

Uncorrected Transcript of

Interview

with

**LOIS BURWELL BRASWELL**

**4 OCTOBER 1995**

and

**WINFORD BRASWELL**

**4 OCTOBER 1995**

by James Eddie McCoy, Jr.

Transcribed by Wesley S. White

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

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**START OF SIDE A**

**LOIS BURWELL BRASWELL**  
**4 October 1995**

JAMES EDDIE McCOY: I'm at 4013 Cannon Mill Road, Kittrell, I am visiting with Mrs. Lois Burwell Braswell, date of birth January 30, 1933. Present Age is 62.....Mrs. Braswell, will you give to me your name, and the date, date you was born.

LOIS BRASWELL: Mrs. Lois Braswell, Burwell, January, 30, 1933. I am now presently sixty two years old.

EM: And today's date.

LB: Today's date tenth month, four, 1995.

EM: What uh, area was you, uh, came up in?

LB: **Peddleford????** Town.

EM: Okay. How long did it, why did they call in Peddleford town?

LB: Well that was the original name that it was named.

EM: Was they more Peddlefords in here?

LB: Yes, this was a Peddleford area.

EM: Was it black or white?

LB: Black.

EM: Okay, what happened to the Peddlefords? Is any of them living here now?

LB: Uh, most of the older heads are dead, but we have some Peddlefords that's living in Oxford, they moved to Oxford.

EM: Would it be a second set of Peddleford's from the others on the northern end? Or you don't know?

LB: I don't know, I don't know.

EM: Okay, were your mother or your father born in Peddleford town?

LB: Huh uh. They was born in Granville County, somewhere.

EM: You don't know what area?

LB: Okay, I think my father was born over in Fairport community.

EM: Okay. What about your mother?

LB: My mother was just born in Granville County, I don't know where, it was somewhere in this area, it was in Granville County.

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

LB: I have three brothers and five sisters.

EM: Okay, you want to name them?

LB: Yes.

EM: Okay.

LB: Lucindy, Edith, Marla Jean, Katherine, Robert, Ursel, and Daniel.

EM: Which one of your parents could read and write?

LB: Both of them.

EM: Ok, which one went to school the farthest?

LB: I really couldn't say. Neither one of them went that far.

EM: What school did your father say he went to?

LB: Probably Fairport Community School.

EM: Uh, was it uh, was it another generation of Burwells in this county, like your father, his grandfather or another...

LB: Yeah, but they live in, they live in another....So, that was before my time, really.

EM: I know that, but....

LB: I knew his brothers and sisters, but I didn't know too much about his mother and father.

EM: And you don't know where they was going at?

LB: No, I don't.

EM: You don't have no idea. Okay, how many brothers and sisters did your father have?

LB: Oh, I don't know.

EM: Was he married just one time, or how many times?

LB: One time. My father, one time.

EM: You don't know how many brothers and sisters, come with a number and not names.

LB: I can at least count ten or eleven.

EM: Okay. Uh, how many did you see and know? That you .....?????? that you liked or was uh, that you visit all the time?

LB: Three, he had three sisters that I visit.

EM: Okay, name their names.

LB: Arabella Burwell, Brady Burwell, and Lula Burwell.

EM: You knew them three, didn't you?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Did you know their kids?

LB: Of course.

EM: You want to name them?

LB: Yeah.

EM: Okay.

LB: I got to think...Saloni, Hildred, Gloria, Roy, Ray, Mike, which is deceased right now, uh, Dan Braswell, that's all.

EM: Are you the oldest Burwell?

LB: No.



EM: Where your oldest brother, cousin lives?

LB: Uh, my oldest brother live in East Orange, New Jersey.

EM: How much older is he, over you?

LB: He's sixty six years old.

EM: Okay, that's not bad...uh, where do you think your father learned how to read and write from?

LB: I guess he attend some type of school, I really couldn't say.

EM: Uh....

LB: But at that time, you know, they didn't, they didn't have too much opportunity.

EM: Every body didn't.....

LB: No.

EM: Uh, didn't have, going from about the seventh grade, six or seventh grade. And another thing is that, all blacks said that, but yes, some kids knew, and was nosey, and knew what went on.

LB: Right.

EM: Did you do a whole lot of heresy[?]?

LB: Uh uh, Uh uh.

EM: It just didn't go on?

LB: Parents, when I came along, parents did not allow children to ask too many questions.

EM: Oh, so you mean it got way down to me, before I could listen. When you got telephone and lights and everything, that's when you could listen.

LB: So true.

EM: Okay, most of yours, you didn't have lights when you first....

LB: No, no.

EM: Okay, you had lamp light, and lights, and, that puzzles me, but, some kind of wooded lantern or something, but whatever you call that wood, but it throws out more light than another wood does. Where did you go to school, where you first start going to school at?

LB: Right here in this yard. Peddleford Town, Peddleford town school.

EM: Where did you live at?

LB: Peddleford Town School!

EM: You lived in the school too? [laughing]

LB: I lived in the school too.

EM: That's nice, I'm glad you did! [laughing] I'm glad to find one black that lived in the school...

LB: I lived in it...

EM: That's amazing, the school you went to, you lived at.

LB: Yes, I lived in it.

EM: What uh, your father, did he know a lot, did he, was he a mover around when he, did, did his parents let him move around a lot? Could you tell that....

LB: I don't know, because I tell you what happened. His parents, and another one of my aunts, and her husband, we were all in the same house together. Over in the Fairport Community, down where Joe Perry, and those people was raised up down there, then go down, like going to the cemetery in .....????? Okay, so we lived in a family house there, until I was about five years old, and after that we moved out. So I really didn't have, you know, I was a child, and I didn't really know, you know, too much, 'cause along then, children of five years old, didn't really, didn't really know too much. So I really don't know, my father was a provider, but he didn't care about nothing but just making, making ends meat.

EM: Okay, I appreciate that, that helps me too. Uh, which one worked in the church the most, your father or your mother?

LB: My mother.

EM: She did?

LB: Yeah.

EM: Your father went when he wanted to, or...

LB: He didn't go.

EM: He didn't, okay.

LB: He didn't go, he was a member of .....???????? he never, from a child up, I never knew....

EM: Did he work out on the farm for somebody, was y'all share croppers or..

LB: We share cropped, but, when I was about eleven years old, he worked at a saw mill.

EM: When you got, oh, you always known him at a saw mill, when you was a kid?

LB: Yeah.

EM: Up until...

LB: At eleven years old, 'cause I was getting up cooking, and preparing his meals, to get up and go to work

EM: Why were you preparing his meals?

LB: Because my mother would just always let me, 'cause I was, you know, I was the one that really wanted to, be the cook, so....

EM: You wanted to be different?

LB: Yeah, I wanted to be the cook. Yeah, so I was the cook.

EM: Uh huh, you carried his food on a log bucket?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Uh, who was the mid wife in your area?

LB: Cynthia Young.

EM: That lady will come up again, how did she get way down here?

LB: I don't know, but she was one, I remember her.

EM: I've been looking for that lady. Was she buried down here?

LB: I don't know.

EM: I did, I looked for that lady one time, for about a year, back in '81, I had it in my research. And I couldn't find it.

LB: Because I was uh....

EM: She was an old lady, I know.

LB: Yes.

EM: She's connected to the Mary Potter, something I'll explain to you later. Uh, when we, in some communities, uh we get locked in, and you have jealousies and stuff like that, did uh, any of your brothers get a chance to go to Fairport School, where was Fairport School, when you was living down there?

LB: Okay, well, see, Fairport school was right there, I guess where the old .....????? church, that old building. It was another building there before that, I think. But I don't remember too much about the school, because see, we moved over here when I was five years old, and the next year, I started school here. 'Cause six years of age, that's when you started school.

EM: And you never moved again?

LB: No.

EM: Well, how did your father sharecrop? He went back and forth on his own, and work for somebody?

LB: No, see when we moved over here, he sharecropped up the road here.

EM: For who?

LB: For the Howells.

EM: Black or white?

LB: White. Frank Howell.

EM: Did he work, did y'all have to work, or he just did it, he worked....

LB: We had to work, all of us.

EM: Oh yea?

LB: Yeah. Sure we did. Or when we got large enough anyway, old enough.

EM: Okay, so Frank Howell was who your father farmed under?

LB: Yeah.

EM: How many years?

LB: Oh, I don't know.

EM: You left before he did, didn't you?

LB: Yes, yes. Yes I did.

EM: You had plans, so that's why you learned how to cook didn't you? [laughing] Uh. Your father's brothers, did you know them? Did you know them after you got up, or his sisters?

LB: He had one brother.

EM: Was he a better worker or reliable or.....

LB: My uncle lived in New Jersey. And he worked for rich white people up there.

