek. That might be the two creeks.

OB: Yeah, it might be.

DS: Is the grist mill on Freeman Creek or Vernon Creek?

RB: Vernon Creek.

OB: It's on Vernon Creek.

DS: Vernon Creek, that's what I thought you told me.

OB: Are you going to go down there?

DS: I hope so.

OB: I hope you go too.

RB: Well, I called him last night and he told me to give you his name and number and for you to call him. He does want to talk to you but he just couldn't today.

DS: Sure, I'll call.

RB: He has had a lot of back problems. He's having to do some kind of going for, going for, what is it you call it?

OB: Some kind of therapy.

RB: Therapy, yeah, and so he's gone but he said that he was interested in talking to you.

DS: Well, I investigated a little bit and it looks like the clean water people would be interested at some level so I'll go see him. Okay, so we're looking at?

OB: Here I am at the site of the old mine in 1991. It was not what you think of a mine as a tunnel. It was just a big hole in the side of the mountain. It wasn't really a tunnel.

DS: Right, they didn't have to go; it's not like a deep coal mine right there?

OB: That's right.

RB: There actually was an opening, you know.

OB: But it wasn't real deep in the mountain.

RB: No, but I think it probably had been at one time.

OB: You think so?

RB: But you could have probably crawled in it, you know, the last time I was over there, but it had caved in a lot. But I'm thinking that at one time it might have went a good ways back in the mountain.

OB: This was the Mr. Ogleby that my dad was named for and we have boxes of letters that they wrote to my granddaddy and I just put a copy of one in this book. Now this is a map showing where the mines were.

DS: Oh, yeah. The Jones Mine, now was that in Zirconia?

OB: Now that was actually in the bed of Lake Summit, wasn't it?

RB: I think it was. There was more than, actually they found them in Zirconia. That's what I said earlier. I think probably that there's probably some that they've never found really.

OB: There was one they called the Pace Mine.

DS: Oh yeah, over here near.

RB: I didn't realize, you saw these, they're kind of a grayish brown color, but the zircons come in a number. They're even clear. You know they use them as a diamond actually.

OB: There's a clear one.

RB: There's a clear one. There's a gray one. I've got a gem book up there and I forgot how many different colors they said but these here are all of them I've ever found that were brown or grayish brown.

OB: That's all the men at the opening of the mine. That's Mr. Hidden and this is my granddaddy. This is the article that I gave you.

DS: Right, I've got that.

OB: And this is just estate papers for Julia Ann, the third wife. And it's real interesting because he had a large plantation in Pickens County and in the courthouse down there we found these estate papers that describe, it actually tells everybody who owed him money when he died and everything that he gave Julia Ann when she married Meredith Freeman. Among the things that he gave her was a little black girl five years old and she became our great Aunt Julia's little companion and took care of her and was her friend right up until they were old ladies.

DS: As part of the property?

OB: Uh-huh, yeah there's a list. It's amazing how much those slaves were valued at. Some of them had such value. This is in Pickens County, the markers. And these are from the archives. It shows Meredith's number of slaves. I have heard there was a story that at one time he owned ninety-nine slaves but the archives only shows about ten.

DS: And that was here in Henderson County?

OB: Here in Henderson County.

DS: Because people tend to think of Mississippi and Alabama and the big plantations.

RB: Big plantations, yeah.

DS: But it was really throughout, at least in some of these areas. So he must have done a lot of farming on this thousand acres.

OB: Well, you know when we were children I first lived in a little house way down towards 25. It was near the old Freeman house. When I was seven years old we moved up here. My dad had thirty acres here that he had inherited. It seems to me that the whole place was clear and clean, was fields and just, you know, so somebody must have been working on it.

DS: Right, what were they growing then, do you remember?

OB: I don't know. No, I don't.

RB: I know when I was young it was pole beans and squash.

DS: Good soil from the river I guess.

RB: Yeah, the ones along the river they're sandy looking but they grow stuff good you know, so I guess there's a lot of topsoil mixed in with the sand.

OB: This is another picture that this cousin did. She was a born artist. She could do this when she was six years old. In the summer of 1937 she did ten of these, one for each of her uncles and aunts. Now this is a copy of Meredith's will, his handwritten will.

DS: So I guess what I'm wondering is will this, are you passing, I mean is Ronnie taking this? How is this material going to move in the family?

OB: I've already made Ronnie and Anita a book like this.

RB: She's made copies for us.

OB: I have a grandson that's helped me all of his life and I've always told him that I'd let him have my book.

DS: Well, I think, well, it's just my idea but as we're compiling some of this stuff and it goes to the Green River Library, I mean this has got all kinds of wonderful things in it. So that's just my little plug for historical archives.

OB: Well, you know, most all my genealogy friends have gone to computer with their stuff, but I just wanted to keep it like this.

DS: I understand. It's different looking through a book than staring at a screen.

RB: Yeah, than staring at a screen.

OB: That's my grandparents, Edward Hamilton Freeman and her name was Mary Marinda Fuller. She came from north Greenville County around the Locust Hill area.

DS: So there was a lot of, I mean sometimes we think of this big state boundary but there was a lot of movement back and forth. I mean in some ways the Green River community was more closely sounds like associated with the northern parts of South Carolina than it was with Asheville.

OB: Didn't they haul their produce down to Greenville by wagon?

RB: Yeah, in this area they traveled to Greenville a lot. That's how Travelers Rest, I understand, got its name. And then over on the other side the people that lived in Rosman traveled down that, what is that highway over there, 278 and they traveled down to Pickens County and when I worked I worked with a lot of people from Rosman and they actually had relatives down around Pickens. And you know people here has got relatives down in Greenville and Travelers Rest because, you know, probably some young kid was traveling with his dad and he met his sweetheart, you know.

OB: The story goes that my granddaddy met her that her family was collecting the toll on the Buncombe Turnpike and that's where he met her.

DS: One of the earliest stories I heard was about a member the Capps family had walked down to the, worked in the Poe Manufacturing, the Poe Mill before the mill was here down in Greenville. And I assume he walked down to Travelers Rest maybe and got a stagecoach or something from there.

RB: Or maybe caught the stagecoach from here and commuted.

DS: Maybe so, maybe so.

RB: Or they might of rode a horse because back then who knows.

OB: You know there's a story, you've heard of preacher Vernon, he's the one that married my Aunt Julia, Edward Hamilton's sister, and they said that the rode, at that time they had guests. It was not an inn exactly but they did take in guests at the old Freeman home. And they said he rode up one day on a big white horse and she fell madly in love with him. (Laughter) This is just a list of all their children and grandchildren. This is a picture of the whole family sitting in the backyard. This is my dad. He was always a sickly child and he looks sickly there too.

DS: He doesn't look too happy, does he?

OB: No.

DS: Studying the ground.

OB: This picture I was very, a cousin of mine brought it to me one day and it looked so old and in such bad shape we took it out of the frame and were going to work on it a little bit, clean it up and when we started rubbing on it the picture was rubbing off. So it was a charcoal or something. But anyway, I had this copy made and it didn't make a good clear copy at all so I finished it myself.

DS: I was going to say it looks pretty good.

RB: Touched it up.

DS: These computer programs do that now but you did that yourself.

OB: Yeah, we've done a lot of that. This is another picture of the old house. That was in 1914.

DS: So how many rooms in this house? It's a big old house.

OB: It had ten but a couple of them were little attic rooms.

DS: So do a lot of families keep this much history?

OB: No.

DS: So you worked hard on it?

OB: No, my family has always been interested in their family history and they all had information and they all had pictures and they shared it with me. So it wasn't really much trouble for me to get this much.

RB: My grandfather, which was her dad, had an old trunk and it was full of papers, letters.

OB: Old pictures.

RB: Old pictures.

OB: It was a little trunk about this long and it wasn't more than that high, was it?

RB: No.

OB: He brought it home from World War I and he kept all his treasures in there and it was just such a delight for all of us when he opened the trunk. There he is with all of his brothers. This is my dad.

