

Uncorrected Transcript of

Interviews

with

FRANK H. CLARK

13 June 1995

and

MARY THOMAS HOBGOOD

23 September 1995

by James Eddie McCoy, Jr.

Transcribed by Lauren Miller

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

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[START OF SIDE A]

FRANK H. CLARK
13 June 1995

JAMES EDDIE MCCOY: June the 13th 1995, I'm visiting Mr. Clark. His address is 304 Leneir Street. Time is approximate 3:30. I'm Eddie McCoy and I'm going to be visiting Mr. Frank H. Clark at 304 Lenoir Street. Mr. Clark, give me your age and date of birth.

FRANK H. CLARK: I was born December the sixth, 1915.

EM: What's your name?

FC: Frank H. Clark.

EM: Aw. What area of Granville County you lived near when you was a kid?

FC: North Granville.

EM: Okay. How close was the church to your house? The Johnson Creek Baptist Church.

FC: I was about one mile away from the church.

EM: Okay, well, y'all didn't have no excuse about going to church, then did you?

FC: Naw.

EM: Cause you were so close. Aw, were your mother a good work in your church, as well as your father?

FC: Yeah, my mother, she was a missionary; and my father, he was a deacon of the church.

EM: Were you old enough to know that your mother and father was that good of a work and really worked hard and your father was a deacon early?

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: You was?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay, um, did he enjoy, and he was, dedicated to his work?

FC: He was very dedicated to his work.

EM: Not matter what kind of work he did?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay, he took pride in it. Okay, what about your mother?

FC: She was the same.

EM: How many sisters and brothers?

FC: I had to sisters and four brothers.

EM: Okay.

FC: Two of 'em was dead.

EM: Okay, um, which one of them that out of all of y'all worked, loved the church the most of all the kids. Was it about the same?

FC: About the same.

EM: Okay, and when Sunday come you knew where you was going?

FC: Yeah.

EM: That's what everybody say. Um, what did you do in the church now?

FC: Well, I at the present time, I was deacon of the Johnson Creek Baptist Church?

EM: Is that the church your mother?

FC: Yeah. Umhuh.

EM: And all of y'all attend.

FC: Yeah.

EM: Um, what about your uncles and aunts?

FC: My uncle and aunts mostly some of them lived away from here.

EM: They was?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Could you name your two sisters?

FC: Aww, Viola Clark and Ethel Clark.

EM: Okay, um, how many sisters and brother was older than you?

FC: Ahh, let's see, three brothers, naw two brothers, naw one brother was older than I am.

EM: Okay.

FC: And the other two was younger than I am.

EM: There was?

FC: Uh-huh, and the sisters, I had one older than I am, then one younger.

EM: Did, um, y'all always did what mother and father said?

FC: Yeah.

EM: There was never no doubt?

FC: No doubt.

EM: That's good. Aw, what school did your brother go to that was older than you? First grade on?

FC: He went to the Johnson Creek School.

EM: Okay, um.

FC: Mm-huh, then he wound up over to Mary Potter one, two years I believe.

EM: What did he do after he left Mary Potter? Did he try to teach, or what?

FC: No, he just, ordinary work.

EM: Mr. Clark, we was talking about your brother, the one in school at Johnson Creek into Mary Potter. Now I want you to tell me, what school did you go to and how many children, approximately, went there and did you have a sister or a brother going with you to the school everyday?

FC: Um, the school that I went to, it was a distance, a short distance, up here from the house.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Well, my sister and brother and I both we attending that school until the school got, the number of people got too large, and they had to build another school down to Johnson Creek.

EM: Okay, before they went to Johnson Creek, um, I can understand you forgetting the name of the school 'cause it been so long, but in my research it was named Clark School. But ahh, we'll move on to the next school. Was the next school at Johnson Creek?

FC: Yeah, the next school was built down at close to, near Johnson Creek Baptist Church.

EM: Okay, would the school move or the church move one time? Tell me about that.

FC: The school moved. They moved the school.

EM: Okay, you had two Johnson Creek Schools. One got too big again? With children?

FC: Naw, they didn't, uh, that's when they did away with that one, and they moved it over.

EM: Aw, okay.

FC: Yeah, uh.

EM: But what I'm saying, did the chur- the school never caught on fire did it.

FC: Oh, naw, uhuh.

EM: Was it a log cabin school or was it a frame?

FC: It was a frame building.

