

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

3/31/09

Peggy Van Scoyoc (PV): This is Peggy Van Scoyoc. Today is Tuesday, March 31, 2009. I am in the home of Mr. Herbert Bailey in Evans Estates in Cary. We are going to talk today about his life and his experiences. So, I was just talking to you, asking you about if you can remember things that your parents maybe experienced when the South was still segregated, and what their lives were like in Cary at that time.

Herbert Bailey (HB): My recollections of Cary would probably have to be around the time I was ten, somewhere in that neighborhood. And that would have been approximately 1955, where some of the memories might go back beyond that, but I'm not quite aware of whether they would or not. So the position of my stories often times would be sometimes incorrect, but the story is in fact the truth.

So being around Cary, I have been here a long time. I remember when Maynard Road didn't exist. I remember when Kildaire Farm was a farm. I remember when Harrison Avenue was called Allen Hill, or whatever it was at that particular time. And it went down and dead-end. I remember when the center of town was the area of Ashworth's and Hobby's Appliances. I remember when Cary had only one blinking caution light.

PV: And that really wasn't all that long ago. It's hard to believe.

HB: I remember my father being, making wages of \$50 a week. I remember when Cary was building their first fire department, and he managed to donate, I think it was \$125, or some amount that was to purchase one brick in the fire department wall which still exists there today. I remember when Cary was a Southern town, and not occupied by the North.

PV: So what was it like as a Southern town?

HB: Well, there's this book about town, and they call it the other side of the tracks, so I can only speak for my side of the track.

PV: That's what I'm here for.

HB: It was kind of isolated and it was kind of a neighborly place. You knew everybody. If your house burned down, the neighbors helped. My father's barn burned down and the family helped. My family always has lived on the original farm. There's none of my family that's in this immediate area that doesn't live on the original farm. And then those that have gone from the original farm did at one time live on the original farm. And right now I have three of the family that's gone. My mother has moved back to the original farm. I've now moved on the original farm. And I have been in Cary on the original farm all of my life, except for my conception in Virginia.

I remember when the cross-country gas line came through, and I played in the ditch, when the evenings when the gas company crews left.

PV: Where is that line?

HB: It goes through, very close to the intersection of Silvergrove Drive and it goes through the subdivision over here that Clark built several years back. And it comes out up in the area of Food Lion up on the intersection of Harrison and Maynard. And it comes through by Crabtree bridge at Morrisville. So it traverses through. One of the most interesting things about it was, there was a creek that's over in the Silverton area. And on that creek, there was an extremely large bank. And when they came through, it was a massive excavation. And as in historical situations, you hear about Indians always living on a creek. Well, after that gas line went through, we found arrowheads for years and years and years on that gas line route. That

was very unusual. And we collected them and saved them. It has long since expired, and the creek has changed and the subdivision is on it now. So all of that is gone.

PV: Covered over.

HB: Covered over. The building blocks of time.

PV: That's pretty incredible to find that kind of evidence of earlier peoples and earlier civilizations here, going way back. That's exciting.

HB: Yes, and this is not something somebody told me. This is arrowheads that I washed off, that I looked for and that I found more than one. I mean, there's probably, I found maybe ten, twenty, something in that neighborhood.

PV: That's exciting to know. So, going back to your childhood, tell me about your schooling, and where you went to school?

HB: I went over at the area that is over where, over on, I think it's Johnson Street now. Johnson Street goes through, it's the elementary school there. And there was a, I don't remember what it was called. But nevertheless, there were three rooms, and a cafeteria, and of course the bathrooms and stuff.

PV: So was it East Cary at that time? East Cary Elementary, and it is now Kingswood?

HB: It's Kingswood, I think is what it is now. And I'm getting old too, and I have a problem recalling names. I can tell you the place, tell you the people sometimes, but just names. And then some of the names have changed. Like for an instance, West Cary Jr. High School used to be Clyde Evans Sr. High School, which it was named after my grandfather. And they for some reason changed it. The school system wanted to get away from naming schools after individuals, is what I was told. And so they changed it to West Cary.

PV: Now did he donate some of the land that that school is on?

HB: No, but he orchestrated the deal for the county to purchase the land.

PV: That's exciting.

HB: My grandfather was really uneducated, but he could read the King James version of the Bible, and he did it quite a bit. I don't know where he got his education, but he acquired reading. And I don't know that he was uneducated. I remember one time he says, "Boy, you know I have plenty of money." I didn't understand what he meant. I said, "Granddad, you have plenty of money?" He said, "Yes." I said, "How much do you have?" He said, "I have \$10,000." At that time, he was somewhere around eighty. And so it was plenty of money. And I remembered it very well because that week I had spent \$30,000. His definition of money was, from the time that he came from. So he had a lot of money. He died with \$10,500, I think it was, and he had a farm that was worth \$10 million.

PV: Wow, did he know it was worth that much?

HB: Well, it wasn't worth quite that much then. But since that time it's been worth that much.

PV: That's phenomenal.

HB: Yes. He bought the farm for \$10.00 an acre. My grandmother promoted the deal. He cut the timber on the land to pay for it, which was \$1,000.

PV: Do you know who he bought that land from?