DS: So he'd been to the war it looks like.

OB: No, he wasn't in the war. He was in the Army. But he got the flu; you know, that was when the real bad flu came around that killed so many people and they put him in the hospital and he had to stay in the hospital six months before they would let him come home. Then he had a cousin who had lived next door to him, one of the Vernon's, who got that flu and he never recovered. He spent the rest of his life in a veteran's home until he was seventy-two years old.

RB: Affected his brain.

OB: Affected his brain some way. This is just more of the family. I think this one's interesting. That's one of uncles taking his mother down to Locust Hill to see her mother.

DS: Horse and buggy.

OB: Uh-huh. And this is just a group of my cousins. We had a little pond down there near the spring.

DS: Now is this near the old house or near the?

OB: It was between the house and the barn and the spring was nearby too. The reason for the horses back when I was growing up the old barn was not being used and Camp Greystone kept their horses there in the summer. So the community children would ride the horses over to Greystone and when the girls finished their riding lessons they'd ride them back. That was quite a treat.

RB: They used to let us, I went to school with Nancy Bell and her dad owned ( ) Dam and Green Cove Camp and we went over there several times a year and rode horses, you know, like especially in the spring when the weather turned nice he'd have us over there. He'd have us at Christmas usually and they had a large house.

DS: Did he invite people from all around the community or was it just particular?

RB: Her class, she was in my school class.

OB: They were very good though. Once he and Kella went to the South Pole Antarctica and he invited us and several couples from the community to come over one night and have supper and watch his movies that he had made while he was in Antarctica.

DS: Is this Frank Bell?

OB: Yeah, Frank Bell, Sr.

RB: And my dad actually worked, what, a year over there. He was a stone mason and had a big fireplace. Have you ever been in the house?

DS: I have.

RB: You know the big fireplace and a lot of the rock work my dad did it. But he had other, who else worked over there? Did Toad work over there some? I think my dad and one of his brothers and what was the Hill man that laid rock, was it Hicks?

OB: I believe it was.

RB: I think he laid but he had several stone masons because, well if you've been over there you know how it's a big house and I think all the rocks actually came out of the fields around there.

OB: The Bell family was actually a very influential family in the community.

DS: Sounds like it. Do you know where they came from?

OB: Charlotte.

DS: They came from Charlotte?

OB: Uh-huh.

RB: Frank Sr. thought a lot of my grandfather, my dad's dad.

OB: Yeah, he did.

RB: I don't know what it was all about. Even when my grandfather lived to be what, ninety?

OB: Ninety-three.

RB: Three and Mr. Bell come and visited him regularly, after he had a stroke and, you know, he couldn't walk or anything.

OB: He was a jolly old man. Everybody loved him.

RB: But he came real regularly to visit him.

OB: This is the Vernon Falls, a long time. This was made about 1940 I think. It's not nearly that big now.

RB: Well, there's a good bit of water coming over it now.

OB: It's doing better now?

RB: Yeah, it's doing better. You know, back in the summer it was so dry it was just down to a trickle. That's where the grist mill was. And you know at one time and I asked my dad, which he was in his eighties then, I found part of a grinding stone down here in this creek.

DS: Freeman Creek?

RB: Yeah and I found it at the bottom of one of these little falls down here. I just found a pie shaped piece you know. And Daddy said that he never did actually had never heard of one being on this creek but that at one time there had to have been one there.

OB: Must have been.

DS: Right, not like something people carry around and let them drop somewhere.

RB: No and we know it was that because where the axle had been through it there's marks around it where some kind of a gear had been against it you know. You could see the marks of the teeth of the gear on the stone. Who knows how many years ago there had to been one on this creek.

OB: Well, you know there was a log cabin over here at the spring when we were children that had been built before the Civil War so somebody had lived in this area. It might have been a slave cabin.

RB: Somebody at one time must have had it down here below this little set of falls down here.

DS: Sometimes when I think about a grist mill I assume, you know, that there was one big one for the whole community but it sounds like maybe there could have been lots of them all over.

OB: Down in South Carolina they were all along the highway, weren't they?

RB: Well, you know the big bridge you cross when you go up towards Curtis and Lynn's. You know that was a grist mill right below the bridge and Lynn, did she show you a picture of it? She's got a picture of that.

OB: Has she? I wish I had, well, remind me to show him the small pictures.

RB: Briggs Mill was the name of it and my dad lived on Green River at the time. You know, he lived up there until he was what, sixteen? And he said that they loved going up there because he really thought the world of Mr. Briggs that ran that mill. So people on Green River took their corn to it. People in the community here probably took it over here to the Vernon Creek to that mill.

OB: We're getting into my grandmother's family now, the Fuller's in South Carolina. This is my great grandparents on that side and he was killed in the Civil War.

RB: People don't realize how many people were killed in the Civil War. For every family, about every family had, you know, maybe more than one lost.

OB: Meredith, during the Civil War he lost his son and two daughters that died while they were in the war, so it was kind of hard on people. I've saved all the old obituaries I can find. They're the most wonderful source of information, about the best you can find. This is one of my



Fuller relatives. Their last name was Gullet and this man was a Boy Scout leader in Greenville County for sixty-two years.

DS: Wow, long time.

OB: He was another one of my daddy's first cousins. He was probate judge in Greenville County. These are just family gatherings, some of the old aunts and uncles. I wrote a short, just about a page on each one of the brothers and sisters. I didn't do that after that generation. I listed their children but I didn't write anything much about them.

DS: So how did you find this information? I mean from obituaries or from?

OB: Well, we've just always known it.

DS: You've just known it and you pass it on in the family?

OB: My mother and daddy told me most of it. Of course, I had to look up a lot of, I went to the cemeteries a lot. Ronnie can tell you that. Then I went to, that's where my little grandson was a lot of help with the microfilm. My eyes have gotten so bad.

DS: But you say your mother and daddy told you this, I mean so would they say okay, now you need to know about Anna Sue Freeman or would they just be talking about?

OB: Well, we knew her. She was the oldest child and she after her parents died she owned the old house and she loved it better than life itself. She lived in St. Louis. She spent the winters in St. Louis and the first of June she came home and stayed till September.

DS: You talked about her when I was here before.

RB: This is the lady that painted the.

OB: Yeah, she's the one that did the painting.

RB: That did the painting.

OB: She just died recently.

DS: What I'm trying to understand is whether they were, your parents were trying to make sure that you understood about all these people in the family or whether they loved to tell the stories and you had a memory for it.

OB: They loved to talk about it. They loved the old stuff just like I do. I know everybody doesn't and everybody in their family didn't but they did. And my mother's dad lived until I was fifteen and he was like that too but he was a Capps. So he remembered a lot about the Capps'.

RB: When I was younger I'd go down at my Grandmother and Grandfather Beddingfield's and they sat around and talked a lot about, you know, relatives and friends and neighbors that they'd had on Green River. And you know I remember talking about it a lot but I

had one uncle that never married and he was at home. Now he's a wealth of information because he was there for years and he heard all that and he's got a good memory.

DS: Is he still alive?

RB: Yeah, he's still alive.

DS: Who's that?

RB: A. J. Beddingfield. But he stayed at home, lived in the home till his mother and father both died and they were both in their nineties so you can imagine. And he knew everybody on Green River. Well, they were all his relatives mostly.

OB: Yeah, everybody around here was related some way, just about everybody.

DS: Yeah, I can't remember who it was said that their father told them they couldn't marry anybody around here.

OB: My mother told me that.

DS: That's right, that was you. I thought that was you.

OB: This was another house that was down close to 25 that belonged to my aunt and uncle. It was right near the old Freeman home.

DS: You know something that we forget just thinking about people telling stories, there's no television, there's no, there's not stuff running all the time and so people are.

RB: They're not sitting there with their eyes glued to a TV.

DS: They're going to be talking about what they like to talk about and what they know about, which is going to be their family and their friends.