EM: With slabs.

FC: Yeah. Right.

EM: Okay, um, so it one room or two room?

FC: It was a two room school.

EM: Okay, um, can you name the teachers or someone who was there?

FC: Uhh, Elizabeth Day was this teacher there and also, um, Melissa Yanson.

EM: Uh-huh, who taught at the school that you don't know, you forgot the name of, and I call it Clark School. Who were the teachers taught you there?

FC: Ahh, Miss Yanson, and there was one more teacher, I think there was two teachers who taught there, and the Day-lady teacher, aw, she was a Day.

EM: Okay, that's her last name.

FC: Yeah.

EM: That's no problem, we can find research on that. Aw, could you describe Miss Yanson? Was she genuine. You said she was the first one?

FC: Yeah, she was the first one.

EM: Was she an older lady, or was she younger?

FC: Yeah, she was old.

EM: Okay, Miss Day, she was an older lady or a younger?

FC: She was younger than Yanson.

EM: Okay, so, aw, basically, Miss Day, ah, Miss Yanson was there when the school probably started?

FC: Mmm.

EM: When you moved there. Aw, let's talk about your father first. Give me his name and how old you think he was when he died.

FC: Um, my father's name was Frank Alexander Clark. He was, ah, 80 when he passed.

EM: Okay, um, what kind of work did he take?

FC: He was a farmer.

EM: Yeah, that's what all of y'all?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Always?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Um, did you ever see your father's, your granddad on your father's side?

FC: No, I never see him.

EM: What about his mother?

FC: No, I didn't her on my daddy's side; but on my mother's side, I saw her father, grandfather.

EM: Okay. Your farmland, did it come through your mother's dad or somebody or did your father buy it himself and start it?

FC: My father, he bought it.

EM: He bought it?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Okay, 'bout how long did it been in the family?

FC: Uh, it, it been there since, ahh, 79 year.

EM: How many acres of land did he have?

FC: Uh, on the first farm there was 35 acres of land.

EM: Mm-huh.

FC: And on the, ah, second farm, there's 105.

EM: Did your dad-

FC: Dad was b-, dad was ahh, 'cause I was much older, I got up and aided on the second farm.

EM: Aw, could your father read and write?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Where did he learn it from? Did he tell y'all?

FC: Well, he went to school at, ahh, I think the same little school I was going to, I guess.

EM: Okay, what I call Clark School?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Um, how did, how did he, now he did-

FC: No, he didn't go to that school 'cause that schools, uh, that school, that was afterwards. I don't know which school my daddy went to. There was a school there that he went to.

EM: Oh, maybe you'll think right. I'm going to come back again anyway. Um, your father, what, was he sharecropping first? Where did he get-

FC: No, what it is, ah, his daddy, I think, his daddy's, aw, the place he lived on, I think is his daddy's place.

EM: Oh.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: What, did he have anymore brothers and sisters?

FC: Yeah, he had some more brothers and sisters.

EM: How many did he have? If you don't mind, you can just guess.

FC: Just one, I believe.

EM: A girl or boy?

FC: It was, a, it was a boy.

EM: Okay, so, you never seen neither one of your grandparents on your father's side? The grandmother?

FC: Naw.

EM: You never seen them?

FC: No.

EM: Okay, so, your father was always farming all your life?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay, so he would never owe nobody, he wasn't a sharecropper or nothing?

FC: No.

EM: His father could have been one, come out of slavery, but your father wasn't?

FC: No.

EM: Okay, let's, um, if could, if he could read and write that good, he did a good job. Keeping a farm and working, and see a lot people don't know y'all been coming to town every week.

FC: Naw.

EM: See you been coming to town for necessity, and you didn't come once a month, for some sugar or coffee or something like that.

FC: Naw.

EM: Well, see people don't understand you fought, you got have seeds for everything. You gotta have feed for your cow, the horses, and, um, it, it was a lot of budget and know what your doing.

FC: Yeah, well, you, you'll raise the seed for your, ah, hogs and cows, and then you turn, actually, we would, ah, raise seed for everything. Mostly for replanting, for, um, planting tobacco, you raise the seed. We actually didn't have to, um, come to town that often.

EM: Mm-huh. Do you vaguely remember the first time you came to town and seen it?

FC: No, I don't (Laughs).

EM: Where did you get your books from at your first school? Did you ever know?

FC: Well, ahh, they would come through the school far as I know. Where we get our books from.

