

Transcript of OH-00145

Charles Jones Woodland

Interviewed by
John Wearmouth

on
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Typographic Note

- [Inaudible] is used when a word cannot be understood.
- Brackets are used when the transcriber is not sure about a word or part of a word, to add a note indicating a non-verbal sound and to add clarifying information.
- Em Dash — is used to indicate an interruption or false start.
- Ellipses ... is used to indicate a natural extended pause in speech

Subjects

African American History
Agriculture
Antique and classic cars
Depressions
Genealogy
Race relations
Rural conditions
Rural schools
Segregation
Transportation
La Plata (Md.)
Thomas Stone National Historic Site (Md.)

Tags

Depression, 1929
Food preservation
Habre de Venture
One room school house

Transcript

John Wearmouth [J]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Mr. Charles J. Woodland who lives on Maryland Route 225 close to Ripley. He was born and raised in this general neighborhood. The purpose of the interview is to try and locate with his help the cemetery for black people here at Habre de Venture. We are at Habre de Venture now. The date is February 10th 1988. This interview is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program. It's a nice crisp winter morning here and the sun is shining. Both of us are standing on the edge of both the Stone family cemetery and the black family cemetery. The two cemeteries evidently were separated by oh about an eight foot wide walk way. And was there a hedge along one side as you remember Mr. Woodland? Okay. In your own words where were you born from where we are? Where were you born?

Charles Jones Woodland [C]: Five miles from here in Ripley, Maryland.

J: Toward Indian Head?

C: Towards Indian Head going west. And you want my age to?

J: Yeah.

C: I was born 1913 September the 23rd. My father was named Jim H. Woodland and my mother was Virginia Sarah Woodland.

J: Virginia Sarah?

C: That's right. She'd been deceased in 1940. 60 years old, 62 years old.

J: Now we'll go on with this interview later under warmer conditions. Do you remember how old you were when you first visited this cemetery here at Habre de Venture?

C: Was eight years old.

J: About eight years old so we're going back to roughly 1920. Your father brought you over here that?

C: That's right.

J: And what was the reason for coming here?

C: To clean the cemetery up.

J: Okay what kind of condition was it in then?

C: It was in honeysuckle ran over it.

J: Okay.

C: [30th of May].

J: Why the 30th of May?

C: That was Decoration Day.

J: Okay right. Was that widely observed by local people at that time, Decoration Day?

C: Yeah but nobody ever just [my father] because his father was buried in here.

J: Okay and his father's name?

C: Cornelius Woodland.

J: Cornelius Woodland. How did he happen to be buried here?

C: Well as I understand he used to drive a stage coach for the Mitchell's. He had a [assisted in that way].

J: I see.

C: So he was buried.

J: Did he ever work for the Stone's?

C: No. His sister did. Her name was...Tina. Aunt Tina.

J: Aunt Tina.

C: Brookes.

J: What did she—Aunt Tina Brookes. What did she do here for the Stone's? What sort of—

C: I imagine it was maid work.

J: Okay did she work in the kitchen do you think?

C: I think so.

J: And where did she live when she was working here?

C: We lived about a half mile across the [hill] Stone's house.

J: Okay not some other property?

C: On the same property.

J: Oh okay. Is that house still standing where she lived?

C: I don't know. It was because some people lived in it.

J: Okay is it on the edge of that big ravine over there?

C: That's right.

J: Okay we can call that the tenant house for want of a better name.

C: Right.

J: How long has she been gone now your sister? Or was she your Aunt? Your Aunt I'm sorry.

C: My father's sister.

J: Did she ever marry?

C: Oh yeah she had a bunch of children.

J: Oh for goodness sakes.

C: She must have had 10 children. And she lived on the house. One of them died. I think it was buried in this cemetery.

J: In this cemetery here?

C: That's right.

J: So this was a nephew of yours that you were here to?

C: First cousin.

J: First cousin.

C: That's right.

J: Okay now from where we're standing—and we're looking off towards the sunshine and it is about 10:30 in the morning so I guess we would be looking in roughly a southeasterly direction—about how from where we are would Cornelius Woodland's grave have been to the best of your memory?

C: To the best of my memory would have been about ten feet.

J: Okay in a southeasterly direction? Okay. From the northeastern corner of the Stone cemetery from the northeastern most wrought iron fence corner and we are standing right at it now. Did your father ever mention how many people he thought were buried in this black portion of the cemetery?

C: No he didn't.

J: No idea how old it was?

C: No.