OB: You know like I said, we had thirty-five first cousins and it was a pleasure and a treat for us just to sit on the front porch and talk and laugh and play.

DS: Thirty-five first cousins?

RB: You can see from this old house here all the houses had big old porches and in the summertime.

OB: My home over here where I grew up had some long porches.

RB: And, you know, in the summertime everybody was sitting around on the porch talking, you know, instead of like you said, watching TV or.

DS: Holed up in the air conditioning somewhere.

OB: Well, really people mixed more back then than they do now.

RB: Yeah, they visited more.

OB: We visited a lot when my kids were little. We had all these uncles and aunts and cousins and we would visit two or three times a week somebody.

RB: That's pretty much gone now.

OB: Yeah. Well, as you can see, I've saved all the stuff I ever found about my family. That's my dad's brother William. He was the oldest boy. There he is with his first wife. She died when her little boy was about two years old. There's another family picture.

DS: So after Meredith, people were they farmers? What kind of work did they do?

OB: Well, all of my daddy's brothers did some farming, didn't they?

RB: Yeah, pretty much.

OB: Uncle George did. Uncle Fred did.

RB: They cut timber.

OB: Uncle George got in, he was into a lot of different things like the lumber business.

RB: Well, he had lumber and he had a sawmill and he had a grading business with loaders.

OB: For many years they had a store over on Lake Summit about where the pier is and they swapped it back and forth. One of them was running the store all the time for many years. There's a few of our boys that went away to the war. Yeah, we've been very lucky. I had a cousin who died in Washington back in the summer and her daughter came in the early fall and brought me a huge box of old pictures and a disk that she had done. She had put six hundred of them on a disk and she said that was just a drop in the bucket. But this aunt that I was telling you about, Anna Sue, she had a family history on the back of her pictures. She wrote the name and the date and where it was made on every picture.

RB: Yeah, every picture. That's something that don't happen very much. You know, you'll find pictures but you'll say who is this person, you know, and maybe if they resemble somebody enough you can say well, that looks like cousin such-and-such so it must be his grandfather or something, you know.

OB: Have you noticed over just beyond the Green River Bridge those two chimneys that are standing where an old house has burned?

DS: Uh-huh.

OB: Well, it was this house and it was about the same size as the Freeman house, had those big porches all around and the Hart's lived in it. And this Hart fellow was married to Lucinda Freeman, who we think was Meredith's sister. So they were right close. This lady and her husband, Jack Freeman, have a nature museum down in Tryon. Have you been down there?

DS: No, I haven't. I've been to Tryon but I haven't been to the museum.

OB: It's a right interesting thing. Her daughter died of cancer when she was forty-three about two years ago and she's an artist. She did some of this stuff. Mostly it's just old pictures.

This is one of my cousins that got killed when he was twenty-one years old. He was in the military academy.

DS: So can you tell us during that time that you were running the post office, what are some things that you remember? I think you were telling me or maybe Ronnie and Joyce were telling me that was it Lee Marvin and some people came in for the playhouse?

OB: Oh, the playhouse, did it actually begin here in Tuxedo?

RB: Yeah, I think, on a hill.

OB: It actually began in the old schoolhouse up towards Camp Windy Wood.

DS: The thing that's now the Flat Rock Playhouse started down here?

OB: Uh-huh, it started here and we had several of the early actors here, Angela Landsbury and Lee Marvin and who were the ones that played in, I can't think. Things leave my mind these days but there was a bunch of them.

RB: I think didn't that Pat Hingle or Hinkle, what is his name? He was one of them. I've heard a lot of them that got their start in the playhouse.

OB: They were there for several years and then they moved out to the old mill at Flat Rock was the next move.

DS: Right. Other things that happened while you were in the post office, were there things that stood out in your mind?

OB: It went from Green River Mills to J. P. Stevens.

DS: Right, this was the mid '50s, is that right?

OB: Something like that, wasn't it?

RB: Yeah, I believe it was about the mid '50s.

OB: I don't remember the years.

DS: It was after the strike.

RB: Yeah, they had a strike and they couldn't seem to get people back. It was like a wildcat strike. They didn't actually have a labor union or anything, did they, they just all of them decided to strike and it got kind of violent for a while.

DS: Sounded like it was pretty rough for a while.

RB: The thing about the people that worked in the mill over here, some people worked there all their life but you had a number of people that soon as the spring thaw came they quit and went to farming and they would farm all summer and then maybe after the farming was over with they might cut a little pulpwood and then long about December and January they'd go over here and get them a job in the mill. And you know they always hired them. I mean, you know, after so many years a man come in working two or three months you'd think we're not going to hire

him anymore. But it seemed like certain people, of course, maybe they were good workers, you know, and they needed somebody to work.

DS: Knew what they were doing, they'd done it before. They didn't make money on them for a few months anyway.

RB: They seemed like they would always hire some of the same people over and over and over every winter for about two or three months.

OB: It was all so congenial, everything was. People just worked together better than it seems that they do now.

RB: I guess that might have been one of the reasons for the strike because a lot of people were independent because they had land and they could farm, you know, and make money or they could cut pulpwood off their land and make money. So I mean, you know, they weren't rich people any of them but they were independent to a certain extent.

DS: They weren't completely dependent on the income from the mill.

RB: They weren't completely dependent on the income from the mill.

DS: I heard somebody say that he managed to get himself fired every spring, one way or another.

RB: Yeah, well, if he didn't get fired he probably quit. (Laughter)

DS: And I heard somebody else say he'd fired off the first shift and he'd go back a couple of days later and see the foreman of the second shift and get hired right back on, on a different shift.

RB: Yeah, I know, you know, I personally know some people, most of them are dead now, that were farmers that worked over there about every winter. Soon as it thawed out they'd be plowing the fields.

OB: It definitely was a whole different world than it is now, sure was.

DS: So when it changed to J. P. Stevens and you're there in the post office and in the community, did things in any dramatic way at that point?

OB: Not really, no, not really.

DS: Just different owners and people kept working the same work?

OB: Of course, we'd been used to the old people that had been there for so long in the office. See the mill office was right next door to the post office and there was a big boarding house across the street from the post office where in those days the teachers came from other places and they lived in the boarding house.

DS: And the school was right there or one of the schools?

OB: The same school that we have now. I think that school was built in 1924.

BR: Tuxedo was really at one time a pretty self contained little community.

OB: At one time there was quite a few businesses, wasn't there?

RB: Yeah, because there was at one time when I was young there probably was a half a dozen service stations in Tuxedo, believe it or not.

OB: You know where Joyce's granddaddy had that little brick building is still down there on 25, Mr. U. S. Staton's, across from the service station.

RB: Yeah, a little antique store.

OB: That's an old, old, I expect he started that about 1900, didn't he?

RB: Joyce has got a picture that was made the day it was opened.

OB: Has she?

RB: Yeah.

DS: Her family name is?

RB: Staton.

DS: Staton, oh, okay. Yeah, I've been by the building.

RB: And you know I don't know what all of them were but I've heard my father-in-law talk about it. But in that field next to it there across from where the CITGO station is now, just a grassy field now, but they made a picture of that store and there's buildings all in that field. You can't tell what they are. They look like they're just little made out of rough lumber.

DS: Businesses?

RB: No, I don't know if they were businesses or just, maybe somebody had lived there and just had little sheds and barns.

DS: Could it be housing for the mill for the workers or was that closer down?

RB: No, I don't think mill housing ever came over. About as far as the mill housing came was about the South Lake Summit Road right before you get, you know, it didn't really.

OB: Uncle Fred had a little store right behind U. S. Staton's store, little wooden building. I remember that. I remember going there.

RB: Well, that might be one of the buildings that's in the picture. Oh, I remember when that little building was there when I was young.

OB: Can you remember that?

RB: Yeah.

DS: What kind of store was it?

OB: Just little grocery stores.

DS: So if there were a half a dozen filling stations there must have been half a dozen or more of those little stores.

OB: I guess there was.