EM: Uh-huh. It's always different. 'Cause I always ask that.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Did your mother or father ever talk about a midwife in that area?

FC: Midwife?

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Oh yeah, that's, yeah, midwife, there is a lot of 'em, quite a few midwives aren't there?

EM: Well, uh, can you think of 'em now, you?

FC: Naw.

EM: Okay, the next time I come back I'll get you to write 'em down for me. Think about it. That's, I just like to ask people that. It's very important. Okay, gimme your mother's name and how old was she.

FC: My mother's Maude Jekcola? She was 103 when she passed.

EM: She was 103?

FC: Yeah.

EM: How active was she?

FC: She was always active up until she passed.

EM: She was?

FC: Yeah.

EM: She knew where she was going all, all the time? What about her faith in the Church and God?

FC: It was good.

EM: It was?

FC: It was very good.

EM: Was she a nice grandma?

FC: Yeah.

EM: A nice mother?

FC: Yeah.

EM: And everything?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Your children, everybody liked her?

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: She was a likable mother, and the neighborhood children- y'all had a lot a kids, other kids from 'round the community, came at your house and ate or had something?

FC: Yeah.

EM: It was always something there for everybody?

FC: Yeah, uh-huh.

EM: That was good. Um, did your grandmother and your mother- did you know your grandmother, your mother's mother?

FC: Yeah, I knew my grandmother on my mother's side.

EM: Tell me a little bit about her. [????????] were, things like that. Just tell me something.

FC: Well, uh, my grandmother on my mother's side. [????]On Blue Wing. She was up there on the other farm, so we moved her down there to the farm at Johnson Creek so she live down there for awhile.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: And, uh, but I think she was close in her 80s or 90s when she passed.

EM: Mm-huh. Aw, was she sweet and kind too?

FC: Yeah, she was very [????????].

EM: Quiet?

[??????????????]

FC: Jo, Joanne, ah, Tuck, I believe her name was.

EM: What were your mother's maiden name?

FC: Uh, Joe. . [?????????] maiden name, she, she was a Tuck before she got married.

EM: Your mother was a Tuck?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Aw, and her mother was a Tuck too?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay, what, this name don't ring a bell in Granville County. Did they come from Virginia or they was always in North, North Carolina?

FC: We was always in North Carolina, on the edge of Virginia.

EM: Did you know any Tucks? Do y'all have family- you ever seen your mother's, your grandmother's or your mother's father? 'Cause she was a Tuck or her sisters.

FC: Uhh, yes, yes, my, mm, Maruda Tuck, her sister. She had a sister, Joanne T-, Joey Tuck; that was her brother, Joey Tuck, and, ah, Alexander Tuck, Mac Tuck. I think she had three brothers.

EM: Where were they buried at? Where was your grandmother buried at?

FC: She buried at Johnson Creek. Wait a minute, no my grandmother's buried at, uh, Blue Wing, I believe.

EM: Blue Wing, and she was a Tuck?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay. Blue Wing?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay, that's where your mother came from, right, Blue Wing?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: 'Cause y'all had a farm up there first?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay, then your father bought one down at Johnson Creek?

FC: Naw, we had the farm at, ah, Johnson Creek first.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: They was living on this, ah, farm on Blue Wing; so, ah, they getting to the point they had to move, they going to sell it, so daddy bought it.

EM: Who was going to sell it?

FC: Ah, I don't know.

EM: Oh, he was renting it from them or?

FC: No, they was, yeah, they was on it, living in this house that, ah. They was a renting on it. My mother's, aw, why they was living on Blue Wing, they didn't have no farm.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: They was living, they was renting.

EM: Okay, and then your father bought the piece of property?

FC: Yeah.

EM: The person put that piece up for sale?

FC: Yeah.

EM: And so he bought it?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay. That was through his- your granddad?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Okay did you see your granddad on your mother's side?

FC: Yeah, I saw him on my mother's side.

EM: Okay, what kind of man was he?

FC: He was a nice man.

EM: Did you, was you old enough to know how, how much he worked and how gifted he was, anything?

FC: I think he was, uh, uh, kinda like a carpenter. You know a,ah, built chimneys.

EM: He was a jack of all trades?