J: Well considering the age of this plantation and the length of time that it was farmed actively it is as we discussed earlier my feeling is that this was a later cemetery for black people used probably from the end of the Civil War on. And that, this is only in my opinion, an earlier black cemetery must be located elsewhere on Habre de Venture. Quite possibly in a northwesterly direction from where we're standing now over toward the field where two or three so called slave cabins were still standing in the early years of this century. This plot that we're looking at now, in my opinion again, would be much too small to have been in use for longer than half or three quarters of a century. What do you think about that?

C: I think so too. It could [inaudible] [way back not long you see].

J: In this little patch here is in a southeasterly direction from the main Stone family cemetery. There are some trees in it that appear to be no more than 50 years old. I see the stumps of a couple of cedars that may be older. But I would say 50 to 75 years ago this would have been a relatively clear patch of ground so suitable for a cemetery. What was the time you were last here? Did your father come with you every time every year?

C: Well yeah he'd come with me.

J: And other members of the family? Brothers, sisters come with you?

C: All my brothers. [I only had one sister].

J: Okay and how many brothers?

C: I had four.

J: Four brothers.

C: That's right.

J: And they would come over here and?

C: Help clean.

J: And what kind of tools did you bring with you?

C: Bush axes and rakes [inaudible].

J: And this was almost a yearly thing?

C: That's right.

J: Do you remember putting flowers on—

C: [Inaudible sentence].

J: Flowers on any of the graves? Uh—huh. And what marked Cornelius Woodland's grave spot? How could you find it?

C: [Me as I can come to it a piece of cement was set out here.]

J: Looks like the cement top off an old well.

C: That's right.

J: And that's where he—and it was marked by a wooden?

C: It was wooden [case out here].

J: A wooden peg okay. There weren't any fancy carved headstones in this portion as we see over here in the main part of the Stone family?

C: No cedar pegs.

J: Cedar pegs?

C: That's right made crosses.

J: Oh I see okay. Not even any real fancy carpenter work. Okay and we have marked some trees here in the black cemetery this morning with some patches of red tape so I can come back and circle them so that we will know exactly where this particular black cemetery was.

So we're back at stone's throw now. We're in the house where it's comfortable. The sun's shining and we took care of the cemetery business over at Habre de Venture. I'd like to go into your youth a little bit Mr. Woodland. How far back can you go in memory with your father and mother and your brothers and sisters? What things do you remember about growing up as a member of the Woodland family?

C: Well I remember we had horses. I must have been about six years old and the horse had a colt. My father used to give each one of us a horse.

J: Riding horse?

C: That's right. Would ride until he started working. Then he put him out on the farm working.

J: Oh I see. So these were—

C: Work horses that's right.

J: Before they were big enough and strong enough to work you got a chance to learn to ride.

C: That's right.

J: Okay so your father was—what did your father do for a living? How did he keep the family going?

C: Raised tobacco.

J: Okay that was the big money crop?

C: The big money crop.

J: How many acres did he have in those days [inaudible]?

C: Raised, used to raise about eight acres of tobacco.

J: Eight acres of tobacco out of how many total acres on the farm?

C: Oh must have been around 30 acres of agriculture we raise crop on.

J: And how did that break down? Eight acres in tobacco and what else would he plant normally from year to year?

C: Grass.

J: Pasture.

C: Yeah pasture and wheat, barley, rye, that's grain.

J: He took care of this. Who took care of the vegetable garden?

C: We'd take care of the garden ourselves. All of us would get in there.

J: Did your mother spend any time out with the vegetable garden?

C: No she didn't work out no. [She'd work in].

J: She stayed in the house and took care of the house?

C: That's right.

J: How many boys were there in the family?

C: Five of us all together.

J: And what were their names from the oldest to the youngest?

C: Phillip Henry Woodland, Sydney Emmanuel Woodland, and James Cornelius Woodland, and Francis Griffin Woodland. I had one sister Edith May Woodland.

J: Okay and you are Charles J.

C: Charles J, that's right.

J: And where did you fall in that group? One of the younger ones?

C: Youngest one of them.

J: Youngest?

C: That's right.

J: How many of those children are alive today?

C: None. All deceased.

J: You are the last of that family.

C: Last at last.

J: How did your father treat the boys growing up? Was he super strong discipline? Did he get you working early?

C: No we [didn't work too hard].

J: He let you be normal children and enjoy games and doing the things kids like to do?

C: That's right, right, playing.

