

**Vera Pace**  
**(Euva Pace Capps)**  
**Interview Recorded: February 18, 2008**  
**Interviewer: David Schenck**  
**Transcriptionist: Cathy Mann**  
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David Schenck: This is David Schenck and its February 18<sup>th</sup>, Monday, and I'm sitting in the living room with Vera Pace Capps, right, Vera Capps Pace?

Vera Pace: Vera Pace and Euva Capps.

DS: And Euva Capps and we're talking about Joe Capps and his time working at the Poe Mill in Greenville, South Carolina. So you were saying that he worked down there to buy this land we're sitting on.

VP: That's right.

DS: Can you tell us about it?

VP: He made a dollar a day and he'd come home on a weekend and he'd walk home from Greenville.

DS: From Greenville? How far is that? That's a long ways.

VP: That's about thirty-five or forty miles. And he saved his money and bought this place. It's over, I guess it's considerably over two hundred acres and he got it for six hundred dollars.

DS: Right.

VP: And one of his brothers, I think it was one of his brothers, said he thought he'd buy it and Joe said I'll loan you the money. (Laughter) But he got it himself.

DS: So he worked down there. Did he have some land here before he had this piece?

VP: I don't reckon he did. I don't know.

DS: And have you heard part of the story that he or the children preserved some trees or a grove of trees in his honor on the place or just didn't cut a certain part of the land because of that?

VP: No, I haven't heard that. I didn't hear that.

DS: Okay, because that's part of what I heard was that he had worked down there and he had walked, came home on the weekends and that there was a grove of trees that was there to kind of remember it by. And Sandy remembers being shown those trees when he was much younger, you know, but nobody seems to remember about those.

VP: I don't remember that part.

DS: Maybe somebody just, you know how stories are. They kind of get added on to.

VP: Well, there was never any timber cut across the river. To my knowledge it's still just first row timber.

DS: Well, maybe that's what they're talking about.

VP: It's first row timber as far as I know.

DS: And what relationship was Joe Capps to you?

VP: He was no relation to me. He was her father-in-law.

DS: Her father-in-law, okay. What was her maiden name?

VP: Pace.

DS: She was a Pace?

VP: Yeah, she was a Pace.

DS: Okay, okay, alright. I was getting confused about Pace and Capps, which happens to me up and down the valley. So how long have you lived here?

VP: I've been with her for seventeen years. My home is on Cabin Creek Road going up on Mountain Valley. My home's there but I've been staying with her since her husband died. And I've been staying with her around the clock since she's not been well.

DS: But did you grow up on Cabin Creek?

VP: No, I grew up on Green River down the road a way, she and I both did.

DS: Right. Another thing that we're asking people about is changes that you've seen in the valley since you were a little girl. All kinds of things have happened I guess.

VP: Yeah, a lot more people. People are building up here on this property.

DS: \_\_\_\_\_'s property?

VP: The \_\_\_\_\_ property, there are a lot of homes going up there. And they're more cars on the road now. When she and James was first married she said she'd be helping them hoe corn and they wouldn't see but one car all day long and that would be the mailman. But now there're just all kinds of cars going up and down the road.

DS: I guess it wasn't paved this far out for a long time.

VP: No, for a long time it wasn't. Joe minded his own business just like all good old country people. Everybody respected him. There's a lady, a Thompson lady built a little summer home down here said she wanted to be close to him because he was such a fine man, that she really admired him. And maybe his wife would be telling a story and he'd say now, Lydie, you don't know what's true or not. (Laughter)

DS: And he made his living by farming I assume.

VP: Farming, uh-huh. Yeah, when he started farming he and James and his youngest son Brett I guess went with him, they'd go as far as Traveler's Rest in one day and at night they'd

spend the night at Traveler's Rest and the next day they'd go on to Greenville and sell their load, which would be potatoes, cabbage, and turnips and so forth.

DS: And then come on back?

VP: Yeah. And then later when they got a pickup truck they'd take the truck and go to Greenville. James said he remembered many a time sleeping on a bag of potatoes at Traveler's Rest.

DS: That's pretty rough bed I'd think.

VP: I would think so.

DS: And you did some farming when you were young I guess.

VP: Oh yeah, I helped my daddy.

DS: Children always helped.

VP: Yeah, we truck farmed beans and squash and grew corn for our horses and cattle.

DS: But then it got harder to make a living farming I guess.

VP: Yeah, uh-huh. The big man rooted the small man out.

DS: Yeah, all over the country really.

VP: Un-huh, that's true.

DS: In terms of farming. Did you ever work in the mill down there?

VP: I didn't but she worked about twenty-six years at Tuxedo. I worked at Berkley for eleven and a half years and then they laid off two hundred people and they went to non woven gauze, then I went to Inca and worked for twenty-three years. I was telling you about Joe minding his own businesses, his brother went up to Jim Perry's house one afternoon on business and they was have supper and they invited Jim to eat supper with them. And he ate with them and they passed him a bowl and he asked them what it was and they told him it was poke root salet, and he said no thank you. And the next time Jim saw Perry he said you know the night you ate supper with us we all but died and Jim said what happened to you and he said that poke root salet like to killed us. And Jim said I knew that stuff was poison ["p'isan"]. And he said why didn't you tell us and he said you never asked me. (Laughter) You never asked me. He just knew he didn't want none of it.