HB: You know, I don't know, but there were two people in my early history that I remember that could conceivably been the previous owners. And I don't know one by, well one name, and that was Conahay. Conahay drove a business Plymouth coupe, which was a Plymouth coupe that did not have anything but the door windows, the rear glass and the front glass. Anything that was bigger than the business coupe had five windows which was the door glasses,

two small windows behind the door glasses, rear and front glass. That's six, but they called it the five-window coupe. Which would have been the two door glasses, the two porthole glasses and the rear glass. And the other person could possibly have been Luther Maynard. I just don't remember Luther Maynard other than, I remember Conahay. Conahay used to hunt squirrels. He always hunted with a rifle, and that was unusual. Everybody uses a shotgun.

PV: So they were both big landowners in this area?

HB: I don't know if they were or not. However, I do know that those were the two primary people he interacted with, and I assumed that was one of the two of them he might have bought property from.

PV: So your grandmother was a real lover of land as well?

HB: Yes, my grandmother was a real lover of land. We called my [grand]mother affectionately "tight wad." My grandmother was tight. She managed her money to the max. And she never took a public job of any kind. Her money was generally an allowance. They farmed, and I would imagine they shared the bounty, but I don't know the financials. I was always young.

PV: Did you help on the farm?

HB: Oh yes. Back then they called it crowning tobacco. Sometimes they called it priming tobacco. And I did that for my grandfather from the time that I could physically manage the job. So that was probably maybe twelve, ten, twelve, thirteen.

My first real recollection of working was my dad was a plumber. He would do plumbing in country houses. The distance from the country house to the ground was generally very close. So he went out to dig to get under the house to the area of work. My job was to bring the lead, molten lead, because they only had cast iron pipe at that time. So it was a rigid, and they didn't

have any kind of rubber seal at that time. So it was a rigid pipe that had to be cut and it was made of cast iron. And the joints were lead and oakum. Oakum is kind of a weak end that you put in, pack it in kind of tight, and then you pour the lead and that seals it off, makes it permanent. So that's how the water got under the house. I remember it very well because my father would get on me pretty good. Molten lead probably melts at about maybe 700-800 degrees. And in melting it at that temperature, it also cools very quickly. So my job was that I had to get it to him faster than it would cool. And so I had to follow the trench that he dug underneath the house. And lead is extremely heavy. I had to hold my left hand with my right hand in order to carry the lead and kind of do the leapfrog, move it in, set it down, move it in, set it down until I got to where he was working.

PV: How did you melt it? Did you have an acetylene torch, or...?

HB: No, they used propane. They used a propane, they called it a lead pot, which is just like a grill, a tank, except for that the outlets are vertical. And then it's this cast pot that sits on top of it with a frame that holds it. And you melt the lead. And while it's molten you carry it to the needed place. The largest lead joint I've ever made was twenty inches in diameter. And that's in the neighborhood of sixty inches perimeter.

PV: Wow, that must have taken a lot of lead.

HB: Yes, on this particular application, you started off with several pots, and you didn't pour with a ladle. Lead needs to be poured continuously, so you poured with a pot, and then you changed with a pot, and you changed with a pot until you pour the whole joint.

PV: Wow, what a job. You were telling me before we turned the tape on about your father trying to get to work in the mornings.

HB: Yes. Being from the other side of the track, sometimes jobs were hard to hold. And I remember two specific instances. One morning I asked him, I said, "Dad, why did you have to leave so early?" And he said he had to make sure he had to get to work on time because the jobs were really valuable. This was in the 1950s. I remember it because he indicated his salary was \$50.00 a week. So he said he had to get to work. And I asked him why did he have to leave in the dark? He said he had to leave in the dark in order that, if his pickup broke down, he could still walk to work. And he worked at, near the intersection of Wade Avenue and U.S. 1, and worked for a company called, I think it was Mimsco, Carl Mims, which was the son of Charlie Mims, which was his first employer. Charlie Mims did a little subdivision over here on 54 called Bud El Acres. And Charlie Mims' wife, I don't know her name, but she was always called Bud. And so, Hence was the name Bud El Acres. In recent times, I've installed a city sewer main that went through Bud El Acres.

At that time, my dad's primary source for fuel was a wood heater. And at the dead end of Evans Road there was a saw mill. They went down there and got slabs for free. Slabs was the tangent point, the cord point of a log which was like a quarter moon, except it would be straight across the front whereas a moon is curved across the front. And they would cut it off the edge in order to trim the log to be square in order to cut boards out of it. So there was four slabs for every log. And we hauled those slabs. My grandfather had a '36 Ford truck. And you take that Ford truck and you jack it up off the ground on one side. You put a belt across the rear tire and put a circular saw on the other end of the belt. And then you put in on a platform with a handle and you lift the platform and push the slab into the saw, and it would cut off 18" pieces of slab pine wood.

PV: So the wheel was turning the saw?

HB: Yes, you start the truck up and, there's a term in automobile mechanic work called "positive traction," which means both wheels turn as you move forward all the time together. Well, they have a system in there called spiners, or a ring gear and pinion system. And they allow one wheel to slow down while the other wheel turns. And that means that you can make a left turn, and when you make a left turn, or a right turn, one wheel is slow and one wheel is fast because one is on the inner part of the circle and one is on the outer. Well, with that being the case, the truck did not have positive traction because it left one wheel on the ground and one wheel in the air. And the wheel that was in the air would turn as if it was going around a curve of the circle, and it would turn the saw. And so you cut heat wood, cooking wood for the house. And the timber for my father's house, which is 1103 Evans Road, was cut off the farm. And it was heated by wood off the farm. They finally got an oil heater. It burned diesel fuel. That's back in the day. I'd like to see back in the day again, tell you the truth.