EM: Uh huh, so he always had the good side?

LB: He always had the good side. He always had the car, and we had to walk.

EM: I understand, he just lucky, one that got out of here and left. Uh, reason I asked, that shows that how far you could go in school, is how far your parents, your father push you. So, your mother was the...

LB: She was the backbone of the family.

EM: Okay, she was .....????

LB: Uh huh, yes.

EM: Okay, how many brothers and sisters did she have?

LB: So many I couldn't even tell you. Ten, twelve.

EM: It was...

LB: It was a bunch of them.

EM: Okay, what about her mother, did you know your grandmother on her side?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: What, did she stay with y'all, or did y'all...

LB: No, no, she lived up around, in the Olive Grove Community.

EM: Do you think your mother came from that area?

LB: No, I think my mother was raised up right around in this area somewhere. Right around through here somewhere, I don't know where, but she was raised up in this area. But my grandmother moved up there, when I got older.

EM: Moved up to ...

LB: Up in the Oak Grove...Olive Grove community.

EM: Oh, oh, after you got old?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: She was living down here?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: With y'all? Or with who?

LB: No, she, they lived, her and her husband was living somewhere in this area, but right now, I'm just blank.

EM: That was your grandmother and grandfather?

LB: Right, right, Uh huh.

EM: Uh, why did she move away over there, away from your, she had relatives or....

LB: Her son, I think my uncle moved up there, Thomas Brangum. And his wife, they got, he got married, and they moved in a house, and I think she moved with them, the best I can recall.

EM: Your grandmother was a what?

LB: Brangum.

EM: She was a Brangum?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Your mother was a Brangum?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Okay, tell me a little about the Brangum family, about what church, how they structure, how far did they go in school, or some of them, or what.

LB: I really, let's see, I really can't tell you too much about their education level, but I do have a aunt that live up here on Raleigh Road, Mamie Harris, she is now 78 years old..

EM: She .....??????

LB: Uh huh. Sally Harris married McCore Harris, that's my aunt....

EM: I know her.

LB: ...Uh huh, she lives in Durham, I don't know nothing about her schooling. And my other mother's sister, Lessie Terry, she lives in Henderson.

EM: SO, Sally that married McCore Harris, was a Brangum? I didn't know she came from Oxford. Okay. Oh, okay. McCore Harris, anybody can tell about him.

LB: Yeah.

EM: You could sit here all day and tell stories about him. He was nice, but I'm just saying, you know.

LB: He was nice, but...

EM: Yeah...

LB: But I don't know, that's all I know, I don't know.

EM: Yeah, he was smart, you know.

LB: Yeah.

EM: They was smart, they was go....he was a provider.

LB: Yeah.

EM: He did okay. Uh, how far you think your mother went in school?

LB: Not very far.

EM: You don't....

LB: No, I don't think so, probably 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

EM: Were they sharecroppers or did they own their own land?

LB: I really don't know what they done, really. I really don't, 'cause I think that was a little bit, I never heard them, I don't think my, I really don't know. I don't know, I just don't know what they done. They probably did do some type of farming, because I never...

EM: What church did your mother and father.....they only went to Fairport?

LB: My mother went to Peddleford Grove Church, which we used to call Peddleford Town. But now we named it Peddleford Grove Baptist church.

EM: Okay so, the Peddleford Grove church, and the Peddleford Grove school, and Peddleford Town, all of it goes....

LB: All of it goes together.

EM: Okay. Give me an idea of how many lived in this circle of Peddleford Town. Uh, the, the Howells lived in here, the Braswells lived in here, uh, who else lived, Amos lived in..no, they came from..

LB: No, Amos lived in Olive Grove....

EM: The, Baxter Peace and them, the Greens, are they considered...what other..

LB: They all are.

EM: Okay, so who else lived in Peddleford Grove?

LB: Okay.

EM: Who else?

LB: Braswells family, Peddleford family, Falkon family,



EM: Okay, anybody else?

LB: The Wortham family.

EM: Okay. That's Mrs. Wortham that I spoke to, interviewing this week, is that right?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Yeah, she told me just call her let her know what afternoon I was coming by.

LB: Yeah.

EM: Okay, she came up here? Who?

LB: Owens, Yeah, I ain't through yet, Reverend.

EM: Okay, go.

LB: The Owens family.

EM: Tell me, tell me, tell me something about the, tell me a little bit something about the Wortham and the Owens so I can tie it in.

LB: Okay. The Owens family, their mother is a Peddleford.

EM: Okay. Okay, that's what I needed to know.

LB: Uh huh, their mother.

EM: Uh huh, I needed to have that recorded, their mother ....

LB: Now the Wortham family, the Worthams, he been living there all his life, right down there where she live now.

EM: Okay.

LB: Okay, a good many of them was a member of our church. But I think the most of them have pulled out, 'cause he removed his membership before he died. To .....?????

EM: And they came out of Peddleford Grove too?

LB: Uh huh. The father and some of his children, is a member here, but I think they, they no longer attend. Some of them moved away, New Jersey...

EM: I understand.

LB: Some of them got killed....

EM: Uh huh, and as they have friction, we have that too, among us. We, we tend to leave, because we can't have our way.

LB: That's right, I....

EM: You know, that's, that's human nature in that area.

LB: Right, Yeah, Yeah.

EM: Okay, uh, my main topic is, is that I, I want to know what came first, the church or the school. So, I have to leave that to your husband, him and I have to argue that one out. I don't want to argue with you, I'll take him on about that. We'll leave that to him. He better start thinking of that one, we going to fight over that one. Now, always was food in the house?

LB: Yes.

EM: Okay, the whole community looked after everybody?

LB: Yes.

EM: Somebody get sick, don't have to worry about nothing, tobacco, everything. Why don't they, why don't we do it now?

LB: We don't love each other. We don't have to, we think we know where every meal is coming from, you know what I'm saying, there is something on the table all the time, to eat.

EM: That's what's wrong.

LB: That's what's wrong. We don't have to suffer enough.

EM: We lost that...

LB: We did.

EM: Got a neighbor across the street that would borrow sugar and flour, Lucille Peace, that's one out of a thousand. You know what I'm saying? We loan it to her, but we were used to that.

LB: Yeah, Yeah. And the days behind us though, it wasn't borrowed, you know they just gave it...

EM: My mother, when the Taylors, they've always borrowing something from my mother, they want salt or somthing, momma said tell them to keep it, said I'll buy some when I go up town. You know, most everything, she send, she won't get it back no way. And they would keep it, and borrow something the next day, and people don't realize that, you won't share, you sure won't.

LB: When I would be, I am. I was a sharer, I would be ashamed. I do without. I know a long time ago, we didn't have a car, and we didn't have it, but my husband always kept some here for me....

EM: Uh Huh but that was neighborly.

LB: Yes.

EM: People don't know.

LB: No.

EM: But it worked.

LB: It was.

EM: You know, if you need something, go to somebody, go to somebody else, you know, everybody do it together.

LB: But now people say, well, they in the .....?????? They ought to have it. But everybody is just not that fortunate.

EM: That's one thing that, we lost, and I hate we did. And uh, we can't get it back anymore, and whites thinks that uh, we won't to live in their neighborhood, but we knew what suffering we would do. If we moved, they didn't know we had to pay a price. That's true. They didn't know that. I live in an integrated neighborhood, lucky they uh, they don't have anything, next, but if they had a had something, we wouldn't hardly be neighbors. I'm being honest with you, you know, we wouldn't borrow, or look out for each other.

LB: We live next door to some too. And if we needed them, I feel like we could go to them for a favor, anytime if somebody died in my family, and they find out there here, and the same thing...

EM: Yeah, you still got a little bit of it...

LB: Right.

EM: But you and I are discussing that it's gone, you just can't do nothing with, in mean in the church, everybody was in charge of the church. I told Rev. Joins other Sunday about a kid in church, I said Rev. Joins, I don't like the church being changed. I said, I don't think that's fair. I said I think the church should stay back in the 1800's, early 1900's. When it come to kids in the church. I think, and you need to, I told him I would like for him to come up with a scripture, or preach on it one Sunday, or have a meeting. And let's don't loose that part of the church. We done lost everything else. Okay, your brothers and sisters, how many of them, who went to Foreson School?

LB: I had one sister that went to college, and she lives in East Owens, New Jersey. And the rest of us, all of us finished High School. But my, Danlo, .....??????? he went to the eleventh grade, and all the rest of us finished.

EM: Uh huh, Robert, I know your brother, he's a hard worker, and smart guy. Always been like that?

LB: Yeah, he always been smart.

EM: Uh huh, he took it from his own self, or from something, his parents, you know. How did he...