FC: Yeah. (Laughs)

EM: Well, you gave me something else to ask people. I forgot about chimneys. I used to clean 'em. So somebody had to build them too, now, didn't they?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Yeah, 'cause everybody don't know what their doing. Oh, he was a masonry, and more or less, monkey see, monkey do?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: He could fix things, build things.

FC: Yeah, yeah.

EM: And y'all would help him?

FC: Naw, I never helped, u-huh, 'cause he was, ah, he was that much older. Ah, course when I met him, he, he- I don't think he, but I knew anything much about him, he was, he was at work.

EM: Okay.

FC: Yeah

EM: Okay.

FC: Yeah.

EM: But he was a masonry and all that?

FC: Yeah, mm-huh.

EM: And that, that's probably your father got it from, and y'all got it from. It hand down, it had to because y'all did everything at that yourselves?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Wouldn't that better that way?

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: Did he ever hire y'all out or do you know what I'm talking about?

FC: Well, we, we had worked out at, uh,

EM: On your home?

FC: Yeah, a day after we caught up at our work, at home.

EM: Okay.

FC: Yeah.

EM: Alright, now. Did y'all come in to help each other, if somebody got sick or anything happened?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Save the crops?

FC: Yeah, they'd help 'em save the crops- every, when anybody got sick.

EM: Why we can't- why can't your neighbors next door do the same thing as y'all, in every- people done back then?

FC: Well, I think everything moves a little faster now and so people don't have time to, to help each other I don't think.

EM: Do you know that, ah, when I'm talking to people and students, the problem I have, we- why we don't want to sacrifice like y'all did?

FC: Mm-huh. Well, everything moves so fast now, and till I guess you gotta get on the fast times.

EM: Huh, but you know how much sacrifice y'all did?

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: You're proud?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Think about it. You know, an acre of land was close for 50 something, a dollar, a dollar and a half. It's two thousand dollars to me and you.

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: That fifty cent was, you know how hard it would be for me and you to make two-thousand dollars?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Your father, somebody, you know?

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: It was the amount of chore and everything. It was, it's amazing how they could do it. Y'all helped, y'all helped everybody.

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: When you didn't have any, there's no problem.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Walk to school in the rain, sleet, or snow.

FC: Oh yeah, you had to go.

EM: You had to go, 'cause that your parents knew you need it.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: So, could your grandmother on your mother's side read and write? Or you didn't know, you was too young?

FC: Mmm, on my mother's side. I don't think so. I don't, I don't believe so. I'm not sure.

EM: What about her father, your, your grandfather on her side?

FC: I don't think he could do too much in reading and writing.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: But, since you, since you been in North Carolina all your, all your through your life, you never met any Tucks in Granville County, but, 'cept, 'cept that, 'cept your grand-

your mother or had there been anymore Tucks came in the Granville County? Did you ever know of them?

FC: Mm, no, not to my knowing of.

EM: Okay. Uh, your father had a lot of experience, Mr. Clark?

FC: Yeah, very much. Mm-huh.

EM: Aw, what he talk about? Value, he said? What most, what he talks about when he was talking to y'all, about life and preparing y'all?

FC: Well, he would tell us that, ah, when, ah, he said he didn't have too much chance of going to school himself, but, ah, he would try to, ah, get us all through, ah, school that he shouldn't sent us to college or nothing, but he would try to get us all through high school; if we wanted to go.

EM: Mm-huh.

FC: So, ah I think that's about the most I made it through high school. Yeah, all I made it through high school.

EM: He wanted that. And mother had to sew by hands, sewing machine, patch, do everything?

FC: Yeah, mm-huh.

EM: Flour bag, any kind of sack, to have. You all, y'all always have nice things?

FC: Oh, yeah.

EM: For what poor people could have?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: You have, oh, everything, and it wasn't rock bottom?

FC: Oh no, ah, we, we made it fine.

EM: 'Cause everybody didn't live well back then, people have to know it. But, ah, just in the amount of land and property y'all acquired, I appreciate it because it was hard work back then, 'cause y'all was fighting against the [????????] the money. You had people back then, white people, didn't want y'all to have nothing?

FC: Well, that's, that's true. Well I don't know, around in my area it seemed like they was, they was very nice white people though then.

EM: They was?

FC: Yeah.

EM: That's good. Y'all got along good as neighbors?

FC: Oh yeah.

EM: And worked together?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: That's basically what life is about. Okay, we going to go back to that school one more time, and I'm going to ask you some questions. Did it have lights in it?

FC: No.