PV: It sure has changed. But you were really living off the land.

HB: Oh yes, well we had gardens. The time the barn burned, and the horse was in there. So the horse died. And I was the oldest of five, and so I remember the event. That white horse, and he was standing there at the door, and he'd start to the door and back up, start to the door and back up. And then finally the barn was burned and the horse died. And the horse was a valuable commodity back then. At that time I think my dad was driving either a Crosley station wagon, or a Dyna-flow Buick. Then his next vehicle was about a '52 or '53 Dodge. And then his next vehicle was a '59 Ford.

PV: So your father was in business for himself throughout his career, pretty much?

HB: No, he was working for plumbing companies. His first job that I remember, well his first job was, my father was a chauffeur for the government in Norfolk, Virginia. And that's the

only job, and I don't know of that job. I only know of the story. And then my mother was a welder in the Norfolk Navy yard. She worked on aircraft carriers and destroyers, World War II. And so they were up there together, in which I had an uncle that was there, and, I had two uncles that were there, and they, I had two uncles and a couple of first cousins that were there. And so they were all together, and they survived as a family. They lived at 914 Carver Circle in Portsmouth, Virginia. Anyway, my father and mother got together finally, and I was born there. And I stayed there somewhere between two and four months maybe, not quite that much, maybe more or less.

And we moved here to the farm. We stayed with my grandmother. And that was, and I know that that timeframe staying with my grandmother was somewhere around '45 to approximately '47. And the reason why I remember that is, I might have been told the story so much that I know it, or I remember it. My grandmother, my great grandmother, my grandmother's mother died in '37, and in her dying, they had to carry her out on a thing like they carry soldiers when they're wounded.

PV: A stretcher?

HB: a stretcher, yes. And they had to carry her to Highway 54, because the weather was bad and snow was on the ground. But at that time, I was staying with my grandparents, and my mother and father. And shortly thereafter they built the house up on the hill, 1103 Evans Road.

PV: So this was your mother's...?

HB: My mother's mother and my mother's grandmother, which is my great-grandmother.

PV: So that would be Mathilda?

HB: No, I think it was, they called her Ma. This is my grandmother's mother and Mathilda was my grandfather's mother. I actually don't know my grandmother's mother's name. For some reason, heritage is generally measured on the side of the male.

And so, and then my grandfather, we were, he was here and I never was involved with my grandmother's folks much. Which brings to issue, in my history of growing up, I've been to every uncle's house and every aunt's house wherever they were at least one time. And I always called them. And I did that for my grandmother's brothers and sisters, well my grandmother was an only child. So I went to my grandmother's brothers a lot, which their names were Stewart. And they are from the New Hill area, New Hill in Apex. So I'm of course rambling.

PV: No, that's good, that's good. So in your life then you went to the elementary school here in Cary?

HB: Oh, back to the school, yes. The school, we had one building with three rooms and a cafeteria. One of the most unusual things was, milk was supplied at lunch for three cents. And you get a half pint of milk, three cents. And I remember that because my job was to sell the milk. The school that I had, the teachers were Ms. Logan, Ms. Ligon, and Mrs. Hope; L.W. Ligon, E.H. Hope, it was not L.W. Ligon, it was L.W. Logan, E.H. Hope and, I don't remember Mrs. Ligon's first name. Back then you called your teachers Mrs. or Miss. And you never knew their last [first] names, so I don't know their first names to this day. I remember their initials. So this school was three rooms. And my first grade had three classes in it, first, second and third. And the next room had fourth, fifth and sixth. And then you were shipped off to another school. In the history of my school and schooling, I have never been in an integrated school.

PV: You never did?

HB: I have no idea what it is to be, to sit down beside a white person and be educated.

PV: So after the sixth grade at Kingswood, where did you go then?

HB: Well, the school at that time, let's see, I think it was only the one room. And the first addition we got was a gym, if I'm not mistaken. But at some time in there we got a gym. And then the next thing that we got, and the cafeteria was in the same building with the school, which was the one building. And we had coal and potbelly stoves to heat by. And it was always a pleasure to get the coal, and it was always something that you could do to please the teacher was to get the coal. And so the coal was in the northwest corner of the building underneath.

And so, somewhere in that timeframe they eventually built the school that's below the hill there. And it went to the eighth grade at that time as well. Now I graduated from there in the eighth grade, and my principal's name was E.F. Rayford. And there were other principals there as well but I just don't... oh, Mrs. Hope was a principal at one time. So they built the school that was under the hill, and we had a playground, and one of the most things that was really interesting is we had a maypole and what they called a Giant Stride. The Giant Stride was a single pole with chains with bars on the end of the chains, and you could go out to its perimeter and swing around the pole. And we had a baseball field, and played softball a lot.

PV: Were there a lot of students in the school?