LB: He took it from his mother, 'cause my daddy wasn't that hard of a worker. I'll be frank with you, my mother was....she worked, she washed, on washboards with white folks.

EM: Yeah, taking clothes. Yeah.

LB: Walked to the job, done, 'cause I used to go with her.

EM: Where did she work? For somebody?

LB: Right up the road here, about a mile up the road.

EM: Did she cook for somebody?

LB: Washed and ironed.

EM: Uh huh, and you stayed there until she.... My mother used to do that, take me until she couldn't go, 'cause I was the oldest. Uh, what do you think about what I'm doing, uh, going around trying to get some history of the community, and we don't loose it all. We try to save it.

LB: I think it's great.

EM: It takes a lot of time.

LB: Yes.

EM: And a lot of money....

LB: Yes.

EM: You have to put up....and people think that you get it back fast, it costs a lot of money .....???????? Uh, how many children do you have?

LB: One.

EM: Just a boy?

LB: Just one son.

EM: Oh my God, he got it made.

LB: You know him..

EM: Yeah, I know him. He got it made.

LB: Yeah, he think he have, anyway. I'll leave it like that.

EM: But you let him know sometimes he don't, huh?

LB: Yeah.

EM: Yeah, you got to.

LB: Yeah, he big outside, but don't make no difference how big you get....

EM: Yeah, that's right, you have to.

LB: I still had you, so that's the name of the game here.

EM: My mother call and tell me what to do. Don't ask me, I'll tell her how much she tells me what to do. I do it, you know, but I tell her she shouldn't tell me. But, you know, that's the way it is. Are y'all close, your brothers and sisters, you know?

LB: Of course.

EM: Y'all are?

LB: Yes.

EM: Uh, you uh, your community is kind of puzzling down here, when I get with y'all, and we start getting around with the pieces, uh, tell me a family that you are related to, somebody else, you know, different sisters, like one of your sisters get married.....??????? how many went over the Peace side, how many went over to Braswell, how many went over into Wortham of whatever, of your sisters and brothers?

LB: None, none but Catherine.

EM: You married a.....

LB: I married a Braswell, other than me and my sister, Yeah, wait a minute, let me back up, my sister married Edward Rogers, which was my husband's first cousin.

EM: So, you got Rogers down here too?

LB: No, well, they was, they came from, Fairport.

EM: Oh, you have some Rogers in here too?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: I didn't know that. They still living here?

LB: Yeah, my sister married a Roger, and all of her children. She got, uh, you know Kevin Rogers? Beaver, Kenny Rogers, Teach at Mary Potter, at uh, coach at uh....

EM: Wortham School?

LB: No, in Oxford.

EM: Oh Yeah, okay. Over at, uh, Mary Potter?

LB: Somewhere over there.

EM: Yeah, okay.

LB: They are my sisters children.

EM: Okay, so that's the Rogers. So your sister married into the Roger family?

LB: Right.

EM: You married a Braswell?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Your other sister married a Peace?

LB: Peace, Uh huh.

EM: Okay, now that's it for this community? Everybody else married outside of this community?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: So, you in the Peaces' family, the Braswell family, and the Rogers family?

LB: Yeah. Sort of..

EM: Rogers, Braswell, and Peace.

LB: Well, now, he's dead.

EM: Who?

LB: Rogers. Her husband in dead.

EM: That don't make no difference, she got a boy, that's a Rogers

LB: Yeah, Yeah, they still, they still in the family.

EM: Uh, the Peaces and the Braswells, they was, they got big, the families came very large, didn't they?

LB: Now, some of his, some of Winford's people, married into the Peace family. Jessie Braswell, Jessie Braswell marred Duronc's sister.

EM: Okay. Okay. So they interlocked?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: What about the Amoses?

LB: No, I don't know anything.....

EM: You don't know anything about them?

LB: I'd know them, you know, knew Robert Amos, you know, years and years when I was younger.

EM: Tell me, uh, something about your grandmother and grandfathers that the heard or you got pictures or smething like that. That uh,you kept you saved.

LB: I don't have anything.

EM: What happened?

LB: Now my father had some, and I think when they, when my father and mother died, I don't know whether of not my brother got rid of them, or what if somebody else have them, or not, but I have some pictures, I don't have nothing af.....I just got may fathers and mothers picture. I don't have nothing of my grandfather, not a thing.

EM: Any of your family go to the military, serve in the service?

LB: Huh uh.

EM: Nobody?

LB: huh uh?

EM: Where did you, where did you start work at when you first started working?

LB: John .....???? Hospital....???

EM: How many years did you work there?

LB: Twenty-seven years and three months.

EM: What happened, you retired there?

LB: I retired, I got old enough to retire.

EM: You don't look old enough to me to retire.

LB: Who?

EM: From looking at your age, what you just told me you aren't old enough to retire.

LB: Why not?

EM: Not a sixty-two, you ain't old enough to retire. You don't look like there is nothing wrong with you.



LB: Ain't nothing wrong with me, I had good sense! [laughing] Ain't nothing wrong with me. I ain't got nothing.

EM: See, I know your birth date and everything, now, I got you.

LB: I ain't going to work nowhere, I don't care what you know.

EM: You're not?

LB: No.

EM: Uh, let's talk about, tell me something, tell me something about children, tell me a story about you think about children now, because, my experience, and people ask me this, when I'm interviewing, just, you know, what happened?

LB: Frankly speaking, I just feel sorry for children that's coming into the world today. Drugs, is so much out there for them, everybody looking for that fast buck, and to start off with, the parents are not training the children up, in the way they should go, from a early age up. They let little children do what they want to do, say what they want to say, go where they want to go, and it's sad. I feel so sorry for children coming into this world now, I don't know what to do.

EM: And the grandparents can't save them, because, the grandparents done died so fast, until, everybody get dressed, and everybody go to coming to.....

LB: Uh huh, it's sad.

EM: Yeah, you're right.

LB: I think God I don't have any grandchildren, I just got my one son to worry me to death, but he don't, he's not a bad person. I can't get him in the church, he was in the church one time, I can't, I'll leave it in the hands of the Lord.

EM: That's right. That's good, that's his problem, you lucky, it'll work.

LB: Other than that, you know..

EM: He's training.

LB: He got respect for and his father, as long as he stay here, he will have to have, because when he loose it, he can take that door right there. Or that one right there one.

EM: That's what I talk about strength too. Uh, a gentleman told me, and I was talking about it, he said that white people would committed suicide, they couldn't have taken what blacks went through, when they was coming up. You believe that too?

LB: I do, I really do. It's changed now.

EM: I understand, but he was talking about like in the thirties, and twenties, and forties.

LB: Oh, Yeah. Yes.

EM: .....that, that they couldn't have taken it, they didn't have the strength. It takes strength to run a family.

LB: Yes.

EM: Tell me about your mother trying to run a family with the father not.....

LB: My mother, my mother, she worked for people, you know how the salary was, nothing. But she tried, she kept us all in school, and she kept us clean, my father would buy some groceries, but not that much. But uh, she would work for everybody around this community knew her. Every time a white lady had a baby, she was there, she was there, she was a doctor. And I had to go right along with her.

EM: She was strong.

LB: Yes. Had it not been for her, and the Lord, I won't leave him out, we couldn't have made it.

EM: What made strong black people back then?

LB: God almighty, and prayer. Prayer!

EM: I went to my doctor and told him I was sick, I was feeling bad, but I told him what kind of work I do, and I interviewed a person the day before, had thirteen or fourteen children, and like you say, the ran the family, the mother the father, sharecropping and all that, and I told him I wasn't sick, it's what I've heard, about moving around, I say, I'm way off, I got a nice house, but, the strength that those people had. Why it wouldn't pass on down the line, I mean, I got a little bit of it, you got, what happened to it?

LB: I just don't know.

EM: The blame goes around, and don't nobody want to accept it, or what?

LB: Uh huh, that's it. But we all are, we all have come short, the parents, well, it starts in the home.

EM: But we, we had chickens in the yard, we had pigs, and stuff like that. Do you think because we were strong because we knew we had to grow our food? We had to, we

couldn't go to a store, we didn't rely on each other, when it comes to what each family is supposed to have, or provide for....

LB: That could have been some of it. Yes. Yes. Because we grew our, we were, we still got chickens and pigs.

EM: Because, blacks all they wanted to do was learn how to read the bible. And they, that was as far as they thought they needed to go, 'cause they would then think they would live long enough, that they would need to use their education. Well, you and I could understand that, but, they could have passed on a little bit more knowledge, make sure we got more schooling, uh, been a pusher.

LB: Well, my mother, she was a pusher for school. She wanted us to go to school, she made sure that we went to school, regardless of what work we had to do, we got home, she made sure that we stayed in school.