RB: Well, all the service stations sold a certain amount of groceries you know, milk and bread.

OB: Plus we had a couple of rather large sort of like fruit and vegetable stands along the way, did a big business.

RB: Plus they had the community store over at the mill. It was a pretty good size store you know.

DS: Right.

OB: It was once a right thriving little village.

RB: The coming of the four lane killed it.

OB: This was my dad in World War I and my brother in World War II.

RB: Pretty much killed the community, you know.

DS: The four lane?

RB: Yeah, it took all the traffic off the road. That was about.

DS: Nobody stopping in Tuxedo?

RB: Just local people you know. At one time, what she was talking about, they had produce stands and stuff and a lot of people from South Carolina it was a thing to drive up here on the weekend and get them some produce and buy cigarettes. A lot of them sold cigarettes because cigarettes here in North Carolina were much cheaper than they were in South Carolina and they sold a tremendous amount of cigarettes you know. I've seen the fill up, several places I've seen them fill up a box, cardboard boxes full of cartons of cigarettes. The truck drivers, you know, they were bootlegging them I guess.

DS: Right, probably.

RB: But the truck drivers might buy twenty cartons, you know, and they'd take them to South Carolina and maybe they were making two or five dollars a carton on them, whatever. They were probably making good money.

DS: Well, the other thing we were talking last time I was here I think Joyce was talking about it but the four lane cut Tuxedo not only off the highway traffic but off from this part of the Green River Valley and back on up towards Rock Creek.

RB: Well, it cut it in half really.

DS: And her family place, the old Staton place was?

RB: No, the place where she was born, her grandmother's old place is up Green River.

DS: Oh, okay. I thought she said some family land got eaten up by the four lane. I misunderstood that.

RB: No, her home, you know, where she was born and raised, they took it and it was an old house. I don't know who had owned that house.

OB: It was very old because those Taylor boys they grew up there while my daddy was growing up in the early 1900's.

RB: I don't know who owned it.

## Track 2

DS: So we've been joined by Joyce Beddingfield. Right, you're here, Joyce? Say your name so we know you're here.

Joyce Beddingfield: I'm Joyce Beddingfield and I've lived here all of my life, proud of it.

DS: And your family was Staton?

JB: Well, my mother's side of the family were Staton's and my dad was a Corn. And we still live on the same road that my dad's father bought property on back, when do you think that was, Octavia?

OB: That was must have been in the late '30s, don't you think?

JB: Yeah, and they were.

DS: Corn had been here from way, way back.

OB: Oh yeah, John Henry Corn, her ancestors have been here forever.

JB: He fought in the Revolutionary War. I'm assuming that's where all the Corn's that I'm related to, came from.

DS: I read somewhere that he named, somebody gives him credit for naming the Green River. Who is it, the guy who, I can never remember the name of that book, The Owyhee (?).

RB: Banks of the Oklawaha.

DS: I think he has a story about Corn.

JB: He does. John Peter Corn is in one of those books.

RB: Well you know actually her dad told me that, was John Peter the one that had the rock quarry down towards Saluda somewhere? He had I'm pretty sure he said that would have been his, what, great, great grandfather or something. But he actually, her dad actually told me that he invented the brakes that they use on a train right now. He had some kind of a quarry on the side of a mountain and a system, you know, and he actually invented something similar to the type of brakes that they use on trains right now because he was having to bring that rock down the side of a mountain.

DS: To be able to stop it.

RB: To be able to stop it but, you know, he never was credited with it.



DS: Or made any money on it probably.

RB: Or made any money on it but actually he was supposedly the one that invented them.

DS: So we were following the history of the Green River Valley and we had kind of gotten up to the second war and Mrs. Beddingfield, you want to talk about people leaving the valley for the war and then I've got a question because my impression is how you were able to make a living changed pretty dramatically after the war. It sounds like people went out of the valley more after the war.

OB: I think more people left. That's about when they started leaving, a lot of them, when the boys came home.

DS: Did most families have somebody who was involved in the war?

OB: I remember a time when there was not a boy any place in Tuxedo, not a one. They were all gone.

RB: All of them that was old enough.

OB: My husband was one of the first ones to go. He was twenty-six when they, they bombed Pearl Harbor on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December and in February following that he had to go. He was twenty-six in the first draft. And along near the end of the war, this fellow we were talking about, Othos, and my brother were eighteen and they had gotten down to drafting eighteen year olds then. So they pretty much cleaned all of the whole community out.

JB: Daddy and them said that their brother Ed was only seventeen.

RB: He was about the same age. He joined though.

OB: He must have told a story.

JB: That's what I heard that he was only seventeen.

DS: So then some of them came back. I'm sure there were plenty who didn't come back. How did things change as they came back? Do you remember?

OB: Well, the biggest change was that they all got married, all of them at about one time, didn't they? And then we had the baby boom. They all started building houses. My husband, he came home in October of '45. We got married in December and early in the spring he started this house. Well, for a year after that you couldn't get any building supplies after the war. So he went back on some property his daddy had, way back on Green River, and sawed the logs to frame it up and started gathering up the rocks to rock it.

JB: Well, did you have Fred, was Fred not the one who had the sawmill?

RB: George.

OB: No, that was George.

JB: Okay.

OB: I believe it was in South Carolina at that time, wasn't it?

RB: When I remembered it, it was down here next to Lake Summit, you know, was the last place I remember it being.

DS: It was a family sawmill?

RB: Yeah, it was her uncle, the one that was into everything. He was into logging, farming, construction, grading.

OB: I said in my story that I wrote I think he helped a lot of the young men get started in the adult world. A terrible thing happened. We had the most wonderful teacher that taught all of us in the fourth grade and she became engaged to one of my aunt's brothers and he got killed in one of Uncle George's trucks and Uncle George quit the trucking business then. He never did it anymore.

DS: So people came home, got married, started building houses, probably having some children.

OB: Mays followed the construction business the rest of his life. He did a lot of rock work. He worked off and on for fifteen years at St. John of the Wilderness. You know at one time that church got really bad run down and they restored the church.

DS: And he was part of that?

OB: And when they finished the rector made an album for him, pictures of all the work they had done out there. I've always said all those boys came back and, you know, they just went to work and never mentioned that war and it was just like they'd never been gone.

RB: They didn't have all this stress syndrome.

OB: No, they didn't.

RB: Very few of them. They just, like you said.

OB: It was a terrible time. Mays was in combat for ten months at one time. J. C. was wounded, wasn't he, your dad?

JB: Well, he had shrapnel in the calf of his leg and I've got his Purple Heart.

OB: And then Othos' brothers too, his brothers were prisoners of war for a long time. It was not a good time.

DS: So did jobs and the economy change after the war? Was it different trying to make a living here or was it sort of kind of the same mixture of some farming?

OB: The mill was still in operation but a lot of the boys got in the thing like Mays did with construction, mostly outdoor work.

JB: Well, my dad came back and he took a job in Asheville. His name is J. C. Corn and he learned cabinet making over in Asheville from I don't know what the name of that business was but he rode a bus from here part of the time to Asheville. And then he got into construction end and all his life he built furniture and made gun stocks and violins and we've got his violin, the first one he ever made. And he sold several of those. They were beautiful pieces of wood that he had used, that curly maple like they talk about all the famous violins and all of that and the front was made out of fir. But that was how he did after he came back, the same thing that Mays had done basically because you either were a farmer here or in construction, rock layer, carpenter, something to that effect, if you didn't want to work in a mill. And they were outdoorsy type people and they didn't want to work inside.

RB: Yeah, they'd come up as farm boys and outdoors type. You know, most of them you could not pin them down in the mill over here. I can tell you a cute little story about that. One of the used to be a supervisor over here in the cotton mill, Grover Maybin, was a good friend of mine. Grover every now and then when we'd be out or I'd be over there, we'd be out riding around, he'd get to laughing and he said I was just thinking about what your daddy told. You remember when daddy worked over there for a little while. I don't know what kind of machine he was running but Grover said that the boss man, which is wasn't Grover, it was another boss, came by and told daddy said you're making too much waste, which I don't know. You worked over there; you know what the waste was.