J: How did your dad and mother feel about education for you?

C: Well they was crazy [about—they wanted to get education.]

J: Okay and how much did they have themselves?

C: My father mostly educated himself. He had books of all kinds.

J: So he could read pretty well?

C: That's right. He could read better than I could.

J: Did you ever hear him mention going to school at all?

C: I think he would say he went two grades, first and second grade. Then he got a book called a business guide and he read that book and that showed him how to do the mathematics and read and spelling. All this was in one book that he took up like that.

J: Did your mother—was she able to go to school?

C: Oh yes she was able to go to school.

J: Where was her school?

C: Well her school must have been at Pomfret.

J: Where was the school for blacks in those days? Was it on 227 around Marshall Corner Road?

C: On Marshall Corner Road. It was old two room school.

J: Was it right at that intersection?

C: Oh you get to the intersection, this about a half a mile from Marshall's Corner.

J: Okay was it on the left side?

C: Left side.

J: Going towards Pomfret?

C: Right.

J: What did you call your mother? Did the children call her mother, mom, by her maiden name, or what?

C: We just called her mama, mom.

J: Mom okay and your father what did you call him? There were so many different ways and I'm trying to get a pattern for how even these things change? It might take some good stuff, dad, or father, or mother depending on how young we were. Okay when did your father feel it was time for one of his sons to start getting out and working for a living?

C: Well I'll tell you my father didn't believe us going to work for a living. Work for yourself. But we just went out on our own. We used to [tell him] when we go. Anytime you want to come back you always had a place to come and had work to do there if you want to.

J: Were you happy as a youngster at home?

C: Oh yes.

J: Were these good days?

C: Oh yeah. We lived—we are good. I had some [first] cousins live just across the field from us. We used to play together and we were like sisters and brothers.

J: And what family was this?

C: The Waters family.

J: Waters.

C: That's right.

J: Who were the half a dozen or so better off blacks who lived in the Ripley Marshall Corner neighborhood? You must have known them all.

C: The Morris's they were the best. And Taylor's they lived in that area.

J: Okay there's still Taylor's there aren't there?

C: Yeah.

J: The Butler's were some?

C: Butler's yeah the Butler's, Clarence Butler. Gray's.

J: Now in the black community within the black neighborhood were their certain families that your mother and father told you to stay away from?

C: No all of us played together.

J: So you were free to make up your own mind about who your friends were going to be?

C: That is right. That's right.

J: Who were some of your white neighbors there?

C: Neighbors, Farrell's. They were just [bunch] was two brothers of them we used to play together. And the [Sydler's]. Must have been about four or five of them. And the Nelson's.

J: Nelson's.

C: That's right. That's about all of the white families around.

J: Any Norris's?

C: Well he had no children.

J: So you were able to associate with the white kids and have games and play ball and no serious problems?

C: Yeah, no serious problems.

J: How many of your colored neighbors, your black neighbors, were Catholic? You were.

C: The Water's were.

J: Water's were.

C: They was Catholic. Gray's was Catholic.

J: And they all went to church where?

C: St. Joseph's.

J: And normally how did you get to church on Sunday when you were still in your teens or earlier?

C: Well we used to ride the car to church.

J: So in your generation most of the people had a car?

C: Car.

J: How was the road between your house and St. Joseph's?

C: Old gravel road.

J: Gravel?

C: That's right.

J: Bad in the winter?

C: It'd be bad in the winter.

J: So to get to St. Joseph's would you come out on the 225?

C: Come up 225 and go Marshall Corner Road.

J: And then turn left?

C: That's right.

J: In the 1920's and 30's about what part of the St. Joseph's congregation was black and what part white ?

C: Well they had the white—

J: Percentage.

C: Oh percentage. It wasn't such a large congregation.

J: Were about half the people white's on a Sunday morning and half black?

C: It was about half and half. Then there was another set of people other words there was two or three sets of colored people there. There was the Shorter's and Wesorts and the black sorts.

J: That's true it was as you say a three group congregation which makes its really different. Nowhere else in Charles County would you find that break down. How did the church up through your teenage years ever have annual get togethers like picnics?

C: Well the blacks had picnics.

J: But it was not a total mix?

C: No was no total mix.

J: Okay so for socializing outside of the church it was still a three group system?

C: That's right. Yeah it was the Wesorts, the black sorts, and the—

J: And white sorts.

C: [Laughs] that's right.

J: How did you feel about this? Was it something that you sometimes wondered about?