EM: And all of y'all made pretty good grades? In school?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: And she made sure you got your lesson, ask did you get this, did you do that, and the teachers.

LB: Yeah, yes. Right.

EM: Who was your first teacher?

LB: Whew!

EM: Ain't been that long.

LB: Yes it have. She was uh, .....

EM: Mrs. Peace?

LB: She might have been a Baptist.

EM: Okay.

**(TALKING IN THE BACKGROUND)**

EM: Mrs. Percilla...

LB: Silia...

EM: What school was she at, Peddleford Grove?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Okay.

LB: This is where I stared, right here.

EM: Oh, you started right here.

LB: Right here.

EM: Oh, okay, okay, okay.

LB: That's a long time ago.

EM: It was. Not for you.

LB: Now, you wait a minute here!

EM: How far did you go in school? To the seventh grade?

LB: Huh uh. I finished.

EM: You finished High School?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Was buses running when you went to Mary Potter? You went to, y'all went to Creedmor?

LB: Yeah.

EM: Uh, this community always been made up, about the same, the same amount of whites and same amount of blacks, or was they more blacks than whites, when we came into the forties?

LB: No, it was more whites, I would think. Yeah. 'Cause this land over here on this road, everybody got a, all these people that live on that road there is black now. Where it used to be, nobody on that road, nobody was on that road.

EM: It was a dirt road, but it never had the houses.

LB: All the land belonged to my father in law. Falcom. That was all his land.

EM: Mr. Falcom?

LB: Yes.

EM: He was black?

LB: Yeah.

EM: Uh, where do I find his children?

LB: Uh, right from here, right next door.

EM: Oh, okay.

LB: Go all the way on down ...??????? and turn, you got one where it go....

EM: Okay, I remember that. He still living?

LB: Yeah.

EM: the church, you, your husband goes to Peddleford Grove, you got to Allar? And y'all go back and forth? Or what.

LB: Both of us, go to Peddleford, both os us a member at Peddleford Grove.

EM: You .....????? membership, or....

LB: No, no, I never belonged there.

EM: You came up in Peddleford grove?

LB: Right.

EM: Okay, uh, I appreciate you sitting down and talking your time with me and everyting.

LB: I've enjoyed it.

EM: And uh, I uh, think that uh, I hope something come out of it. That, you and I, one day will look back at it, and see and improve on that responsibility of blacks or white, has taken our own responsibility.

LB: Yes. Yeah. Uh huh.

EM: And, we, we didn't push hard enough. The strength we lost, we lost strength when we got to the sixties. And everybody bailed out of everything. Everybody dropped everything went north, went south, went anywhere they could possibly go, got married and ran away from it.

LB: Uh huh.

EM: We weren't going to take it no more, and we, and we weren't going to work as hard as our parents. And then we got up, my wife and everybody, I ain't going to get, my child is going to have more than I have, and most of them end up in jail.

LB: That's true.

EM: And the momma, in the mental hospital, nervous breakdown, trying to buy them one hundred dollar sneakers, or hundred and fifty dollar shoes.

LB: And you know I became, when I got sixty two years old, first pair of sneakers I ever bought for myself, they cost fifty nine dollars.

EM: They don't know anything about going bare-footed to they?

LB: No. No! 'Cause I got a brother over here, had a boy, and he was, you know, he just had one child, and he gave him everything he wanted, so when I went over, I kept him for a while myself, raised him up some, while my brother was working at Butner, but then, I went over there one day, and his shoe was setting in the yard, his shoes, and I said, well, I tell you one thing, you better get that shoe up, 'cause if he was raised up like I was raised up, if he lost one of them, he would just be without shoes. It wouldn't be no shoes.

EM: That's right.

LB: But uh, I think it would be good if some of them, had a worked and went through what we had to go through when we was coming up. Might have made better women and men out of them.

EM: Why when Sunday come we knew what we had to do? And now it don't mean no different. They don't know you can wash, you can iron on Sunday. They didn't know that. And they didn't know, they don't know when Sunday come what you had to do, no matter what you had to put on.

LB: Right.

EM: You going to church or Sunday school. It's, we as a, not everybody, some people still save some of that history. And some of the tradition.

LB: Right.

EM: But, you as a parent, and your husband, y'all can't let your son, change a little bit of your roots.

LB: No, Huh uh.

EM: A little bit of your bringing up.

LB: No, no.

EM: You can't let him do that. And that's what has happened. You understand?

LB: Yeah, I understand.

EM: That's what's happened. My mother says, better to have us all there on Sunday to eat, we then see everybody. And she do that. She tell you don't cook. Uh, it's better to tell me what to do. And you know, see, she tells me what to do, so we got a little of that. You understand?

LB: Uh huh.

EM: Uh, a lot of these parents, it's just giving, they just don't have time for it, they giving up themselves. They don't want to take time. They expect the teacher to teach them, get their work, discipline, and everything.

LB: Yeah, everything. They think the teacher going to, they just grow them up until they are old enough to go to school. That's what's happening now. And they send them to school, and think the teacher going to raise them up. Train them.

EM: When uh, when I visit in communities, a lot of times, people do ask me, what do you want or what are you looking for, uh, I know what I'm looking for, and then sometimes, a good conversation, like you and I, means a whole lot. That, you trust me, and you share ideas, and we sit down and share each others ideas. And you trust me, and I tell people, people trust me, I've been blessed with that, and they work with me, and a good conversation, you learn a lot out of that.

LB: You really do...

EM: ....than you would out of something else. And you, you understand? You do. Because, what I want, I get out of your husband, not you, I'm going to beat up on him.

LB: Don't you hurt my husband. [laughing]

EM: But uh, it's, you admit, that uh, like your son, your brother, he works a lot, nobody going, they ain't going to give up that. That tradition, you know, you can tell. You

know, your sister down there the other day, you know, you can tell the ones that going always, and she, I appreciate what she said, she said, you go see my sister, said she, said she, she's the one that carries, you know, can take care of everything, and I appreciate her, and I know she meant it. You, 'cause they grown, but you still call and find out what's going on with them.

LB: Right, right.

EM: That's the tradition. Yeah, you call and make sure everything is going all right.

LB: Right, right, Yeah.

EM: Somebody have to do it.

LB: You got to still stay in touch.

EM: Yeah, 'cause you can so easily loose it.

LB: You can, you can. I said family don't stay together nowadays, what is going to stay together.

EM: And you know they don't.

LB: No, they don't.

EM: Over a dollar. I know a family busted up over a half a acre of land on a school.

LB: You'd be surprised that brothers and sisters in the family don't even speak to 'em, on account of some land. What they going to do about the land?

EM: That's right.

LB: Get six feet, and go on to something, hell or heaven one. I would fall, I told my mother and father that I was so glad they didn't have nothing, that we had to bury them. But anyway, so be it. We buried them. And uh, we didn't have nothing to argue over.

EM: That was nice. Church. You serious about it?

LB: Yes I am.

EM: Okay, tell me about it.

LB: I think if there's ever been a time that people need to stand up for what's right, they need to do it now.



EM: What positions you hold in the church?

LB: I don't hold, I'm just president of the missionary circle, my husband's a deacon.

EM: But, you don't play church?

LB: No, Huh uh.

EM: Everything is Bible study, everything is on board, you have to work with the church, work with the minister, help keep everything going. That's a job, you know.

LB: It is.

EM: It's just the way we talked about children. It's a job, you have to go around make sure all those kids, your cousin, your nephews and stuff, have to be in place.

LB: Right.

EM: Okay, that's good. You and I .....???????

LB: Yes.

EM: That's good, that's tradition. You have, you still have that?

LB: Yes.

EM: Okay. Uh, it's good to have all that.

LB: Yeah.

EM: The Lord bless you, you live good.

LB: He bless me everyday.

EM: Yeah. So you sacrifice better at the end, it's better to have it late, than to have it early, when you early you can live through any of it.

LB: Yes you can.

EM: But when you get older, it, it becomes a little different, and you can live with it, but if it's comfortable, you live a little bit better, and feel a little bit better.

LB: Sure.

EM: And when you get, you stay busy around here?

LB: Uh huh.

JM :Okay.

LB: Around here, I'm never at home. My husband say I'm gone all the time for somebody, me or him, always gone to do something, for somebody..

EM: For the community.

LB: The community. Somebody sick...

EM: That's good.

LB: We never steal...

EM: Y'all work for the community?

LB: Yeah, we retired, but we, we retired from....but we ain't retired from helping.

EM: That's what I'm saying, y'all still got the tradition.

LB: Yeah, Yeah, yes.

EM: You look after, make sure everything, Mr. Peace up there, he do to. He takes care, that community, going that way.