EM: Did you, y'all didn't have lights at home, then?

FC: Mm.

EM: Aw, we the stove in the middle of the floor or on the side?

FC: It was in the middle of the floor so, ah.

EM: It was?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Aw, did you, just guess about how many kids was at your first school before they outgrew?

FC: Mm, I don't know. I guess maybe it was close at, ah, hundred or more.

EM: How many, ah. Did you, did y'all have, ah, bathroom outside or didn't have any toilet?

FC: Outside toilet.

EM: For boys and girls, everybody used one?

FC: Boys and, boys and girls, far as I know, yeah.

EM: Where did you get your water from, for that school? Drinking water?

FC: There was this spring.

EM: It's the same spring you, you, y'all used too? At your house?

FC: I think it was, yes. But I'm not, ah,

EM: Because you said, by you saying it was so close to school,

FC: Yeah, mm-huh.

EM: Okay. Let's talk about the wood. Did your father furnish the school with wood? Make sure y'all had enough? Or the school bought it from somebody?

FC: Never did, the school must have bought it from somebody, 'cause I'm not sure just how that was, just how they was getting the wood. Because you know when I was a kid, growing up, kids never pay much attention to things like that, no way. Ever since the, the, they was buying wood, I don't know who they was getting it from.

EM: Did you have a, you think they had a black that ran a sawmill in that area?

FC: Well, they had, ah, sawmills around.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Threll he used a sawmill.

EM: Know where he lived?

FC: Yeah, he lived down the road from, a few blocks, well, down the road from, ah, just a short distance from, ah, where I lived at, on Johnson-

EM: Did you, how often you knew him? You go to his house? Y'all was friends?

FC: Oh yeah, well, he's, he had a, well he would run, he had a sawmill, and he had a thrashing machine.

EM: What is a thrashing machine?

FC: Well, it thrash wheat.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: He was black?

FC: Yeah. Mm-huh.

EM: Did you know any of his brothers or sisters?

FC: Naw, I didn't, I don't think, I don't know if he had a brother or not. Naw, all I knew was Shep Threll.

EM: He lived by himself?

FC: Naw, he had a wife over there and had one daughter.

EM: What was her name?

FC: Nell Threll

EM: And his wife was Haddie?

FC: Uh, uh-huh.

EM: Was they good neighbors, or-

FC: Oh yeah, they was real nice.

EM: Was they in the same church y'all was in?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Okay. Well that's, that's family life. Um, did, ah, your brothers, after they left home, what kind of skills did they pick up as they went along?

FC: Uh, my brother used to work at, um, Yanson.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: At, uh, the Chevrolet place.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: And, uh, I had one another brother, he was working down there at, ah, the Dodge place here in Oxford, in McCanty.

EM: Okay, so, after-

FC: In McCanty where he worked.

EM: After he learned the skills in McCanty work and got confidence in everything, did they left Oxford and went to another state and went to work?

FC: No, he, ah, my brother, he's still here. He live in [???????]. He live on over on Railroad Avenue. And, ah, 'cause he retired now. He used to, then he went to, ah, he used to work out here and board.

EM: Uh-huh. Was he always tinkering with cars or your father?

FC: Yeah. Mm-huh.

EM: Did y'all ever have a buggy, aw?

FC: Yeah, we had, ah, side cart with ah buggy, or, a sire. No we never had a buggy, we had a sire, used to hook the horses to.

EM: A sire with a two seat?

FC: Yeah, that's two seat, mm-huh.

EM: Did y'all have cows and horses and stuff like that?

FC: Yeah, cows, horses.

EM: You, so you, y'all raised all your beef and everything?

FC: Yeah.

EM: So, ah, are you proud of the what your father instilled in you and?

FC: Oh yeah, uh-huh, very proud.

EM: And your mother too?

FC: Yeah.

EM: They was right, they was understanding and loving?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: And caring?

FC: Yeah.

EM: That's the way families, and that's what families is all about; it's that, is what makes a family. Um, what did, what did you do after you left from up at Johnson Creek, from that county?

FC: Well, I went to, ah, Richmond. I, ah, we to be a barber.

EM: Oh, you went to barber school?

FC: Well, no I didn't go to barber school, I just took it up while I was at home.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: So, I, ah, went to Richmond and went to barber sh- I opened up a barber shop, me and another guy, we was going to open up a barber shop in Richmond.

EM: Uh-huh. Did you have any family in Richmond?