HB: You know, they probably had maybe fifteen to twenty kids per class. And in the first grade, it was not that many because it was three classes. And the one teacher taught all three classes. So my teacher was Mrs. L.W. Logan in the first grade, and she taught first, second and third grades. Maybe it wasn't first, second and third because there was three teachers. Ms. Hope was the principal and she taught. So it could have been, I don't know. It changed before I got to the last grade in that building.

But it was always unusual to go by one building and then to walk down, or ride down Academy Street and see this great big white pretty big school building. So that was always the separation, separation of the money and the resources and the quality.

PV: Did you ever interact with the white kids from the white school, play with them, or knew any of them? Or stayed separate?

HB: Nope. You know, with my complexion being what it is, I do run into people now that said, they ask me, "Do you know this one, and this one, and this one," and it's the other side of the track.

Did crop tobacco for some other people. There was one fellow named Creet Badget and I believe he was in the plumbing and heating business, sheet metal business. And so I did crop tobacco for him. And that's the only outside person that I could ever remember. One thing that I did do in recent times is I met a gentleman that I've been knowing for twenty years, and turns out he was married to one of Creet Badget's daughters. Yep, been knowing him twenty-five, thirty years and he is married to Creet Badget's daughter. It is a small world. They say we only five people from somebody you know. And I've seen that to be the case a lot of times.

PV: So then after middle school, after the eighth grade?

HB: After eighth grade, we went to Berry O'Kelly High School in Raleigh. And we catch the bus to the elementary school, and then they would, we'd disembark and get on another bus, and sometimes the same bus to go to Berry O'Kelly. And that was a combination of Jeffries Grove area and this side of Wake County.

PV: And so you went all through high school at Berry O'Kelly?

HB: Went all through high school at Berry O'Kelly. My senior year, my father and mother had a conflict with Mrs. Ligon and the principal about my baby sister. She did not like

Mrs. Ligon. Mrs. Ligon was a terror. She ruled with the iron hand. And I was never instructed by her, and I didn't have anything against her. In fact, you don't know unless you were instructed by her. So my baby sister was just terrified, and she requested a change to another teacher. And the principal said no. And my mother and dad packed up and moved. Took the other four kids and left me here. Yep, they just threw me away. I stayed with my grandmother to finish my senior year. And I had, went down to Raleigh, and at some time during my senior year, he broke his leg.

PV: Your grandfather?

HB: My grandfather. That's the only time I've ever known him to be injured. At any rate, I stayed there and I helped him with the animals and stuff when I could, and I also drove the school bus.

PV: Now, where were you taking the kids, to Berry O'Kelly?

HB: Yes.

PV: So where, what was your route?

HB: It was through Morrisville, back through here.

PV: Okay. And you were picking up all the students?

HB: Yep, and then I'd go to Cary Elementary School, and then I would leave there and go to Berry O'Kelly. And sometimes, part of the time we didn't do that. I just got on another bus with another driver.

PV: So it must have taken you quite a long time to get to school.

HB: Yes, leave about an hour and a half early.

PV: That's a lot, riding on the bus. Did that cause problems?

HB: No, it wasn't a problem.

PV: What about athletics?

HB: I weighed 119 pounds, and I was a shrimp ().

PV: So that never came up for you. But there were probably other kids who were involved in athletics at Berry O'Kelly and needed to practice after school. How did they get home then, do you know?

HB: You know, I don't know. I don't have any idea. But it was no school transportation, or county transportation furnished. There were no activity buses.

PV: So if you weren't on the bus going home directly after class ended, you had to find your own way home.

HB: Yes. We had to walk from here to 54 as a child.

PV: So clear down here on Evans Road, all the way up to 54 and Maynard?

HB: No, just 54. Yes, 54 and Maynard now. 54 but there was no Maynard. Evans Road at one time dead-end into 54. And so with the change of Maynard, or with the addition of Maynard Road, they re-directed the terminating point of Evans to right there in front of Lowes.

PV: So that intersection. And you had to walk home.

HB: Had to walk home. I remember one time, they got this bar on the front of the buses now that doesn't allow the child to run and disappear below the hood line. I got off the bus. The bus drove off and I took off at the street behind the bus, and a car hit me. And I remember going up in the air, and I remember coming down, and I remember the man being panicked. I remember waking my eyes up, waking up. So he loaded me up in the car and said he wanted to take me to the hospital. And I said, "No, no, no. Take me to my granddaddy." And so he brought me down to my granddaddy, and I had the characteristic of being called crazy a lot, so I ()

PV: Were you badly hurt?

HB: Oh no, I wasn't badly hurt. I didn't have, I don't know. I don't know if I was badly hurt or not, but I do know I was hit, knocked up in the air, and come down on the ground. There was this place up there on the corner called Stone's Barbeque. And you would save all your money all week long to go by and buy a Tootsie pop at the Stone's Barbeque.

PV: And that's where you were headed.

HB: Yes, that's where I was headed, going to get a Tootsie pop. Tootsie pop and twin-sicles.

PV: What other businesses and stores were in town. Were there any on your side of the tracks? Were there any businesses...?