LB: 'Cause my son said daddy, if something happen, he outlive me. Said, he pick stuff out the garden to take to, said they be lost, 'cause I don't.....?????????

EM: Yeah, see.

LB: But, uh, you know, that's his tradition.

EM: Yeah, he don't know, he's just guessing. He might. But like Mr. Peace told me, he said, Yeah, if he takes care, I know Mr. Peace, said Yeah, I go to church, he said, Yeah, I know you take care of it.

LB: Why church really is seven day a week, you know, you just only go to church on Sunday morning. You got church all week long if you do it. 'Cause always somebody need you. You know.

EM: It makes you feel good.

LB: If you just walk in and say a kind word to a person who is sick. You know.

EM: Okay, I appreciate it..... (TAPE SKIPS) Uh, I'm Eddie McCoy, I was visiting with Mr. Braswell's wife, now we going to talk a little about Mr. Braswell, he going to fill me in a little.....(TAPE SKIPS OR STOPS.)

**END OF SIDE A**

**(BEGIN SIDE B)**

**WINFORD BRASWELL  
4 OCTOBER 1995**

EM: I'm James Eddie McCoy, I was visiting with Mr. Braswell's wife, today's date is September the tenth, fourth day, 1995. Uh, Mr. Winford Braswell will be giving me some of the experience he gained, and what his family did for the community when he was coming up. Uh, where were you born at Mr. Braswell? Where you grew up?

WINFORD BRASWELL: Right around, right here, I was born right down there where Rev. Braswell live.

EM: That was the home house?

WB: Well, it was one up, far as being old house, that was the home house for me.

EM: To you?

WB: Right.

JM : You had two home houses?

WB: Right, that was the one.

EM: Uh, how many sisters and brothers was it?

WB: Uh, now I got half brothers. I got, let me see, I got to get them straight....

EM: Just their first names, you ain't...

WB: My sister is Geraldine, my, and my youngest sister is Joyce. One, two, three, four, five, five brothers.

EM: Got five brothers?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: Do, did they live around here now. In the community.

WB: All of them live around here but one. One live in Kittrell.

EM: You kidding. That's nice, y'all didn't leave.

WB: Yeah, I got three brothers, live right, right in line here. My baby brother, he live in that house with the father. Yea he uh.....

EM: Now, I'm going to beat up on you now, I think that, I think that, the kids that went to Peddleford Grove school, I believe they started in the church first, and then they got too many kids and they built a church, a school for, for the kids.

WB: What you believe the school....my understanding it was a school where the old church used to be, first, then they....

EM: And the church came out...

WB: The school house was there, and the church came after.

EM: Out of the school?

WB: Right.

EM: Okay. So, I didn't beat up on you.

WB: Right, but when you was talking, I can't remember, I was just going by what I ....

EM: Hey, I know. That's what history is about, what you heard. Uh, that's what I, main thing I look for, is what came first, the church or the school, because this is what I'm doing research on.

WB: Right.

EM: And, I don't want to tell you how many preachers stole schools from, from people. It's...

WB: Probably amazing.

EM: It is, and that's why I enjoy this, is what came first because, it was a incident up there, they had a church, a school named Bridges Chapel, right there in front of Waisin Industry, you know where I'm talking about. And where the Kings Inn hotel is. Back up there it was muddy on that hill, the property became the Tyler's farm, and it was a minister in the area was having church in houses, bible study, and he went all around through town, until he got different people, different denominations and, they needed to

get out of that situation, and he heard that they was building a school on Raleigh Rd. Where Raleigh Rd. Church is. And he talked the people into letting him have bible study there, instead of in the house, and they went for it. And, the lady say, the next year, they was completing everything, and they came, they went one year, and he said, well, we, they don't use it at night, and they don't use it on Saturday and on Sunday, let's use it as a church and a school. And they fell for it. And then, you do what the minister say, he said, well, the children here can walk up to Mary Potter, or walk to school, or walk to the Grady School. And, he, they broke up the different denominations where he had Methodist and stuff like that, he brought them all in to what he wanted to bring them into. But uh, that, my research is on what came, I enjoy it because, you .....??????? Did they tell you it was in a log cabin?

WB: Uh, my understanding it was.

EM: Okay, and then, when they move here on this property, it was uh, weatherboard.

WB: Different wood, Yeah.

EM: Okay, tell me, give me a little history about how you got here, how you got the property, how you get to move and live in the school.

WB: Well, the way I got to live in the school, Jack, my stepfather, he bought the farm. He bought the farm here. Bought it from the Hancocks. And it was a, the best I know it was the Smith Farm before the Hancocks bought it, I think.

EM: Were they black or white?

WB: Black. The Smiths were. And he bought the farm, when he bought the farm, he bought the school building with it. And after I got married, I uh, I moved into a house, bought this, got it from him, and I reckon I lived in the school building a couple of years I guess.

EM: How many rooms was it?

WB: It was uh, two rooms. When the school, when the school was using it.

EM: How did you, explain to me how did you split it up, or what did you do.

WB: Well, there was a man lived in it a little before I moved in it. And he uh, he split it up, one of the rooms, and made two rooms out of it. ....??????? His father, he lived in it.

EM: Uh, and tell me how you come about after that.

WB: Well, after he moved out, that's when I moved in.

EM: What did you do to it?

WB: I didn't do nothing to it, really.

EM: Okay, where did you get your water from when y'all was going to school. Where was your water?

WB: We got it from, over here on, cross the road over here on the house.

EM: It was a , was it a pump or was it a well?

WB: Spring.

EM: A spring?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: One child could go, or two went?

WB: Two, two. Two would go.

EM: Okay, did the community, uh, supply your wood, your parents for wood, I know Rob Amos...

WB: We have uh, we have just run around through here, just breaking up deadwoods...

EM: I know, you always do that. Yeah. I'm glad you said that, kids didn't know that.

WB: Right. Somebody I think, would bring a load of outsize, and we cut it up. We'd have to cut it up.

EM: Robert Amos.

WB: Robert Amos was there before my, you know before I remember that.

EM: Right, I have documents that he sold wood, to schools.

WB: Right.

EM: Uh, he did, I don't have these two, because he was, Mr. Braxton said he always looked after everybody, so, I'm sure he gave that to them, whatever .....???????? Because your parents, y'all owned enough land anyway. And had enough wood throughout the family, to get some up here to make y'all halfway comfortable. This was Mr. Faulkner's property?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: Before the school? The school....

WB: No, the school was here.

EM: On Mr. Smith...

WB: I don't know what it was the Smith or the Hancock, would it be when Hancock owned it. Old man Bob Hancock, I think was the one that owned it, him or Frank one. That's what we got it from when we bought it.

EM: Uh huh. Uh, did the church start with bible study and Sunday school, in the school before they went on and got bigger?

WB: I don't remember that.

EM: What did they say?

WB: I can't, I think they just had church in the old log building there, then the start adding on, I understand that they was going to add on to the church one time, before they could finish it, it fell down.

EM: Okay, and where did the kids go to school at then, before they came right here?

WB: Now, I don't know where the children went to school then, the older ones was going down there I guess.

JM; Where?

WB: Down there at, down there where the old church used to be.

EM: Yeah. Did anybody ever tell you about a school here before that one?

WB: Uh....

EM: Uh, give your name, and your address

WB: My name is Winford Braswell, I live at 4013 Camden Mill Road, Kittrell.

EM: What's your birthday?

WB: August the 9<sup>th</sup>, 1933.

EM: So, how old are you?

WB: Sixty-two.

EM: Okay. You never heard, August the 9<sup>th</sup>?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: 19?

WB: 33.

EM: 33. You, if I tell you it was another school in this area, I know you don't know about it, but, was there ever a white school in this area?

WB: Not that I remember.

EM: Your whole life?

WB: Huh uh.

EM: Never seen a white school in this community?

WB: No.

EM: What about down Fairport?

WB: I don't know about down there. I don't know about down there in Fairport. Might have been one down there.

EM: Did anybody tell you, your four parents, that they had to walk from here to Wilton to school?

WB: No. I know, .....?????? 'cause I used to go there, when we moved, we moved from down here, and stayed over across the river for a couple of years.

EM: What do you mean across the river, I know what you talking, just explain it. I know what you talking about, just explain it, why you said across the river.

WB: Over there, right before you get to ninety-six highway, we lived there for a couple of years.

EM: Name the river so that people will know what you are talking about.

WB: .....??? River. Also called Camden River, 'cause we lived down there.



EM: Yeah, I was going to get you to tell why it was two things. It was **Tile???** River, and then it became Camden Mill?

WB: Right, it was a mill.

EM: That's where the mill came.

WB: Right up from where the bridge is now.

EM: Did you ever remember that?

WB: Yeah, I remember the mill.