FC: Naw, uh-uh. No.

EM: Did he?

FC: Huh?

EM: Did he have any family in Richmond?

FC: Who?

EM: The gentleman you cut hair with?

FC: Oh yeah, he had.

EM: And so how many years did you stay there?

FC: Well, let me see, I went to Richmond in forty, thirty-nine or forty-one, and, ah, I was inducted into the army in forty-one.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Stay in there four years. Then I came out the army, it was, went on back to Richmond. That's when we opened up- I was working with another man in the barber shop before then- so, ah, when I went back then we, ah, me and this guy, Chatam, we opened up a barber shop ourselves and went to work in forty- I came back in forty-five-

probably forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight, forty-nine. And I stayed in there 'till sixty-two, before I came back here.

EM: Stayed where?

FC: In, ah, Richmond, in, ah, working, in working, running the barber shop.

EM: What you got tired of it, or you just want to come back home?

FC: Well, ah, I decided I'd come back home. I couldn't get my wife to move to Richmond, so she just, so I came back here.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Well, do you think that, ah, children work as hard now and respect people back then? Like when you and I came along, you older than I am, but why they, you know, the parents and the children, kinda, ah, one go one way, the other go another way?

FC: Well, I don't know, children get to the place that they, ah, don't respect the parents, ah, like they did back then. Well, ah one thing, I think after the, ah, this child abuse got in there and all taken over, and they started to talking about the child abuse, that's when a lot of parents I think slacked on, on raising their children.

EM: That 'cause of integration. Whites didn't want blacks punishing their kids.

FC: Yeah.

EM: And they messed up the blacks. I feel the same way too, that, ah, that law got, protected the child and told the kid that, ah, they would stand by 'em or work, and they didn't have to take it. I used to get, my grandmother used to tell me, she won't going to whoop no clothes.

FC: Oh, yeah.

EM: Yeah, she whoop without any clothes on. That wasn't no child abuse.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Because I would go do something else wrong, it was that bad I wouldn't have done anything else wrong.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: I'm I right?

FC: That's right.

EM: Aw, so, ah, I personally do look at us, why?

FC: Well, because when you tell 'em something, they meant what they said, when they was, ah, when they spoke to you. And you had to obey 'em.

EM: (Laughs) That was it took, wasn't it?

FC: That was all.

EM: Yeah. And it worked.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Yeah, yeah, that was, was good about the whole situation, that, ah, by working. Could you name some more people up there in your area that own land? The Pointers and different people like that.

FC: Yeah, the Pointers on there, the Peaces, the Daniels, and, ah, Peaces, Daniels and Pointers.

EM: Did you ever go to Virginia much? Clarksville? And then little towns right over near you?

FC: Well, on occasion, yeah.

EM: You did?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Did you have kids to come from Virginia, to go to school with you?

FC: No, um-um.

EM: Not in that area?

FC: Naw.

EM: What, Nelson, Virginia, was about the closest to you. Did they had a black school for kids?

FC: Yeah, they had, ah, school over there in Virginia. I don't think any of the children come from close as I thought, to Johnson Creek.

EM: Uh-huh. Did you know, you know much about Blue Wing? About like, that there was a mine there and stuff?

FC: Oh, yeah, there was a mine there. Actually, there was that mine was on a [?????] farm that we bought up there.

EM: Who had, what happened to the mill rights and stuff like that?

FC: Uh, I don't know what happened to that. They just stopped, just stopped, closed the mine down, far as I know.

EM: Uh-huh. Oh, okay, so,

FC: Well maybe they just, they didn't need no more of that, ah, material that they was getting up there, and so they just closed it down.

EM: Mm-huh. What did you do when you came back from Richmond to Oxford. Tell me some things about what did you?

FC: Oh, when I left Richmond, came back to Oxford, I started working at, ah, Jeff Day[?], where they make antenna.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: I worked there, I don't know, until I, ah, they closed that place up, and then, ah, I went up there to the Oxford, Oxford Orphanage.

EM: How far did you go at Jeff Day's- supervisor or former or lead man or what? How far did you go up?

FC: Well, I just had a, a ordinary job, just cleaning, cleaning up, the maintenance job.

EM: Uh-huh. Um, you mentioned Oxford Orphanage which is white. We have had a lot of black carpenters to come out of that, that, ah, school, and that institution and that poor orphanage, and why y'all, did you, I know you don't know why, but most of the time they always had black carpenters around. I wonder why?