HB: Well, we used all the businesses. You just didn't go to them. There was nothing over here. Stone's Barbeque which was approximately, it was at the corner of Maynard and 54, and it was probably under Maynard, somewhere in that vicinity. It was under Maynard. And that was a barbeque restaurant, somewhat grocery store-type place. And then the next place was Buck Brown's. and Buck Brown's was right upside of the Baptist Church, at the corner of Academy and 54. And it's torn down now, and it's where the church parking lot is. And there is one thing that happened that is really interesting. BB&T repossessed that from the previous owner, or the last owner. And they tried to sell it to me because at this time I'm an adult, functioning and spending money. And I said, "How much do you want?" I think they wanted \$35,000. I said, "Well, I think that's a little bit too much." They said, "Well, my gracious, it's a grocery store, and it's in a good location." And I said, "Well, you've got two problems. Number one, it's Buck Brown's old store. And Buck Brown's old store used to be about ten foot away from 54. They came in with some trucks and loaded Buck Brown's store up and moved it back to its current location. And beneath the skin of this building is all old logs and stuff. And it's a log building

that is the store. It's just been covered over. That doesn't make it worth the \$35,000 that you want. And then the second thing is, it's been shut down more than six months, so Cary's not going to allow the grandfathering to be open back up." And they didn't. And the church bought it for the parking lot.

PV: So they just tore the building down and used the land?

HB: Yes.

PV: So, if you had bought that building, with the intention of opening some kind of a business, Cary would not have allowed you to do that?

HB: Oh no.

PV: But they might not have disclosed that to you when they were selling you the building?

HB: Well, this was BB&T, so Cary really wasn't involved. You just would have had to know the regulations. There's a stretch over here on Pine Drive. A whole lot of people bought through there. And it had the right-of-way from Pine Drive in there. And this, I think this is backing up to Scottish Hills. At any rate, they really objected to opening up the Pine, because they put a driveway behind the houses. And so you could see stuff like that. It was on the map. Sometimes you just have to research it because making a purchase like that, it's a lot of money and sometimes you can't use it for its intended purpose. Some of the owners wanted the Pristine Woods, as is the case with a lot of Cary people now.

PV: You've got to really know what you're doing.

HB: It's getting harder and harder and harder. The government is really getting into everybody's life. It's just going to get to the point that we're going to have that number that they talk about. We're going to be a number. We're close to it now.

I did a job at federal prison. I like to tell people that I've spent just a little bit of time in the federal pen in Butner maximum security. I've spent a little bit of time in the federal pen in Butner minimum security. I've spent a little bit of time in central prison. And I also spent a little time in the women's prison. But I was on the job.

PV: What were you doing out there?

HB: I've grown up to be a pipeline contractor. And in doing that, several years ago I was told by an official of Cary they had over 4,000 fire hydrants. And I've added to that number myself. So we put in pipe. And I have put in all of the pipe underneath and on the site of the first Cary waste water treatment, not waste water treatment plant, the potable water treatment plant. And so they upgraded it once since then, but prior to that time, no one in Cary gets a drink of water without it coming through my pipe unless they buy it from Raleigh. And they can't get it from Raleigh that it doesn't come through my pipe now, because I put a pipe in at their water treatment plant.

PV: That must give you a little pride there.

HB: Oh yes. I really like to brag about you can't get a drink of water in Raleigh, Apex, Cary, Holly Springs, Roseville, Garner, Burlington, Wake Forest without coming through pipe that I've put in.

PV: Wow, you've been all over.

HB: Well, I haven't done, I've done a lot of pipe in a lot of the towns. But what I've done is, I've worked on the pipes at the potable water plant that's furnishing the water for the whole town. So that's gotta go through that primary pipe first. But the 93 million gallon reservoir at Raleigh, the pipe weighed 30,000 pounds per joint, and it was 35 foot deep. And I've had 50% of the water supply for the treatment plant shut off for eight hours. When they were monitoring the

water for the city, they had 22 water towers, I think it was, and they monitored from my telephone over the wire. And I had eight hours to take it loose from the existing system and tie it to the new system.

PV: That's not a lot of time.

HB: That's not a lot of time, especially when you're dealing with 54 and 48-inch pipe. Well, my final test on that job was we had to walk through the pipe end to end. It was about 2,500 feet. We did pretty good, got about halfway and the inspector's phobias kicked in, and he turned around and come back out.

PV: So you've had quite a career.

HB: Oh yeah. I like the pipe business. We've got two tunnels underneath Falls of Neuse Road. You could drive a small car through it, or you could then. It's fill in, we filled it in with concrete once we got the pipe through.

PV: So they were dug for pipe to go through? Well, this has been great. Is there anything else that you can think of about life in Cary in general over the years?

HB: You know, Cary is a wonderful town. It's just being really really regulated now. And then too, I can understand it. The one thing that you have in society is, without change, it falls apart. And when you start regulating change, it makes it hard to change, it makes it hard to continue like, as a society. As a society grows, if it doesn't grow, there is no change, and I think it actually starts to diminish. I was at a town council meeting the other day, and they said that with this economic downturn, they were \$3 million short in their tax revenues. And \$3 million is a whole lot of money when you're getting it two to three cents at a time. () There is one thing that I've told my wife over the years. And that is that, there is one blessing in living. All of the rich folks have to die too. And all those that imposed their will on you, and all those that do this,

that and the other, they're time is written down. And you can run from it, but you always in a chase with death. He's always one step behind you.

My nieces and nephews in the schools here, my brother left, and you know, went to Africa. So his kids basically grew up in schools all over. And everybody left here really, but they're now coming back. There's something about home that always...