EM: You do?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: Before it went in?

WB: Yeah.

EM: Uh huh. Uh, I have been, I have the amount of mills that was on that river, you would be surprised. It's about twenty.

WB: I know it was two. I don't know but where but one, I hear 'em talking about there is another one.

EM: Yeah, it's about twenty, from Person County, through, before you got into Franklin County. There's a lot of them wasn't they?

WB: Oh, you mean on Tile River?

EM: Yeah.

WB: Oh Yeah, Yeah. But there's two, I think around here, one up the river and one up, further down.

EM: That's where it was, they was kind of close together. Because .....????? so it was hard to get in one way. But I think it was about twenty in Granville County. A lot of them, wasn't they?

WB: Yeah.

EM: And uh, when you, how old were you when y'all used to live across the river? What grade did you go to school at?

WB: I don't know exactly what grade I was in, I sure don't, 'cause after we moved back, over down here, at the homeplace, I came back to school here.

EM: you started school here, and you went across the river?

WB: Well, I went to Wilton.

EM: Went to Wilton, and came back across here?

WB: Right.

EM: Okay, how many brothers and sisters was transferred back and forth?

WB: I didn't have no brothers to go to school here. All my brothers went to school at Creedmor, all them.

EM: Okay, they younger.

WB: Yeah, they younger, a lot younger.

EM: Is there any of them older? Your sisters you stepsisters?

WB: I'm the oldest.

EM: You oldest of all, the whole family?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: Okay, uh, you had your own land on this side of the river and that side too?

WB: Huh uh. We share cropped over there across the river.

EM: Who did you work for?

WB: Alan Backer, we farm half, share-cropped with him.

EM: Tell me something about, was he fair?

WB: Yeah, he a nice man.

EM: No problem?

WB: Yeah, I always.....???????

EM: Okay, how many years y'all farm with him?

WB: Two years.

EM: And then what happened?

WB: We moved back to the homeplace, for, I don't know, we stayed there before we bought this, and then we bought this land after that.

EM: From Mr. Faulkner?

WB: No, he bought this from Backer. See, we were living, when we moved back from the river, we lived down there where my uncle John H. Lived, that was the homeplace, and he farmed down there, then, on that, 'cause that was the family farm.

EM: How many acres was in that family farm?

WB: I imagine it was around sixty some. In the beginning.

EM: Uh, what did Mr. Baker think about y'all, you know y'all got along and everything, you know when I talk to people that sharecrop, uh, the kids like you tell me that the white man got mad because you bought land out from under him, and he didn't know it, uh, that you, they got upset because uh, they didn't think you could sacrifice that much, and that's what I was telling your wife about strength and strong. I talk to blacks that bought 80, 60, 100 acres, and was sharecropping, and the white man knew how much y'all was getting, and everything, and how you sacrifice. Why people don't sacrifice and do it no more, what happened as we came down the line?

WB: I don't know what happened.

EM: You was a part of the sacrifice.

WB: I was young when we was share-cropping.

EM: But you was a part of it.

WB: Now, when we left.....???, he didn't want us to go. Jack was talking about it, said he begged them to stay on and all, but see we got tired of working a day for ourselves, and three days, that's about what it added up to.

EM: I understand. And so, you just...

WB: We just come on down here, see we didn't have to pay nothing....

EM: I understand.

WB: So, then after he bought this, this farm come up for sale. And we bought it.

EM: But before you, your aunts and cousins sacrificed.

WB: No, my, I tell you, we ain't never had it really as hard as out here some people.

EM: I know. I know you tell the truth.

WB: This thing people saying didn't know where the next meal was coming from, and all, I ain't never went through that, I was too young to know it.

EM: It wasn't because you had land. I mean, land was in your family. If land was in your family, you could have. Because you, working over there for that white man, in your mind and your parents, you knew where you could go.

WB: Yeah. Right.

EM: You follow what I'm saying? You didn't.....?????? ....anything, you knew where you could go.

WB: We come back right back where we left from.

EM: Right, so you had, you had something. You had something.

WB: Right.

EM: But you went out on your own, you follow, you went out on your own, and just see how it felt, and how hard you had to work, and how you had to sacrifice for what you got, so when y'all got back there, you knew, this is what we have to do. You had grown up.

WB: Right. You knew that was going to be home.

EM: Right. And see, work, at ten years old, you and I knew how to work. You got to explain that too.

WB: That's why I told them when I retired, they said I know you going to get you another job, I said at that the time I had been working on public jobs and all, I had worked fifty years, and I was sixty two years old, and I said, no, I've worked enough.

EM: And that's what I explain to people, 'cause I came up in town, we had to get coal and wood in for those white ladies, I cut grass, you know I did everything to help my

parents, it was six of us. And they wouldn't have to give us money on weekends to movies and stuff like that, and uh, I was, I tell you, I was working at ten. I learned how.

WB: I was driving two mules when I was ten. Plow.

EM: And I know what it is, and that was work.

WB: Yes, it was. That's why we can't each serve.....??????? we ain't doing nothing to burn it out.

EM: That's true.

WB: When I was farming, ham and eggs....

EM: I tell people, take fat back meat, gravy pour it in molasses.....

WB: What's you talking about.....

EM: Sop it with hot cakes...

WB: That was living..

EM: But like you said, we sweated it out.

WB: Yeah.

EM: We worked it out of our system, or we would be dead. Now you can't do it, 'cause you don't do nothing.

WB: You ain't got no work. I hear people talking about farming is work, I said man, it ain't no work on no farm now, it ain't nothing but riding. I said every time you do, you sitting up there riding. I said you don't know what it is to go there ten hours of a day. And I did some hard work.

EM: I got a friend of mine....????...he came out on parole, saw white man with two mules, he bought one to put in the shade, and one to plow, and told him how often to switch them over. But he said the man didn't ever tell him when to sit down and take a break.

WB: No, wasn't no time for that.

EM: That's what he said.

WB: Right.

EM: The man would come and bring him water, and eat, and stay there with him, and then he'll go when it's time to go back. And told him don't let his mules get too hot.

WB: Boy I'll tell you right now, you know I hear so many people say, we got it made, we ain't got it made. We ain't got it made. We done come from down there, up here, but we ain't got up there. We still.

EM: Nobody taken over.

WB: That's true.

EM: That is true. You had sweet potatoes, white potatoes, turnips, chickens, hogs, cows.

WB: Didn't have to buy nothing but some sugar.

EM: That's all you went to town for.

WB: And flour from people that raise the wheat.

EM: That's right. Had all of that.

WB: Yeah.

EM: You had to plant it?

WB: We used to buy it by the barrel.

EM: You had to plant all that stuff?

WB: Yes.

EM: You had to buy the seeds, you had to work that, and the farm, and everything. Everything was work.

WB: Yeah, Yeah, I hear my mother talking about, I believe she was nine years old, was cooking for me, all the whole family, and nine years old. She was cooking.

EM: Where did the Braswell's originate from as you hear say?

WB: I don't know, I reckon it was right around here, I reckon. I don't know. That's all I never. I ain't never hear none of the old ones, say where none of them come from.

EM: Uh, the sixty acres of home place, was that down in, did you know your, you know, you have to explain...

WB: I know my grandfather, I know him, I remember him. He had it when I can remember. He was a, he owned it.

EM: That's what I mean. He, and then your father, your uncles or whatever it was.

WB: Yeah, they took over after.

EM: But uh, the old man had it first?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: Did you know enough, how much work, or what he had to do, or what, what kind of things he did, or he made?

WB: I don't expect he did a whole lot of work, 'cause he had grown, all the children was there.

EM: Okay, at all times.

WB: Yeah, they probably had to work...

EM: Would you say that farm has been there a hundred and fifty years?

WB: Probably have.

EM: It's easy, your granddaddy, then your father to you, now. Since easy, you go a hundred quick.

WB: Right.

EM: Though you and your father, you could go through a hundred quick. And then, the others, keep it going. 'Cause.... Uh, you, so you think that your uncle John H. Gifted with talent, and how to designate work, and how to negotiate with banks and white people, from having experience, he had a little, well say, his brothers and sisters had enough to kept collateral by having a farm, that you knew what, not to get in debt with, and what not to grow, and buy more and have more.

WB: Right.

EM: Okay. No.....????? working together?

WB: No.

EM: Y'all always respected each other. I ain't heard nothing about y'all, it was Braswell, you know never...

WB: We had but one family.

EM: Uh huh. Well that's the only one I ever, well that was good.

WB: You know him.

EM: Yeah, well, everybody know that one, but that was good.

WB: Yeah, for just one.

EM: Yeah, it sure was. Yeah. 'Cause your nephew whatever live in Raleigh, you got about twenty some houses I guess in Durham.