JB: Everybody that lives in this community almost has worked there at some point.

RB: Told Daddy said you're making too much waste and said Grover said Daddy told him said I didn't know they made anything but waste. (Laughter)

DS: That was a good one.

RB: So Daddy was claiming that it was all waste.

DS: All waste, he might have been far from wrong. So other things that happened then after the war, you were at the post office, you started in 1942.

OB: I worked part time for several years. I didn't start working fulltime until about the time his wife retired. I worked fulltime for fifteen years. That was all that I worked.

JB: And how long were you the postmaster?

OB: Fifteen years. That was the only fulltime work I did. When I was a clerk I would work two hours a morning and two in the afternoon or something like that.

RB: So this temporary work is nothing new, for the government is nothing new.

DS: Well, let's talk for a little bit about some of the big changes in the last twenty or so years. The four lane, no, that was a little further back. That's '70—

JB: That's been thirty years.

DS: Thirty years you said last time.

JB: Because my father moved up on Green River and built a log house and he put dovetails in the ends of the logs and it was a really nice log house because the state came through and bought his property. So he had to move and at the same time me and my husband moved up on the hill here behind Octavia's house. It wasn't long after that the school closed. I don't know how many years. Carmen went down there so that was, she's thirty now.

RB: She started in '83 I guess or '82 and she went all the way through grammar school so the school must have closed about '88 or something.

JB: They had it as an alternative school. Anybody that got in trouble, you know, they moved them down there. But in my way of thinking that's really what made a large difference in the community, is the road coming through plus the school closing because that was a big source of getting togetherness, so to speak, with everybody.

DS: And the mill closed in the late '80s too, is that right, or was it earlier?

JB: No, it wasn't earlier than that because I worked down there for nine months when we were building our house.

OB: Must have been the late '80s.

DS: About the same time as the school closed then.

JB: We built our house and moved in it in '77.

OB: And then various little places of business started closing, like my Uncle Fred had over there where the barbershop is he had a nice little café there, it closed. He died, of course.

JB: And there was Swan's Store down there, a little store, and then my grandmother had a store that she ran from about 1912 or '14, something like that, down there and it's still there. Now it's an antique store.

DS: Right, we were talking about it a little earlier.

JB: And she was in her eighties when she decided to close down. And so that's all about the same, everything started closing around here almost at the same time seems like, I mean within a ten or fifteen-year period, wasn't it? There was one other man who had a store across from her and he had gas. My grandmother didn't, was ( ) Pace. We'd go fishing down on Green River and stop there and get drinks and fish bait and candy bar. That was a big highlight.

DS: I think you said when I was here before too that the ball field was there and when the four lane came through and that was a place where people gathered.

RB: Yeah, they gathered at the ball field.

JB: Well, my grandfather played on the ball team when the mill was there and he was the time keeper in the mill and I still have his book up there, the time keeping book with everybody's name in it and how many hours they worked.

RB: From when the mill opened up.

DS: From when it opened?

RB: The beginning, yeah, back when it was first opened.

JB: Oh yeah, he worked there and her mother worked in the cotton mill.

OB: Yeah, in the early days the children worked in the mill; ten or twelve year-olds worked in the mill.

JB: So yeah, the ball field was a big part of the community from the time the mill opened.

DS: You said you played.

RB: Yeah, they would recruit you.

DS: Even if you weren't working in the mill.

RB: Every little mill around here, Chipman's out in Flat Rock and Green River down here and Berkley, they all had a team and it was not an organized type thing but they would have, they had a schedule and they had games. Well, a lot of times maybe Green River didn't have enough players but if you lived in the community that was good enough. (Laughter) You didn't have to work there. But her dad told me that back when her grandfather and all them played, that it was like watching a professional ball team. They were that good and, as a matter of fact, Bill Vaughan.

OB: Andy Henson used to play. He played with the Yankees. He had a place on Lake Summit and in the summertime he would play a lot.

RB: They went and actually tried out for some professional teams, you know, several people from around here. But her dad told me you couldn't have watched a professional team play any better than them, which is saying a lot for a small community.

DS: It is.

OB: At least you can see that at one time it was alive.

RB: It was alive.

OB: It was a live community.

DS: You're saying was.

JB: Well, we've lost our school. We've lost our post office. We have at Zirconia but that's not in the community. Tuxedo lost it and most people from Green River got their mail on

the route, which is a Zirconia address, but a lot of people did have a post office box and she could probably tell you. I don't know how many had that.

OB: We had about two hundred boxes.

DS: That was another gathering place.

RB: Yeah, it was.

JB: It was just like Roscoe Green's down here, he took over, they leased an office for the government to use that as the post office I guess. I'm assuming that's how that works but then that, I think people can still get their mail there, from what I understand, but there's not anybody in the post office. They just put it in there and that's it, and they pick up letters. So then the mill closed, so you've got the post office, the school, the mill, all these little mom 'n pop grocery stores, and things that everybody now drives to Hendersonville and her father made the statement one time, I remember her telling us, that you need to buy from people in your community because if you didn't it wouldn't be long you'd have to be driving for seven, fourteen miles there and back to get it. That's what it all amounts to.

DS: He was right.

JB: But Green's is still there and we do our business with them because we don't want to have to drive to Hendersonville every time you want a gallon of milk.

DS: Well, and they've done a lot, my understanding is they've done a lot for the community.

OB: Yes, they have.

JB: We used to have the Book Mobile and it would come but we didn't have a car so we couldn't get to the Book Mobile. (Laughter)

OB: The Book Mobile always parked behind the post office so we would just walk out the back door and get all the books we wanted.

JB: And another thing in my opinion, I don't know how many people did it but me and my mother would go to my grandmother's store and catch a Greyhound bus, you know, to ride to Hendersonville and the bus would stop and anybody who was standing on the side of the road, that doesn't happen anymore. You go from A to B, there's no stopping in between. So that was another thing that I missed. I mean I think if we had some public transportation down here that people would use it, that ran every twenty minutes or thirty minutes back and forth to Hendersonville. One thing that needs to happen is public transportation and people would use it.

DS: And even that's a gathering place, you know, you're on the bus with a bunch of people.

RB: Sitting at the bus stop with people.

JB: We would wait in the bus station. Of course, at that time there was a lot, it wasn't a nice place to be, the bus station.

OB: When Mays was in the Army, you know, Curtis Osteen's granddaddy was the mail carrier. His name was Curtis Osteen. And the mail carrier didn't come up here. The boxes were along 25. That was the only place anybody could have a box and we would often go down on 25 and wait for Curtis to come with the mail.

DS: And would there be several people waiting?

OB: Yeah, usually.

DS: A chance to talk.

JB: Well, we had the same mail person, Ray Anderson, and he was also in the Second World War. When Hiroshima was bombed he was there, walked down the street the day afterwards but he got three kinds of cancer in his life. He got breast cancer first, then he had bone cancer and then he died with lung cancer. Well, actually bone cancer is what killed him. He had bone cancer and they took one of his lungs out and he lived through that and then he got the bone cancer was the way it was. But he was our mail carrier for what, thirty years.

RB: A long time and back then everybody, of course, we still pretty much do but, you know, everybody knew the mail carrier and the mail carrier knew everybody. And now we've got some that come up through here that I've got no idea who they are and they probably got no idea who I am. So you've lost the personal.

JB: Karen Corn, who's my first cousin, is the mail carrier right now for part of this community and her dad lives right here in this house, and so you know, she's a big activist in the community just like we're starting that Green River Association, community association, and it includes Mountain Valley, Mount Olivet, Green River, Bob's Creek, Rock Creek, anywhere in the Green River Township, the voting area basically.

DS: Where's Mountain Valley? I know all the others.

JB: You go up Green River and you turn on what's that road called, the Cabin Creek Road, that's Mountain Valley. You've been up Cabin Creek Road?