FC: Well, I don't know if I can say exactly why, but, ah, I know James Eaden, he was doing a good job, there, ah carpenter work, and one thing they had the things to work with, and, ah everything that a carpenter need for to work with, they had it there. So, I guess that's the reason why that they come up to be very good.

EM: The blacks?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Mrs. Lang's told me her father- her grandfather- her father work there, too, and a couple of them. And she said they can make anything. Say they made- one of the things she said, they knew he, he made, they mainly talk about all the window frame; doing on these big houses in town.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: They would serve them out, they would make window frames and stuff like that, and they got so good, they just came off and started working on their own.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: But ah, through the years that's one trade that the orphanage recognized, but eventually I'll get, try to get the amount of carpenters that's been in this town. There's a lot of them. A lot of them, that [??????] were schooled train, professional carpenters.

FC: Oh yeah, mm-huh.

EM: What about painters, a-around here?

FC: Painters around here?

EM: Uh-huh. When you was a kid in your area, how many painters did you know that was a good painter?

FC: Mm, well I don't know ah, I didn't deal with too many painters 'cause I used it all, painting myself. (Laughs)

EM: You made that- you learned it on your own?

FC: Yeah, I learned that on my own. I-

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Yeah. I think I had got one guy to paint this house once since I- I mean on the inside, painted one room since I. I think he charged me fifty dollars, so I started painting ever since, and I'd do all my own painting.

EM: How many kids do you have?

FC: Uh, how many kids I have?

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: I have, uh, three boys and ah, one daughter, ah, second marriage.

EM: They all was good kids.

FC: Yeah, uh-huh.

EM: Well, that, that helps you too, you know.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: That help parents when they can concentrate on other areas and don't have to deal with that all the time.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Aw, did you let them move freely in this community?

FC: Oh, yeah, mm-huh.

EM: 'Cause everybody could keep their word? Don't have that no more.

FC: Nah.

EM: Where did you first live when you came to Oxford? Was it after you left Richmond or before? Did you ever live in town?

FC: Did I live where?

EM: In Oxford, in the city before you went to Richmond?

FC: Naw, uh, when I went to Richmond, I was living in North Granville, 'bout eighteen miles out.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: My wife, first wife, she lived down there on Lanier Street. Three- I mean two-twenty-one Lanier Street.

EM: Uh-huh. So, ah, so you was living in, and you came back to Richmond, you was in Oxford?

FC: Yeah, uh-huh.

EM: Aw, what are you, what you think about Oxford far as growth and opportunity? We know smaller towns keep things kind of closed, but you think it could have done a little bit better, faster, than the way they did it?

FC: Well, probably could, but I think they moves along very well after business started to come in here. But ah, it looked liked the seam started growing some then.

EM: Uh-huh. Basic, they try to control growth and try to control what the good pay per hour. What you think about that?

FC: Well, ah, I guess after factories started away first. Before the factories come, you know, they wasn't, doesn't seem like they was doing too well, but ah, after factories come in someone decided to pay 'em look better.

EM: That would a, that's what made people feel bad about themselves.

FC: Yeah, mm-huh.

EM: Let's go back to Johnson Creek. Tell me about some other deacons and hard workers that you think was in that church.

FC: Well, there ah, Pointers' and the [????????], [????????].

EM: What type of ministers? Can you go back and tell me what type of ministers you remember that was good ministers?

FC: Well, we had our present minister, he's a Reverend Peace. He's real good. And had, ah, minister from Virginia, he was a Day, Reverend Day.

EM: Did you have anybody that, uh, minister was there, that over five years, eight to ten years, something like that?

FC: Well, the Reverend Peace, he'd been there about twenty, I want to say close to thirty.

EM: Could, that's what I'm talking about, you kidding?

FC: Close to thirty years, I think.

EM: He always done right. (Laughs)

FC: Yeah.

EM: You know Baptist minister, he stay in a church five years, he done broke a record.

FC: Yeah.

EM: Huh?

FC: Yeah.

EM: (Laughs)

FC: What a minute now, I said thirty some years, I think its thirty, its twenty, ah thirty something years. I don't know.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: He'd been there a long time. I know.

EM: Aw, what else can you tell me about that community for its people in the community, they was trying. Did you have families that was working hard and trying to the best they could for their kids?