WB: Yes.

EM: Uh huh, he's a go getter.

WB: Oh Yeah.

EM: You know, everybody was. You know, and y'all worked, you invest your money, your family bought land, nice things. Tell me, how did the church get started, and the size of church you got with the amount of money it took to build a church like that. I don't know your membership.

WB: The church we got now?

EM: Uh Huh .

WB: A lot of sacrifice. A lot of sacrifice. It took us probably, all together around nine years I guess to build the church. But we just, got together with the pastor, and just a few of the members were determined that we could do it with god's help, and we did it. We built it. It weren't but about, let's see, Robert, my brother in law, Robert and Robert Owens, wasn't but about three or four, four families. Really five families really stuck in there. And built it.

EM: Your wife's brother did all the brick mason work?

WB: No, he did some, and Robert Owens, I don't know if you ever knowed Robert Owens or not, he lived up there, below my brother in law Robert, in Antioch. Before he got married and moved to Durham. And, we had, Milton Herman, when we first started, he was a member, but he left 'em. He was a brick layer too. And we uh, kept on striving and striving, finally got in it.

EM: Where were you at before you got there?



WB: Right up the road there, in the old church.

EM: Okay, I know where it was. You was in there. Did y'all sell that land after you left it?

WB: We traded it, we traded it with the guy below there, to add land to our cemeteries...

EM: Okay, 'cause the other day I went down and seen the tractors and stuff parked on y'all's land.

WB: Yeah, he got, we traded him that, but you know what I've been thinking?

EM: What?

WB: They always, we had a wrestling about, there was supposed to been ten more acres, to the church down there, where that old church was, and we got lawyers to look into it, couldn't ever come up with nothing.

EM: Was it a will?

WB: Uh, see, I don't know. But I know the man that claim it from it, he didn't never have no deed.

EM: Okay, the church that you trade, did you know it was tax exempt? You don't pay taxes on it.

WB: Yeah. I knew it. I didn't knew it for a long time.

EM: Did he put it back on the tax book?

WB: I don't know.

EM: If he didn't, it's still y'all's land.

WB: I don't know whether he put it on the tax book or not.

EM: Okay, well, if he didn't, it's still y'all's land. I don't care if he trade it, because y'all had to get a deed. Did y'all have a surveyor?

WB: I think we had a deed to that, that little bit there. We had a deed to that, taht little old half acre there.

EM: That the church was on?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: Okay, you had deed to your church, okay, okay, okay. But you had your lawyer to draw it all up and everything. So, he had to...

WB: We had a lawyer to search for the ten acres.

EM: Okay. And what did he say?

WB: He couldn't never come up, he didn't never come up with no deed o nothing.

EM: Was there supposed to been a will too?

WB: There supposed to been way back there, but I think they, I don't know whether they, just broke something or what, you know how they did, I don't even remember the people who I give the land.

EM: Uh, in my research I always tell people this when I leave them. That, people that's dead, I learnt research on my own. You can easily find them, than you can people that's living. 'Cause we moves around. Dead people don't move. And, that's why I'm doing all my work on my own, so I'll be smarter to help my people. Because I do the same thing as a lawyer do, is research. You, understand?

WB: .....?????? the other night, the other evening when you was down there.

EM: Yeah, that's what, that's my, that's what I do. Is same thing, uh and, I let them know if I leave there was something they waned to tell me, or something they had, that's about, I would tell you, but I would not give you the history part that I researched, because it's mine, but I will give you the numbers, and the numbers of the book, and where go read it yourself. Because it's my history, mine has to stay with me.

WB: Right.

EM: You understand. But I, I've done that for a couple of people, and uh, like Harris's grove, the man told up we could have it. Mr. Peace, whatever we wanted to do, we could have it, the community, do what we wanted to do with it. And see, how me going in there doing that, you still left, wouldn't nobody know.

WB: If you hadn't a did it, it would have just been.....

EM: Right. It's so, he wouldn't never cut no more timber off of it, and once we started going in and out of there, looking at it, come up with an idea, what the community, and get together and do, you'll do something.

WB: Right.

EM: Yeah, you people can do something. It's a ....put a .....?????? have fine reunions.

WB: Do something with it.

EM: You understand what I'm saying. Dig a well, put you a septic tank, sewer, all you do is pool some money together.

WB: That's right.

EM: And go down there and put you a nice trailer. And add on to the trailer like everybody do, put the trailer house, one double wide, and add on to the other what you want to, with the other one, with everybody in the family working, and when you have family reunions, and cook outs and stuff like that, could be used for that.

WB: Right.

EM: You got nice land, you own a acre of land, you don't have to worry about it, it's tax exempt, because it's tied in with one of these churches. Or with both of them. That's all you have to do. But, uh, it just takes, it just take time to do things like that. And uh, it was hard days with that church wasn't it?

WB: Yeah. Yeah, it was, we had, we, we had some, sometimes we would run out of money, didn't have enough money, and we found a .....???????.....any money then, 'cause we got the church built, we wanted to get the heat and all, make a long .....????? put the heat and pews and all in it. I think the first, the first year we had service in the new church, we used a pews. out of the old church. In the new church.

EM: What did you do with the pews after you finished...

WB: We uh, we let another church have them, building a church somewhere up there. Just about gave them to them. 'Cause that's one suggestion I made, I said, God's done blessed us, and we, I think the same people got.....?????? the old church. Man bought the old church.

EM: What year did you start the church?

WB: Started building it?

EM: Uh huh. Just guessing.

WB: In eighty, about eighty five I reckon.

EM: Well, who the land came off, Mr. John H. is the one...

WB: Yeah, we bought the land from him.

EM: Okay. He's a, he was assistant minister there or something, was that his church too?

WB: Yeah.

EM: Okay. Uh, I got to interview another girl that, that .....?????? The Harrises built one in Antioch, but down below your brother in law.

WB: Uh huh.

EM: Uh, that's what I want you to talk about, you know, church and school, and let me, and the people know how brave you are, when it comes to building a church that size. With no money.

WB: That's right. You go to, got to just trust God. For your support, and with him, you can do it.

EM: Did the minister stick with y'all all the way? Did they change ministers?

WB: No, we had our, we changed, our pastor left, I don't think he stayed with us a year after we got in the new church.

EM: Okay that was fine. But he stuck with you...

WB: He stuck with us...

EM: From the start to the end?

WB: Uh huh. Yeah, he stayed with us...

EM: Who came up, why, you knew you needed something better, but who came up with the idea, that size of a church, uh, if you going to build one, have it big enough, come back no more or what?

WB: I guess the uh, our members the ones that did most of the work, I think they come up with the size we were building. See, when we first build it, we weren't planning on having a basement, and after we got started on it, and I think Bob figured we could dig out on the back, and have half of it, and have a nice basement.

EM: That was nice.

WB: Uh huh, and we did that.

EM: So, you got a half basement?

WB: Right.

EM: And that helps didn't it?

WB: Yeah, that's .....??????????

EM: That was the best thing happened.

WB: Yeah.

EM: Yeah. 'bout how many members y'all have?

WB: I don't know that. We done had them to go, way I see it, if you got members on you roll, and you don't see 'em, in three or four years, to me, it's not a member.

EM: Right.

WB: I would say we probably got fifty, between fifty and seventy-five members. Fifty would be active....

EM: Do you have children in it?

WB: Oh Yeah, we have...

EM: Have a lot..

WB: We uh, we let our young people take over the service every once in a while, for training, not for them to take over, we let them know that, but we just let them...

EM: Right, Yeah.

WB: Just read scripture, pray, do all that, Yeah.

EM: Right, and let them know that, when you come in the church....

WB: you ain't out.

EM: Yeah, you, we got different rules.

WB: Right.

EM: And they are not written down.

WB: Right.

EM: And, don't nobody have to push you, is you know what this is your house, you got to take care, but we have different rules.

WB: Right.

EM: They are old rules.

WB: Right, righ.

EM: Everybody can tell you what to do.

WB: Right.

EM: ...In the church.

WB: Right

EM: That's what I told my pastor too.

WB: And we don't have no problems what so ever.

EM: That's right, just let them know what the church is all about.

WB: right.

EM: And uh, you know, when slaves was working for white man, and the white man would say I'm going to give you a house before you die, give you some land, and they have given slaves land, they say I'm going to help you build a house, and you know what those people told him, say, I'd rather have a church. And live like this, than to have a house. Sacrifice. Strong. Not selfish.

WB: Right.

EM: Y'all sacrificed to build that church.

WB: Oh, Yeah.

EM: You didn't build that church in 1920, 1930, when you could get some decent, .....????? you, you know, two by fours, you was buying top two by fours. Yeah, Yeah. It was very expensive.

WB: Sure it was.