DS: That's right. These people might eat it but he didn't. So there's lots more people and I guess there are people from outside the valley. Used to be I guess the families like the Pace's, the Capps', the Beddingfield's, the Maybin's, were most of the people up in the valley up until what, fairly recently?

VP: Fairly recently, yes sir.

DS: I guess around Tuxedo you had a lot of people coming in and out around the lake but up in this part of the valley it seems like it pretty well stayed.

VP: Pretty much the same?

DS: Uh-huh, for a long time.

VP: Yeah, it did.

DS: Are there favorite places you have around here, favorite places growing up along the river or anywhere?

VP: I always like to walk across the river. There's a road you know what goes around what they call the Aaron Capps place and a little stream of water and then you go back to the right and it's beautiful in there. I like to walk in there.

DS: Is that on this property going straight across?

VP: Uh-huh.

DS: And that's the part that you said has never been cut?

VP: That's right.

DS: I guess logging along with farming was the main income for a long time.

VP: I would think so.

DS: I guess Marshall Beddingfield still has got that sawmill over there.

VP: Yeah, he has. And you write stories about the country people or what do you do?

DS: Well, what we're doing, they're preserving a lot of the land, you know, some of these easements and things like that, and what some of us thought was well, we need to preserve some of the stories, some of the history, some of the culture, and some people's voices because everybody's voice is different and, you know, what I say to people is wouldn't you love to be able to hear your grandfather's voice or your grandmother's voice right now.

VP: Oh, yeah. It would be wonderful.

DS: It would be. And so people that come after you, come after me, come after Euva, this is a way for them to not only hear the stories but hear you tell it. And so what this is going to be, this is going to go in the library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but it's also going to be right here at the Green River Branch so that people can listen and a typist will type out a transcript so there will be a written version of it as well that will be available for people.

VP: That's great.

DS: So that's what we're trying to do. So with that in mind, are there other things that you think people ought to know about when they come in here later on and things have changed

even more than they have so far, anything you think is important just for people to remember about life up in here?

VP: I think the important thing is that most people who owns property just holds onto it. They don't sell it and that's a good thing, keep it in the family. I know where my home place is where I live now on Cabin Creek Road, it's been in the Pace family for over a hundred years.

DS: Yeah, a lot of this land has been in the families for even two hundred years. Yeah, I talked with one person who said one thing he hated to see was people selling, families ending up selling their land.

VP: That's right.

DS: Well, I mean you see that Joe Capps worked for a dollar a week to buy the land, I guess it makes you feel different.

VP: Dollar a day.

DS: Dollar a day, right, to buy the land, makes you feel a little different about it.

VP: Ain't it the truth?

DS: That's a long walk. I was wondering if maybe he walked to Traveler's Rest and rode a wagon but that wouldn't save him very much, that's nearly there.

VP: That's right.

DS: But the version I heard says he walked all the way down and all the way back.

VP: That's what I heard.

DS: Did you hear anything about him I guess he brought his laundry up here and maybe took some food back from the farm?

VP: I don't know what he did. That I don't know.

DS: Well, I appreciate this because I've been trying to get somebody who remembered that story and I've asked several different people and, you know, Laurie remembered it. Would you like me to read what she remembered?

VP: I'd like to hear it.

DS: It's pretty short.

VP: Read it.

DS: So this is Sandy's mother. "Mr. and Mr. Robert Cox were caretakers of the Green River property when we bought it years ago. They became our good friends and a source of mountain history and lore. Mrs. Cox told us how the Capps family got their beautiful land on the Green River just below us. Mr. Capps, this would be Joe, had fallen in love with the fertile and forested land along the Green River and was determined to buy it. It took him five years of working in a Greenville, South Carolina mill six days a week and I believe he made five dollars a

week – that would be about a dollar a day – to make the amount necessary to purchase the land. Every Saturday afternoon when he got off from work he would walk the twenty-eight miles over the pass from South Carolina to North Carolina back home. The children of the family would meet him on the pass to help him carry his parcels home. Evidently he brought home his laundry. On Sunday afternoon when he returned, he would take his food back for the week and his clean clothes. This he did for five years the story goes until he had the necessary money to buy his dream land and over the years he instilled his love of that land in his children.”

VP: That’s a good story.

DS: Uh-huh. Well, one thought is to put it in a booklet and maybe take some pictures and just preserve that story of somebody who is willing to do that to buy some of the beautiful land.

VP: That would be a good idea.

DS: Yeah. Well, I might call you back and ask for permission just to go over there and take a picture on the other side.

VP: You can go anytime you want to. You don’t have to call. Just go anytime you want to.

DS: Okay, well I appreciate that.

VP: You just go across the bridge down here and turn to the right.