FC: Well, yeah, I guess all of 'em, far as I can understand, that did all they could for the children, as far as the working concerned. [????????] They had, with what they had to work with, I think they did very well.

EM: Did you have ah, um, your father, all of y'all, you just had to do work, take pride, and you had to do it, you're, you're going back over it.

FC: Well, I tell you, and you farming, if you didn't do your work well, I mean you wasn't- couldn't grow nothing. So, you had to work so to try to get stuff in the grounds to try to get it to grow.

EM: Uh-huh. What did you thin about sharecropping, because I heard people talk about it, but I still, its, was that, that was the way to get started?

FC: No, the best way to get started, if you can afford a farm; best way, to try to own your own.

EM: That's the best way, stay away from working for somebody else.

FC: Yeah.

EM: Um-

FC: So if you working on a share, sometimes that sharecropper is half, I take half, you take half.

EM: Mm-huh. And don't nothing happen have bad season at all.

FC: Yeah.

EM: Your man can let you go?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: And 'cause if you think it going be a bad one the next year, ah, he ain't going to take them chances.

FC: Naw.

EM: Um, when you went up at Johnson Creek, aw, how far did you go- did a lot of kids in your community go down to Mary Potter or did you have to board down here. How'd you get back up there for your father's?

FC: Well, when my oldest brother, aw, he had some, he board in Mary Potter for one year, I believe.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: And, ah, I think he quit.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: And so after the, along then, I think they had decided, ah, open up a- they built a toll, and they open up a public school, you know up there- so I came to Mary Potter, ah, I didn't stay- I boarded up here with Miss Green.

EM: What was Miss Green named?

FC: Bebe Green.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: Big house was up here in the field, in the grove?

FC: Yeah.

EM: Did you, can you tell me something about Miss Bebe Green?

FC: Nn, she was very nice lady, uh-huh. I think, ah, well her husband had passed when we started. He may have, I think he was still living though when I first started going down there.

EM: What kind of work did he do?

FC: I'm not sure what he, I know she was a teacher, I don't know what he did.

EM: Uh-huh. So, when you was finished Johnson Creek, they had buses then? Y'all went to toll and you-

FC: Naw, they didn't have ah, when I was at Johnson Creek, they didn't have bus- they didn't have, it was white, but black didn't have no buses then.

EM: Aw, let's talk about do you ever have an idea how old y'all were when you first got lights out in that area.

FC: Mm.

EM: Didn't have 'em when you went to school, right, at Johnson Creek, did you?

FC: Naw, uh-uh. I don't know exactly, ah, lets see, ah, I think it was after when I left, after I left home and ah, long time before we got lights in there.

EM: Uh-huh.

FC: But now, ah, we had, ah, daddy bought, ah, the gas lamp, so we had the same as, ah, light, like, it would give you light just like these lights here do.

EM: Uh-huh. So, so dad could, y'all could afford things like that, too.

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: And that was good, that you could, you know could, ah, have some decent light.

FC: Yeah. Oh yeah, we had plenty of light, but we, beside dark, we had lamp lights, them lamp lights, it won't light nothing. But after you get them gas lamps, you just like a light that light in here.

EM: When y'all came home as kids where did you study? Do you have a fireplace, or, you had a fireplace?

FC: Yeah, we had a fireplace.

EM: Aw. Who go over with you work, your mother, your father, or?

FC: My mother. She'd go over and over it.

EM: Uh-huh, make sure you tried to do-

FC: Yeah.

EM: Y'all was pretty good students?

FC: I think so.

EM: Um, that is, that is the problem now, is that, uh, we don't work hard at things no more. Aw, where do you think it come from? Just the world, or everything is changing, everything is faster?

FC: Everything is changing, faster, or I don't know, try to move on the fast times.

EM: And that-

FC: And loose [??????] everywhere.

EM: Uh-huh, aw. Were your father real good to y'all as far as, y'all could play ball or something? What did you do when you come home from church? Could y'all have- play ball and stuff?

FC: Well we had a, uh, baseball diamond and stuff just a short distance from the house and, uh, we used to play ball on Saturday.

EM: Did y'all go from area to area playing different teams?

FC: Oh, yeah. Mm-huh.

EM: How were y'all team?

FC: Well, we had a very good team.

EM: You did?

FC: Mm-huh.

EM: That, that was nice. Um, how long you been retired now? Or are you semi-?

FC: No, well, I yes-

[END OF SIDE A]