EM: Yeah, and with all the help, free help and everything, it just looked like they weren't enough.

WB: That's right. Everytime, finish one thing, money out, we had to dig back and go a little deeper. But we, we made it.

EM: How long you been a deacon at the church?

WB: 'Bout twenty, twenty five years.

EM: Well, you been working, you came up in the church early didn't you?

WB: Oh Yeah, Yeah.

EM: Yeah, you was brought up in the church real early. And that was the only church you was brought up in.

WB: Right, Yeah.

EM: Your parents brought you up in there.

WB: Yeah.

EM: Did your mother a hard worker?

WB: Oh Yeah, Yeah, she often mentioned about it now.

EM: She still living?

WB: No. She been dead a long, I don't know how many years.

EM: Was she tough?

WB: Oh she was, she was the law.

EM: She said twenty years, your wife said twenty years.

WB: Been dead twenty years. We got some, I don't know, we had some books down there at the house now, where she kept records, like Ben Peace, did you ever know, I don't know whether you ever knew him or not, that was my sister in law's husband's daddy. He used to come over there and support her, where he'd give a dollar, fifty cent, and most of the members, fifteen cent, ten cent. Quarter.

EM: What was she doing, keeping records? Or you talking about....

WB: She was our secretary. Yeah.

EM: She was tough.

WB: And it weren't like it is now, you know. You got envelopes now, you can put on now you want, and they can go on home, take the envelopes on home, and she sat right there at the table when each individual come up, and put that money there, she'd right the name down, and what they gave.

EM: This was in the old church?

WB: Yeah. Uh huh.

EM: What did you do with the records?

WB: What, the books?

EM: Uh huh.

WB: I. Yeah...

EM: I would like to see them. My grandmother was, she tough on, any children come to play, she couldn't read and write, but she was tough. And, she said she used to plow.

WB: Uh huh. My mother, she didn't go too far in school, but she had, she, yes, Lord. She...

EM: She knew you needed to go to school?

WB: She finally went to school after she got grown.

EM: She did?

WB: Yeah, she did. I tell you, she got her G.E.D.

EM: That was nice.

WB: I can tell you who was one of her teachers. Uh, **Birgon?????** I know you know him...

EM: **Berma Birgon?????**

WB: Berma Birgon. And when the first week she went, he told her she really didn't hardly need to be coming, because she knew about as much as she did. She was...



EM: That was tough. Strong.

WB: Yeah, it's just unbelievable, I don't think, when she was going to school, she didn't go long, 'cause like I said, she had to quit school and started cooking, for all her brothers and all.

EM: She's the oldest?

WB: Yeah. I believe she went to the third grade, didn't she Laura? I Believe she, she say she went to the third grade. She shore, when I come, that's where I got my learning, besides the teacher from her.

EM: And she took on all of the responsibilities?

WB: Uh huh.

EM: You had the stepfather, or she was your real mother?

WB: She was uh, she was my mother. But my stepfather is Jack Daniel, Jack, he live right down the road. Yeah, she, she was just a ....

EM: Amazing?

WB: Yeah....

EM: The Lord blessed her?

WB: Yeah, right, right, right.

EM: She had love and everything?

WB: Oh Yeah.

EM: Church?

WB: Yeah, I reckon she had, I don't think that she had an enemy in the world, everybody loved her.

EM: And get out and walking and .....?????

WB: Well, see back then, you didn't walk far, they lived right here at the church. Walk, you know.

EM: Tell me, about how proud you was, when you found out you could buy the property that your school was on, and you could live in? Explain it....

WB: I know, I can't explain it.

EM: I wish I could have been there, I ..

WB: I can't explain it, I just, I just knew, see I am never, I always, when I was real young, I never been a person that wanted to pay rent. I always had this in my mind, if I could pay a man rent, I could buy me a house. And, so, I ain't never had to pay no rent. Ain't never rented nothing. I just....

EM: What did it feel like when you, and your wife, y'all moved into a, a school, where you went to school, because a lot of blacks don't know, it's five or six that the white people took from us, didn't take, one is.....??????? ....where you cross, go up by the ABC store, cross the railroad tracks, they built the front into the back of that, to the school. And it's one they got, that they built, the school is in the front of the house, you know built it that way, for the history. So, people don't know about these schools, how, you know, it, it's history, it's amazing to get in one. And for you to live in a, you know when you went to, you didn't dream of living in a school.

WB: No, not really. No, I had no idea, when I was going to school there, I had no idea, if someone would have told me, you will live here one day, I wouldn't want to believe it. I figured they was crazy. When I moved in they didn't have lights. I uh, I had lights put in it and all myself.

EM: That's what kids need to know.

WB: You know, a lot of them, if you tell them, they don't believe it. And then they laugh at you, and say how did you make it then, how did you live with that? Outdoor toilet, you take a child now, they ain't going to no outdoor toilet. No.

EM: My father got a .....??????? .....it took five years, six of us, they used to say, Lord, he'll never finish that house. But my father used to get brick masons, pay them on Saturday, they done blew their money through the week. Yeah, rain, and pretty day, and he, did a lot of carpentry work, didn't change the plans, built it right to the plans, and everything, and they say he would never finish it, but like you say, he didn't owe nobody. When he finished it, he didn't have to worry about nobody coming and getting it. And that's what he told us, it's worth a ....

WB: I got a, I got a book, on our old church, and the day that we marched from the old church to the new one.

EM: You have it here?

WB: Yeah.

EM: I'd for you to Xerox it, just send me some Xerox, and get some, information out of it. Let's finish, telling me, let's talk about in there. You went to school. Where did you play at, describe this whole piece of property to me, where, what....

WB: Now, okay, that highway, out there, it was a dirt road on the other side of the highway....

EM: Okay, I understand, okay.

WB: And the school house sit right in front of, my house now...

EM: Where the cars, where we park?

WB: Back this way, not too far from my house.

EM: Okay, Okay.

WB: See, I built right behind it, close up to it there's a creek....

EM: Okay, back other people.... Uh huh, Uh huh.

WB: Right. And, .....

EM: And you played...

WB: Played out there in the front, and back, we used to play ball there, we hit the ball back that way, and I know plenty across the highway over there. And....

EM: What about the back?

WB: Bathrooms was long back here somewhere where the house is

EM: Did you have a girl and boys part?

WB: Had one over here, and one over here. Girls was on this side, and the boys was over here.

EM: Did you have a acre to this school or what?

WB: No, it wasn't an acre.

EM: okay.

WB: It was, less than an acre.

EM: Uh huh, and, and when you, what made you, you just buy this piece, you know, what made you want this piece or what, what kind.....

WB: Well after, after I was living here, living in the school.....

EM: You was renting?

WB: No, I didn't have to pay nothing, I was just living here, I ain't never....

EM: Because of the family?

WB: Yeah, because I ain't never rented. Then I was looking in a, one of these papers where they mail out from Jim Wolbart Homes, and I was looking in there, and I saw this advertisement, and I said, I am getting me a house. I was the only one working at that time. So, when I fill the application out, and send it in, it was back up here in a few days, and so uh, they put up the outside, and I got my brothers to paint it for me. Now, it wasn't this size when I built it, 'cause after I added this on, everybody asked me, said, how in the world did you live in that little box, see my house wasn't but from right there back, I added this, all this on about four or five years ago.

EM: But, tell me the story of what you started to do about, less keep the school, let's build on to it, let's do this. Tell me a little about....

WB: I never did decide uh, that didn't cross my mind, because the school was getting in right bad shape....

EM: Okay.

WB: The outside was old, coming off....

EM: And under it..

WB: Yeah, weren't no .....???? on it you know, just...

EM: Right. That's the way all of them...

WB: Yeah.

EM: Uh huh.

WB: So, and then my mother, she encouraged me too. That I could get me a house.

EM: And you live, in the school that you went to school in.

WB: Right.

EM: Played on this property, and now own this property, live in it. Where you went to school. You know, that's history there.

WB: Right.

EM: Yeah, that's history. That is history. You will never forget it, nobody in your family will never forget that.

WB: It a lot, when I pull up in my driveway, I think about the school building.

EM: What do you think about me going around, uh, trying to put some history together about this county, and bringing the people, and showing them where we came from?

WB: I think it's great. I hope the people cooperate with you.

EM: I've been getting good support, it's worked...

WB: I know it.

EM: A lot of money come out of my pocket. I'm, by me not having the experience, I'm where now, people will give me money, because I'm proving my self. And uh, I'm just as excited as you are, to find a black that went to a school, came back, lived in the school, and then built a house, and live on the property. That's history.

WB: Right.

EM: That is, and you sacrifice too.

WB: Now I still got uh, I still got some of the .....

**END OF SIDE B**