DS: I have, yeah. I just didn't know that was the name of it.

JB: Unless we form some kind of group there's not going to be any cohesiveness in this community anymore. I mean you've got to have goals to work for in a community and the school was the goal. We'd get our kids down there and they'd get a good education, we'd help them out with recreation and we'd do all these things and I mean Upward is where they go to school now and they're not a member of that community.

DS: Can ya'll help me remember, there was that school in Tuxedo but there were small schools where Cedar Springs Church is and where Green River Church is.

JB: And there was one up on Mount Olivet.

OB: I have a picture of the Mount Olivet one-room school.

RB: They were all one-room schools.

JB: And Mitchell Osteen's mother was the teacher up there. Have you met Mitchell?

DS: No, you mentioned him last time as someone I should talk to. So were they elementary schools or was it all grades?

OB: Yeah, when I was in the eighth grade they consolidated the schools.

DS: But up until then?

OB: They started running buses to all the various places.

JB: What grade was that Mount Olivet School, was it from one through twelve?

OB: I think it must have just been one through six or seven. No, it didn't go on to high school. To get a high school education here then you had to go to Flat Rock.

JB: And my mother went to White Rock through the tenth grade. They only had eleven grades and she had narcolepsy, which is a sleeping disease, and ( ) illness and she couldn't stay awake and her mother just kept telling her you need to go to be earlier. (Laughter)

DS: Probably that helped some, went to bed.

JB: It did not help but she did go through the tenth grade I think was how far she went and I think my dad went through the eighth grade, seventh or eighth grade. And it was funny because my sister was at East High and she was in algebra class and he'd never had algebra in his life and he had to help her learn her algebra. I guess because of his carpentry work he had, you know, you had to use a tremendous amount of math for that.

OB: When I was in school when we got through the seventh grade most of the children quit.

DS: To go to work?

OB: Well, I guess maybe in the mill. I don't know what they did but only three of our class went on to Flat Rock when we went on to the eighth grade.

RB: Well, you know it's a different world now. Back then you could do that and even though they were uneducated they were pretty smart people because in there way, like my dad could build a house, he could lay brick, he could lay blocks, he could lay rock.

JB: He read blueprints and did all the math.

RB: And her dad he could do the same thing and he could build a violin, you know, or make a gun stock. So they were basically uneducated but they were not what you'd call dumb.



OB: Well, ignorant.

RB: Yeah, they were not ignorant, which makes you think that maybe at the end of the sixth or seventh grade that if they changed their ways now and put kids in some kind of a trade type school that they were interested in, then kids might do better like that than they do with just a basic education.

JB: Everybody's not meant to go to college. I'm sorry, they're just not. They're not interested. My daughter loved school and she'd go and go and go and never get enough of it. But there are some people who just.

OB: Ronnie didn't like school either, did you?

RB: No, I didn't like school.

OB: One of his teachers told me one time though if he would just study a little bit he could be a genius. (Laughter)

DS: But they learned directly from, you know, they were apprentices. But somebody that they cared for and cared for them was right there saying no, do this, do this.

RB: Well, they learned a tremendous amount, talking about the Second World War, a lot of them, you know, war is a bad thing but my dad was in the engineer's and he learned a lot, you know, maybe nothing much that helped him a tremendous amount out in public life, but a lot of people did, you know.

JB: Well, he came back from the Second World War and went through some kind of a trade with gardening and all, did he not? What type of school was that that they took?

OB: Yeah, he went to agriculture classes under the GI Bill.

JB: Yeah, he knew a tremendous amount about grafting and rooting different things. I mean he taught me a lot about it because I'm a big gardener.

OB: Well, this is the first house that Mays ever built. He built every inch of it with his own two hands.

DS: All the stone work and everything?

OB: All the rock work and everything outside and I drew the plans. I was twenty-three.

DS: Good for you. Well, y'all did a great job.

OB: I was amazed.

JB: It's gone through some metamorphosis.

DS: Well, it's still here.

JB: Because they've added and taken away.

DS: It's going to be here for a while.

RB: It's basically still the same house.

OB: The old Freeman house stood a hundred and fifty years. This one's now about sixty-two years old.

DS: Well, it's on the way.

RB: Well, they had better lumber. That's another thing that's gone see. You had big massive trees with good lumber and this lumber you go buy now that's cut out of little small trees, it warps and it's not strong. It's real wide grain lumber and it's not near as strong as close grain lumber.

OB: In that old house the walls were paneled up and down and the paneling was wide like this and then it had wide flooring boards like that too. The flooring was wide.

RB: They were half lap boards, yeah. They had lapped them like a half inch or so.

OB: My mother told me that a lot of lumber in that house was cypress.

RB: Cypress, yeah.

JB: We had a table that we made out of that siding, you know, out of that old house. We had a big long kitchen table for a while. We've disassembled it but we have the lumber.

DS: So they brought cypress up here from the coast?

RB: Yeah, when they tore the house down who was it got some of that paneling? Daddy got some paneling.

OB: Did J. C. get some?

RB: Daddy got some from somebody. He didn't get it from J. C. but I made a table top out of it. The actual inside paneling was cypress and I don't know about the outside siding.

OB: They said that it was put together with locust pins, the framing was.

DS: So are there things, Joyce, you were talking about the community club, and some communities the volunteer fire department, things that have come in that have tried to be or turned out to sort of be gathering places but I don't know if they. It doesn't sound like any of them have been successful.

JB: We have a large volunteer fire department and when they have their meetings on Monday night, isn't it, Monday or Tuesday one of those nights, the parking lot is jammed. But it's all young people mostly.

DS: Young men?

JB: I'd say from thirty, or maybe younger still, from twenty to maybe forty-five.

RB: They did have some people, you know, like Elbert Capps, he was in it when it started in what, '59?

OB: It started while we were in Florida that year.

RB: And he was a member of it till he died, which he was about eighty years old. So they had some people that stayed with it.

DS: But it doesn't gather the whole community?

JB: No, they do use the community, I mean they do use the fire department at times for fundraisers for people in the community and then we do have I guess you'd still say we're still connected as a community, even though we don't have a school because anytime anybody's sick and they need to raise funds for them. They made ten thousand dollars in one fundraiser down there selling, or maybe more than that, selling barbecue and you should have seen 25. The road was lined up and down and the service station down there where they had it was full. So that's another thing that's great about the community. If anybody needs help, there's always help. I mean they'll have hotdog suppers and things like that and the churches I guess are the big gathering point now.

RB: There is still enough of the original people and not just the original people there are some people that's moved in that are good about stuff like that, keeping up and coming to fundraisers.

DS: So when did the big influx of people from the outside begin? Is there a kind of clear time when you can say, you know, roughly this year all of a sudden it went up?

JB: I don't think so.

DS: Or is it kind of gradual?

JB: This has been, just like Flat Rock was founded, you know, from Charleston. So this has been an influx of outsiders, so to speak, for generations, but the developing part is what has made a big difference.

OB: When they first got the lake, you know, people started coming in from Spartanburg and places building on the lake and then when the mill came a whole bunch of people came in.

DS: I was looking down there at the library I was reading the scrap book at the library and I saw these people, the Lake Summit Foundation. I lived in Spartanburg for ten years and worked at colleges down there and here the people that were on the board and giving money to the colleges and they're up here on the Lake Summit Foundation. I was surprised of four or five names that I knew.

JB: This is the first time that the Lake Summit, they call it the Lake Summit Association, has offered to be in our community with this group that we have, they would donations and different things, as far as I know. They may have done it before this but I wasn't aware of it.

DS: I think they gave some to the library.

JB: Yes, and the camps, well, we're all Friends of the Library in the community, Tuxedo-Green River Community Association, and it's all the same people basically. But they have done that and then the camps have offered in the last, since we've formed this group to let us use their facilities in any way we need, if we want to have a fundraiser or, you know, whatever we need, they offered, which is the first time that I've known them to do that too. But we have a commissioner, we won't mention any names, who has a camp.