PV: ...were involved in the Evans Road widening project. Were you involved in that controversy as well?

HB: Well, yes and no. I've been involved in it. The only thing that I could say about it is, in this nation, we set up a monetary system () You cannot continue to treat your fellow man without fairness, because death is chasing you all the time. You have to be fair. And I think in Cary sometimes there hasn't been fairness. You can see it. I purchased equipment from a company called, I'm not going to tell you. At any rate, in doing that, I have seen my father go and give these people money, and go and drink at the second water fountain. I have seen the people that worked for the company go to the second water fountain. I have seen that. And that is just not right. I think there is always going to be prejudice. You can take a pair of twins, and one of them loses his hand. That's prejudice. No matter how good, how fair, how honest, the best of integrity, there's always going to be disparity. Everybody's going to pick on the fat guy. Everybody's going to pick on the skinny guy. Everybody's going to pick on the guy that loses his hair. There's always going to be some form of prejudice. Excepting one time – that eternal time. And the eternal time, I'll tell you. I told my wife, if I wasn't afraid of leaving here on my own, I would go to the eternal time and be happy to be there. Well, I think I've said more than enough.

PV: Well, this was wonderful. We so appreciate all that you, you've taken your time and helped us. You gave me a lot of good information that I really value. We will put it to good use.

HB: In this Evans Road widening, the compensation is all over everywhere. I mean, you can't find continuity in it anywhere. And not only that, it's a secret. City of Cary, we will not divulge anything about anything. This particular transaction, it is secret. I was doing a job one time for a local contractor, and I walked in and he says, "Herbert, if you help me on this one, I'm in really bad shape and I need to do this work, and I just can't get to it. And we're running behind, and we're going to get in a liquidated damages." And he took out his spec book with all his prices in it, and said, "This is what I'll give you for it." And he stuck it in the copier and handed me the whole thing. And I said, "Well, you know, I could do it for this." I budget, and my expenses and my overhead is, and I was doing the work myself. So in doing that, I went out there and proceeded with the work. I got it done on time, accurately and good. I decided I'd run up to the city of Cary and check on the prices. So I took my sheet of paper and I went up and said, "I'm doing this job and I would like to check on these prices." And the technician says, "Herbert, I can't give you these prices. You're working for so and so. I can't give them to you." And I said, "Well, I understand. But let me make something clear to myself. Is you're telling me that you can't give me a copy of public information." And you know what she said? "Let me talk to my boss." So she come back and says, "Yes, I can give you this. Its twenty-five cents a page, and its 500 and some pages." I said, "That is great. I'd like page 489, and here's a quarter." And she gave it to me. And I took that contract and I said to myself, "If you give me all that was in it, in all the categories that I worked on except this one. And the particular contract that paid me \$25,000 to do the job, and he had \$25,000 in the contract to move his equipment around on the job. So he had \$50,000 in the job." At any rate, I didn't get the second \$25,000. I did get the first

one. And we are friends, friends of the day. And the only problem that I have with this particular contractor is the money. He will not, he is the TW of TW's. He is the king TW (tight-wad.) He is tight, but none-the-less, if he would call me this day and say, "Herbert, I need your help." I would get up from my dinner table on Thanksgiving or Christmas day and go help him. And I think he would do it for me. But he's just tight with his money. And he just worked a good deal, negotiated a good deal. But I didn't have all the playing cards. But nevertheless...

PV: Well, you've had a long and illustrious career in Cary.

HB: I tell you, all my life, I got out of college, I taught school in New York for a year. I did. I was making \$4,800 a year. At any rate, I just could not make a living and living out of state, and so I came back home. And I did a job for my dad in downtown Raleigh on () Street. And the ditch was about thirty feet deep, twenty-eight feet deep, something like that. We had to move the dirt off the top so we could get down. This equipment wouldn't even reach where we had to work. At the end of that job he says, "Would you like to be in business?" I said, "Yes," and I've been here ever since. He gave me every piece of equipment on that job, and I got the payments of that, it wasn't paid for. And I've had my ups and downs, and this time is probably the worst thing I've every seen.

PV: This economic downturn?

HB: Yes. ()

PV: Well, let's just wrap this up. Thank you again so much. This was fantastic. And you were very helpful to me and to the town. So we really appreciate it.

HB: One more story. One morning, I said, "Dad, where are you going today?" He said, "I'm going to NC State University to work. And I really don't want to go. I've been there four months and I've got four months to go." I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I'm digging a

ditch.” I said, “Well, how deep is it?” He said, “I don’t know. Sometimes it gets deep, but I can tell you, I have to throw the dirt three times before I can throw the dirt out of the ditch.” So he had to dig the ditch three times. I said, “Well, how long is the ditch?” He said, “It’s from NC State University to Cameron Village. It took him eight months to dig it with a pick and shovel.

PV: By hand?

HB: By hand. I said, “Well Dad, why don’t you not do that?” He says, “Son, I’ve got five kids.”

My dad was an illegitimate child. His dad was a white judge out of Wilmington. And he experienced prejudice to the –nth degree. He grew up where his family didn’t like him. His dad took him and raised him until he was three. Found out he was half white and half black, and they run him away.

PV: Did he go back to his mother then?

HB: His mother died when he was nine. So he was raised by aunts and uncles.