DS: We're going to have to hit the stop button here in a minute.

JB: And he is the one who talked to them to get them to offer from what I can understand.

DS: So Flat Rock people were coming up from South Carolina. Once the lake was built people were coming in from the outside. The camps, of course, brought kids in from the outside. The mill brought some people in. But when you were talking about this a minute ago you said what's changed is the developers. So there have been people coming in from the outside, at least down towards the lake, maybe not so much higher up in the valley, but when did the development start?

JB: As far as the formal development—

DS: Where you could really feel things are changing around here because there's this new thing happening.

JB: I would say in the last ten years, wouldn't you?

OB: Ten years.

RB: Yeah, the last ten years.

JB: There was not any development down here. Was there any development? There was not a housing development anywhere. There were people who would sell a piece of property to somebody or somebody in the family would die and they would have it through the real estate. And, of course, since computers came in there are people over the world get to see your community property.

DS: So people would sell individual pieces but at a certain point in the late '90s something changed?

RB: Something changed, yeah.

DS: Were you going to say?

RB: Well, what I was going to say about that is I remember, you know, one of my first cousins married a highway patrolman, Arthur Ward, and Arthur had gone to a meeting and this was back fifteen years ago I guess. And he had gone to Raleigh for some kind of a meeting and they had told them how much increase in traffic and all that there was going to be in Henderson

County in the next like fifteen years. And he was telling me that and I was standing there thinking you're crazy or they're crazy. But guess what, they had nailed it.

JB: That's all projections.

RB: Well, it was a projection but they—

OB: Hit it on the head.

RB: I thought this can't happen but guess what, it has happened.

JB: But my problem with all this is not the people that are moving. The people in the South people tend to think that they're objecting to all these people because of the Civil War. I'm sorry, but that's a big misconception. It really has nothing to do with the Civil War. It's attitudes and the attitudes towards the native people here and they are passing through this county and this vicinity and people here want to stay here, they don't want to pass through. They want to pass it on.

OB: And they want to keep it the same.

JB: They want to pass it on and anybody with any common sense knows you cannot keep anything the same. I mean change is a definite constant in our lives but it's just that we want to be able to give something to our children.

RB: The next generation.

JB: The next generation, we want them to be able to continue on here. And if things keep going the way they are, they'll not be able to afford to continue on here unless they move away, make a huge amount of money, come back and buy something for a huge amount of money. And so it just goes along with your roots, that's something you want a permanency and other people don't seem to want that. I don't know if it's us or.

RB: One thing that I've noticed is that they have all these committees now and they've passed all these laws about land management and all this stuff, and they seem to insinuate that the people here don't have a clue as to how to manage land. But if you look back, would this land be so desirable today if the people here hadn't known how to manage their land?

DS: No, that's a great point.

JB: And some of the cleanest water in the world is here.

RB: That's right. People here they passed these laws about not being able to build something so close to a creek or a river, but if you've noticed, the native people knew better than that. They knew how big that river would get during the flood.

OB: We were never allowed to throw anything in the creek.

RB: They knew how big this creek could get. If you go and ride around all over Green River or Henderson County mostly and you look next to the rivers and the creeks and you see how many older buildings are built close to a river or a creek.

DS: Or on a ridge.

RB: Or basically on a ridge, yeah.

DS: So you weren't allowed to throw anything in the creek?

OB: No indeed, our house, my mother, we lived right over here and it was the only house up here then. We used the creek a lot because we just had spring water and creek water. We didn't have running water for a few years. But they were very particular about us putting things in the creek.

DS: And what did they tell you? I mean they sure they told you no but did they explain why you shouldn't put anything in the creek?

OB: Well, just that we were supposed to keep the water clean.

JB: This man that lived up on the mountain that moved here and, of course, he moved here from somewhere else came one time when they were remodeling my mother's house and he came flying up in the yard. He said what are you doing with those shingles, throwing them in the creek; like we were just total ignorant. And I mean there was no way that we were going to put those shingles in the creek. And I mean they just assume a tremendous amount that they know nothing about. Just ask one of these farmers or these people that have lived here all their lives and see how they feel about the water and polluting the water and not taking care, being a conservationist basically, even though you don't call yourself that.

RB: Yeah, it's just like I said, this land would not be so desirable today if people hadn't taken as good a care as they did of it over the years because people have been here for several hundred years.

OB: I was going to look at my pictures and see if I could find a picture of the mill where we made the wheel and all that and show them to him.

RB: What's basically going to ruin the place is all the building that's going on. This creek right down here, when it comes a rain now, I mean the next big rain that comes you can come down here and look and see how much mud is running down. Or you can go up there to our house and see how on this side of ( ) you're up there. Well, where do you think the mud's coming from? It's not coming from here.

JB: And the headwaters of this creek down here are right in the middle of development that they've done on the left hand side of the road if you're coming across Pinnacle Mountain. On the left hand side are the headwaters for that and it just gets smaller and smaller.

DS: It's something that people don't think about when they're building ridge top. They don't think this is ruining the water.

RB: Well, and if you look, you know this drains—

OB: Well, money's the root of all evil.

DS: Right.

RB: There's two ridges draining into this creek and they go all the way up to ( ) up there. I know what comes off of our hill or this right here or even my neighbor's up here. I know what's coming off their place. But also when it comes one of them big muddy patches down the creek, I know where it's coming from. And you know those are the people that tend to insinuate that we don't know how to manage the place. But I'm not saying, I mean when we built our house and we first built our driveway, if it came a big rain, you know, before we had it paved, it run some mud down it, but you know, we did something about the driveway. But when you've got a hundred houses going on, you know.

DS: The impact is different.

RB: I'm not saying these people don't, you know, they pave their driveways and they landscape, but you know, they might be for every one they're completing they got another two or three going on.

DS: And that's over a long period of time.

JB: And I don't blame these people for wanting to move here. This is a wonderful place to live. I don't blame them for wanting to move here but they need to move here with some kind of understanding. I mean you know, when in Rome, do as the Romans, and that's not followed because you get a lot of resentment and it's not because of where they're from and that they won the Civil War. If I never got anything across to another person in North Carolina, I would like for that to be part of it. It's not because of the Civil War, folks. It's just simply because they seem to want to pass through. And some of my best friends, one of my best friends is from, her parents are from Cape Cod, and her parents are just like every other person. They moved here because this was a great place to raise their children and then they moved to Florida in the wintertime and they move back up here in the summertime. And then when they go they do not want to leave anything to pass on to their children. They make their own way. That's just, it's not a heritage. That's what we seem to have here. Everybody has the idea that a heritage is a good thing.

RB: Most people here do want, they do seem to want to leave something for their children.

DS: I've heard different people say though that their children sometimes they're not quite so sure what their children really want or if the children are going to use it in the way that they're thinking that they might.

RB: Well, you know, when I was a kid, when she was a kid they played in the creek down here. When I was a kid I played in the creek down here. When my kids were small they played in the creek. My grandkid comes down here in the summer he wants to go to the creek.

OB: My granddaddy played in it too.

RB: Yeah, her granddaddy and maybe her great granddaddy played in the same creek, you know.

OB: This means something to us.

JB: A wonderful thing, the continuity of it all, it's just great. And to be able to say that you have a piece of something that your great, great, great, great, great grandfather, as far back as you can go he has been here. It's just something and you know in Massachusetts and places like that they have a heritage and they're proud of their heritage because a lot of those people feel the same way we do. You see them on the road show or what's that new program that we like to watch?

RB: If Walls Could Talk.

JB: Yeah, If Walls Could Talk, and people buy a home and then they redo the home and they find all these relics from the past and the first thing they do is research their backgrounds and want to know about the place they're living and the people that are living in it. And to me, you know, some people do have the same attitude.

RB: It's an important thing really.

OB: But people are so different like Ronnie and my daughter. Ronnie loves this old place just like I do. And she loves the place; she loves home, but she doesn't want to live here. She lives in town.