PV: Which side of the family, the father’s or his mother’s side?

HB: The mother’s side, were the ones that raised him. He was raised by his dad until he was about, let’s see, he was in third grade, nine years old. So at nine, his mother died and at nine they sent him home.

PV: So where was he, he was living in Wilmington?

HB: He was in Faison.

PV: Oh Faison, okay. And then with the aunts and uncles, where was he living?

HB: In Faison, same, Faison. One thing that is interesting is, my dad is probably one of the most intelligent men that I have ever met. And he had a drive that was stronger than a locomotive coming down hill with a full load. He was relentless. I mean, he was unbelievably

relentless. He had a vacation house at the coast, on the primary Black Island. At any rate, we used to stop in Wilmington, and I was a full-grown adult before I found out that my dad's brother was the one he was stopping to see every so often. And my dad never spoke of his dad's family. You get no inklings in passing through. Oh, he went to white schools until he was nine. So the first through the third grade, he went to white schools.

PV: And then when he went to live with aunts and uncles, then he went to segregated schools?

HB: Yes, he went to segregated... that's where I really don't know. My father never talked about his family. I think I got to meet my grandfather once or twice. My grandfather twice called my dad up. This is in my very young years, so I don't know that much about it. But he gave him a Cadillac, two times. One time the Cadillac had been wrecked and my dad repaired it. The other time the Cadillac hadn't been wrecked. But I've been to my granddad's house once or twice, and I remember once. It had a white picket fence that we drove upside of.

PV: So he acknowledged his son. He stayed in touch?

HB: Yes. My dad stayed in touch. Nobody else, I'm the only one that's ever been there. I'm the only one that's ever heard anything about it, to really bring back the memories. Really unusual.

PV: So he was really prejudiced against, he had a lot of hard times growing up?

HB: My dad said he has seen times when he would have to steal fatback out of the frying pan at home to eat.

PV: So they wouldn't feed him?

HB: Yes. But he was always hustling now. He was an entrepreneur, he had to be. He was a survivor. I tell you something else that my daddy has said. He said, and I don't know what

grade he went to. But he said he taught rifle marksmanship, camouflage, and demolition in the Navy. Or he, not Navy, the Army. He said he either taught it or he was a product of it, I don't remember. And he didn't talk about his Army career either, his fighting. ()

PV: So he was in the service and it was during World War II?

HB: Yes. And he has asthma, and so they turned him loose. () My dad, he was a hustler, Lord knows he was a hustler, and smart. I've never seen any uneducated man write as well as he does, with continuity of thought. I've seen so many documents that he'd written over the years. If he was mad with his wife, or his son or his family or an individual, he would write them a letter, and you'd read the letter. You'd discover the document and read it. He's gone now. () He says, "You know, I have six college educations." And the first time he said that, and he said a lot, but the first time he said it, I could not understand. He said, "I've been to college six times, and I didn't finish but the third grade." At any rate, I said, "What are you talking about?" Well, the year that I graduated from high school, which was on a Saturday, my mother graduated from college on Friday. And so off to college I went, and I finished. And the four of them behind me went off to college, and finished. And we were the first educated, college educated Clyde Evans children.

PV: That's fabulous.

HB: That's unbelievable. The pinnacle of my college thing was, we took the national teachers' exam. And the highest score that was made, I think, was 1400. And only 11 people made above 1100. I made 1183. So I figured I was in the top of the 11. And I hated teaching.

PV: Now what grade were you teaching, what were you teaching?

HB: I taught junior high and senior high.

PV: Didn't like it, huh?

HB: Didn't like it. And I said I went to New York for a year. I didn't go to New York for a year. I went to D.C. for half a year and I finished a year in New York. I went to D.C. and it was a... this was the time of integration. But the school was 95% black. In the timeframe in which I was there, there were 57 teachers, 54 teachers. By January, 27 had quit.

PV: Why?

HB: The school was so rough. Kids were rough. Poverty. Probably 60% of the kids, or 70% of the kids didn't have but one parent. It was a brand new school the day that I walked in, and by January every window on the first two floors had been replaced. There was one teacher that was sent to the hospital, and I said, this is not for me. I was a country boy, didn't know nothing about fighting. Didn't know nothing about drugs.

The first time, I've seen marijuana twice in my whole life. And the first time I saw it, the prettiest girl in the whole country had it. And it scared me to death, and I run. Scared me to death, and I run, and I've never smoked a joint of marijuana or any illegal drugs. I don't smoke cigarettes. Now I've had my share of Budweiser beers. One time when I was about 25, 26, came to work for my dad one Monday morning and he said, "Son, you have a good time this weekend?" I said, "Yep." This was January, the first day after the first that we worked. I said, "Yep, I had a good time." He said, "I want you to stop drinking." I said, "You think I can't?" He says, "You can't." I said, "I can." He said, "Well, quit. And then about May, get you a case and drink as many as you want." So when that meeting on that first day of work after New Years, I never had one since. That was '72.

PV: You never went out and got that case?

HB: Never, no. One thing that I am a firm believer, if you say you're going to do something, do it. And if you're doing it and then change, you didn't do what you said. So, if

you're going to stop drinking, you have to stop. You can't start back up. You have to stop. And I've stopped, and I didn't drink for about three years. I did not start drinking until I was about 20, 22, 21. Peer pressure caught me. Never had a drink of anything, no alcohol, no wine. I can proudly say, none of my children have ever seen me drunk, intoxicated, disabled, in any way, shape or fashion. They've never seen me take a drink of alcohol of any kind.