DS: Right, right, and I think that's happened across a lot of different families.

JB: I think it's mainly for economic reasons though that most people move away from here because if you have a college degree, how many job opportunities do you have here? My daughter's got a college degree. She can't find a thing in her field. She could move to Charlotte and my sister's son moved down there and he lives in Charlotte and she said if they told me that I was going to make a half million dollars a year, I would not move to Charlotte. She likes living here. She said I do not want to move away. So it's for economics a lot of times that people move and then some people are just dissatisfied with country life.



RB: Well, with most people it's like the sign that Kelly's put up down here in the store. He's got a sign down there that says "A Day In The Country Is Worth A Month In Town." That's the way I feel. That's the way a lot of people feel.

DS: So, Octavia, you've got some pictures here of the mill I think.

OB: These are copies of some that were made in 1916. That's the old mill wheel. There was a big wheel there at one time. Here's another one.

DS: So this is down on Vernon Creek?

OB: Yeah. And this is the creek. It was right big then. There's a child sitting up there on that rock. I don't know who that is.

DS: And this is the falls that's on Mr. Bennett's property?

OB: Yeah. And this is, you can see there was a structure there at that time. I don't know what it was.

DS: So that wouldn't be the mill because you'd have the mill at the bottom, right?

OB: No, I don't have a picture of the mill.

RB: That is probably a plume line.

DS: Well, there's writing on the back.

JB: This is the creek that I played in as a child.

OB: Oh yeah, she wrote on the back of all of them.

DS: Oh, this is the person who wrote everything.

OB: No, I copied, these were copies but I copied exactly what she said on the picture.

RB: Yeah, the mill would have been at the bottom. I don't actually know what that structure was at the top.

DS: Looks like it's holding up a roof or something.

OB: I can remember when I was a child that there was a little shed like thing down there but it was gone a long time.

JB: When I was a child and played in this creek the mill wheel was all that was still there of any of this.

RB: He's got three or four of the old mill wheels. He drug them out of the creek.

DS: You showed me a picture. They're there in the yard. So did people come from, I mean it wasn't just your family, these folks here. Did people come from all over the community to be at the falls?

OB: Well, they took their meal there to be ground. I think people mixed more back then. I know they did when I was a child. This is what we were telling you about the Rainbow Falls

where they ran the six thousand foot thing from the falls down to the mine. This is the actual falls and this is above the falls.

RB: It's like a set of steps.

OB: This rock is black, just real black looking.

RB: It's like a slate type rock and it's broke off and it's just like those steps. The creek comes down, it's just like it comes down steps. And if you go up to my house and look now back there there's a big house. I've not been up there in years but there's a big house setting looks like about where that.

OB: Oh, really?

RB: Yeah, you can see it from the house.

OB: Oh, I've not been up there since I was a teenager.

DS: I'm looking at some notes I made after I was here the last time that I wanted to ask you about. You told me a little bit about Happy Land. Can you talk about that some because I haven't heard anybody else describe that.

OB: Oh, you haven't heard anything about it?

DS: Well, I've heard it from you but I haven't heard anybody else talk about it.

OB: Have you ever read that book?

JB: Yes, I have. There was an article, there was a whole series of articles in the paper about this when it came out.

OB: Well, I got a copy of that book from the library and it's just a little pamphlet type thing and I have a copy of it. But what this explains that a group of freed slaves down in the deep South.

DS: Is this after the war?

OB: Uh-huh.

JB: This was after the Civil War.

OB: Yeah, after the Civil War.

DS: That's THE war. (Laughter)

Track 2

DS: So we're going to talk for a minute about Happy Land

OB: It was a group of freed slaves that got together and decided they would come further north and look for a place to make their own colony. And as they came up through Mississippi and Alabama and Georgia they gathered more along the way until they got over here to the Davis place where there was an inn. What was the name of that?

JB: Splendor?

OB: I believe was the name of it and this Mr. Davis was sorry for them and he let them work there for a few years and they finally went to a mountain over beyond Camp Green Cove and set up their colony. They had a king and a queen and they just had their own little country there.

DS: So where is the Davis place?

RB: You know where Jones' Nursery is over here on Old 25?

DS: Yeah.

JB: Before you get to the South Carolina line.

RB: Right before you get to Jones' Nursery there's a little sign there that's that countertop place that they're making granite countertops and all that now. But you go around that road it takes you, we were over there what, a couple of years ago, went on a little hike over there. But there's still some of the old foundations from the buildings.

JB: You can go around, what is that, South Lake Summit on this end and turn on Bell Mountain Road there and it will take you. That's the way we went in.

OB: My mother and daddy could remember some of the people and they used to talk about them. As years went by a lot of them got older and they died and then a lot of them went into town to find work.

DS: Did they work in the mill? Was there a black community in the mill?

OB: I don't know if they worked in the mill or not.

JB: I don't think any black people ever worked in the mill.

OB: I heard about one of the ladies that became a housekeeper for one of the doctors in town and she lived to be about a hundred years old.

DS: So the Davis place would have been, so they would have climbed up out of South Carolina, come up the ridge, and then sort of where are we and where are we going, and settled there.

I heard something else. I don't know and again, sometimes I can't remember. You may have told me this, a settlement where people spoke Old English, sort of Shakespearean English.

JB: Oh, this is down on the coast of North Carolina.

DS: I thought there was one around here. Somebody told me there was one or maybe I got confused.

JB: We discussed that some of our dialect was similar to old, Old English.

OB: There was an article about it in one of Louise Bailey's books, about the Old English, and how the strange way that some people speak here is actually that old, Old English.

DS: Okay, any other history things we want to talk about or have we done a good job covering all of it?

OB: Joyce, what do you think?

JB: Well, my point of view is all what's happening now. I mean that's what I'm into right now.

OB: I have an opinion that I suppose a lot of people wouldn't agree with but we were talking about, you know there's been a lot on the news lately about the shape the schools are in and how many children are dropping out and all that. I firmly believe that the children would be better off in small schools than they are all herded together.

RB: They need to build community schools again.

JB: Well see that's what my point was. California, we went by California standards and years ago they had small schools and they went to consolidated schools and now they're going back to community type schools and we've just now caught up with California. They found out that it didn't work as well. My children loved school. Of course, Carmen loved it all the way through but Zack liked it as long as he was down here in Tuxedo. And then when he went to Flat Rock and he had one person in his classroom that he knew and I was the same way, it just devastated me. I wasn't interested in school again much until after I got older.

RB: I was the same way basically. I mean I went through the seventh grade down here and I loved school pretty much till I went out of the community. And that's when I got to where that I didn't really like school.

DS: And the teachers, I mean the teachers were from the community that you had up until the eighth grade?

JB: Some of them were.

RB: Some of them were and some of them, you know, came from other places. But I'll have to say that on the whole that we had great teachers. I mean like I had one, she was a big, heavy lady and she was strict. She was a real strict person.

JB: I know who he's talking about, Miss McDonald.

RB: Miss McDonald.

JB: She moved from somewhere else.

RB: She even, we had a boy that lived down the road here that had rheumatoid arthritis. Well, he got in such bad shape he couldn't go to school and she once or twice a week she would gather up, she'd make sure that she got some of us to go with her, and she would go teach him on her own and take us with her. And she did that for years. Now how many teachers today would do that?

DS: I know.

JB: It's the same way with the doctors.

RB: And that's the kind of teachers we had and they had talent shows down here. When they'd have a talent show or something to raise money, all the grown people, not just the kids that were in school, the grown people would get involved. And if they had, you know, a lunch down there or a supper to raise money, I've got some pictures at the house that was made at the cafeteria over there in the school just absolutely full of people. And that's before we had a real big population here.

DS: So the community gathering place.

RB: And it's gone. That's the frame of mind is going fast.

DS: Yeah, if it's not already gone.

JB: I don't know if we're talking about a change that's ( ) or just change in general. I'm afraid that's what it is. We want it to stay and most people do was the time they remember the fondest.