PV: Now how many children do you have?

HB: Three.

PV: Three, and where did they go to school?

HB: The oldest went to NC State University until she just said that "I don't have an identity here," so she finished at North Carolina Central. The second one went to NC State University and he finished. And he finished with right close to a three point average the first time, and then came to work for me. In about six months, something like that, he said, "Dad, I would like to go back to school to get a degree in business." I said, "Well, have at it." And so he finished his second time in a year. Picked up a second BS in business. The first time he finished in zoology, and that's everything that you can't spell, you've never seen the word before, and it's microscopic. So, he was going to be a vet, and he got to dealing with the blood, and he didn't like it. But at any rate, he finished that and he's my CEO now.

PV: So you work together?

HB: Work together, plus he said all the time, "Dad, don't give me any slack." But he's doing an excellent job. I'm primarily a ditch digger. That's what I tell everybody I am. I am a ditch digger. My goal in life is always to put in one foot more than I did on the last time where I put in the most. Success is measured by change. If you can't change it, you are not succeeding.

PV: So now your children, when they were in the primary grades, were the schools desegregated by that time?

HB: Oh yes. I'm sixty-three, and the schools were desegregated two years after I finished. And then they also shut down my school the second year after I finished.

PV: Berry O'Kelly?

HB: Yes.

PV: Okay, so you were one of the last classes out of Berry O'Kelly?

HB: Yes. I was the third class from the last one.

PV: So your kids, did they go to school in Cary?

HB: They went to school in Cary, all at Cary High and over here at West Cary. Oh, and the baby girl, she went to NC State, and she just defied all odds. She didn't finish, she joined the Army. And she's been gone ever since.

PV: Has she seen service in any of the wars?

HB: No. So I think she's pretty soon to get out. I think it's this year.

PV: So your children only went to integrated schools? Did they have a hard time? Did they come home with long stories about...

HB: There's a difference. I've often, I don't understand integration and segregation and stuff like that because, I've only ever seen but one side of it. But I have come to realize at times that I've never seen a pack of animals with two species in them. That's not to say humans are two species. I'm only indicating that there is a difference in animals, but they're different. So you don't see a pack of dogs and cats running together, or a pack of bear and goats, or a pack of sheep and dogs, or wolves. So I figure there going probably be segregation forever. And I still see that it gets down to the minute things. The twins that have one hand missing on one

individual makes a difference. So, we don't have but one commonality on this planet, or too many. We've got to live on the planet. We've got the same god. And the thing that makes people really more on an earthly basis common is the money. Once you have \$10.00, and I have \$10.00 standing in front of that counter, doesn't make any difference. Your ten is as good as my ten. There's been a whole lot of successful black people that I believe that you can be successful. You've just got to, there was rumored that there was this white guy, retired from the Army. He was having a tough time, but he drove a Nissan pickup. You'd see it around. You could see him here, and then five hours later you'd see him two miles up the road, same Nissan pickup and he'd still be walking. From what I understand, they got him for income tax evasion, and he was picking up beer cans. Succeed? You can succeed. I have no problem with standing on the corner begging, working at McDonalds. () Do what it takes. I'm going to try not to steal. I go to the bank, they give me a pencil to sign, I walk out with it all the time. But, people are people are people, and there's always going to be differences, for we need to strive to do. The closest thing we'll ever do to come even is look alike. And that's going to be hard to do, but it seems coming. I'm a product of part of that. So I don't know. I got, my wife tells me that I have weird thoughts about stuff.

PV: She doesn't agree with you on all of this?

HB: Oh, she doesn't agree with me probably on about, we probably agree about 50%, but that's 50% that we are a hundred miles apart. We argue all the time. My wife is like, you give me \$10.00. If I give her \$10.00, her idea is to spend it. If she gives me \$10.00, my idea is to keep part of it. But, I like to think also I'm a gambler. But what I like to do is gamble, not with money, but with them and this, I can do that.

PV: Your hands and your head.

HB: Hands and head, you can gamble with them. You take your head, you pick the task, and then you pick one that you think that your hands can handle it. And then you take the mud and do the rest.

I like to figure things, study it, study it. I did a job one time where we had to go through a massive amount of concrete to get two pipe into the building. So I studied the job, found out that there were probably no restrictions. And the contract called for you tearing out all the concrete, putting the pipe in and then putting it back. I took it and bored me two holes underneath the building, passed all the concrete.

PV: So you went underneath the concrete?

HB: Yes. Turned right up into the building. And the job probably paid about, in fact they paid \$17,000, and I did it in two hours.

PV: Wow, good money.

HB: Everybody bid it what it looked like. I bid it like what I could figure. I like to figure. I've made little things, this, that and the other. I made a scooter one time that would ride down a pipe, pipe difficult to crawl through. I made a little scooter to go down the pipe. Put a rope on it at both ends. Went down the pipe, loaded up the scooter with dirt, having to pull me back out. I got all the dirt out of it. Little things that make the difference.

PV: That's fantastic. Well, again, thank you so much. This was fantastic.

END OF INTERVIEW