C: Nobody wondered about it because we skid along good together. Even going to Sunday school we didn't have no trouble with no white. You didn't know nothing but white or black unless you [measured yourself]. But nobody would never call anybody no name.

J: So it was easy to deal.

C: That's right, right.

J: Maybe even tougher today.

C: Oh yeah but we had another family of people over there too. Their father was white and it was Sander's. Between Norris's and where we lived there. Felt like [we were] these people's grandchildren. Joe Sanders and Esme Sanders. Girl or boy but we used to play together and never had no fights or nothing. [Just] come right out of our house and eat and we'd go over there and eat.

J: Whatever happened to Joe Sanders?

C: He went to Baltimore.

J: He left the county?

C: That's right. And his sister was [born].

J: Have things changed very much in your lifetime in Marshall Corner Ripley area? New houses I suppose here.

C: These new houses.

J: A lot of the old ones are still there?

C: Yeah old houses still there but we never had no problem around Ripley. You know we all got along good together. I remember [our] house burnt down and [inaudible phrase] and tried to put the [fire out]. That was 1923.

J: You were ten years old then?

C: Yeah but I remember it just the same as today.

J: Your house burned?

C: The house where our homeplace was a big 14 room house. [Inaudible phrase] was no [firemen] and no firetrucks. And the white people come and try to help us put it out and help us.

J: What time of the year was it?

C: Easter Saturday. That next day was Easter Sunday.

J: Was this an old house?

C: It was an old house but my father had remodeled it. Kept remodeling it and got a great big old house.

J: Who owned it originally? Did you ever hear about that?

C: My grandfather owned it. His father owned it.

J: And your great grandfather was?

C: That was my grandfather Cornelius Woodland. But he remodeled the old house and added on and made it real big. He had a bunch of sisters that all went away and left there. He fixed it up so if they all come back all would have a room to go.

J: So where you were born and raised there were plenty of rooms for the family?

C: Plenty of rooms that's right.

J: Did the boys double up two to a room or were you able to have?

C: Well we used to be two to a room.

J: How tough was it to keep warm in the winter—

C: Wasn't it wasn't tough. My father had plenty of wood. He had plenty of stoves upstairs and down.

J: Wood stoves not fireplaces?

C: No, one fireplace. One fireplace and stoves upstairs and down stairs. We had to carry our wood.

J: So you put in your time splitting wood?

C: I didn't split much wood. My older brothers did.

J: What kind of tools did your father have when he went out in the woods to know down?

C: He had saws, hand saws or buck saws.

J: Did he have any two man cross cutters?

C: That's right cross cutters. He had wedges to split the wood. Axes.

J: Normally did he try and season the wood? Let it dry out a little bit before burning?

C: No. Well yeah we had it stacked so high didn't burn it all because it was seasoned when we got to it. We had a shed on side the barn. We used to keep that for the wood.

J: So it was covered up.

C: Oh yeah in the building.

J: How many horses were there on the average? Enough for two teams?

C: Always had five horses. Most of them time six horses. And you had some ox's.

J: Oh did he have oxen?

C: Yeah.

J: One or two?

C: He had two.

J: What did he use them for? What kinds of jobs did he have them do?

C: Clean out a stable. That's all that you—and he loaned them out. The neighbors used them.

J: I see. Were they ever used for pulling stumps or any heavy work?

C: No. I'll tell you a fellow by the name of [Inaudible] Smith lived [inaudible phrase] swamp. He used to keep them up there.

J: Down near the Mattawoman?

C: That's right near the Mattawoman. He used to keep them for hauling wood and stuff. And another set [used] to keep up there [Mr. Jone] Proctor's. He lived in [Pom]. He used them for cleaning out stables.

J: But they belonged to your father?

C: He had two set of them.

J: What sort of things did your father and mother do to bring in money?

C: We used to have calves. Sell calves. And had chickens. Never sold chickens we ate chickens and sold a few eggs. The main thing was tobacco and wheat.

J: On that tobacco that was the big money crop even then. What was tobacco bringing on the average in the 1920's?

C: It's bringing around 23 cents a pound.

J: And amount how many pounds in a good yield year? What did your dad get from eight acres.

C: Around about 6,000 pounds.

J: Six or 60?

C: 6,000.

J: 6,000.

C: That's right.

J: Times 20 cents [one fifth]. So we're talking roughly about 1,200 dollars cash money for tobacco?

C: Yeah.

J: That was a pretty good income for one crop wasn't it?

C: Yeah it was a good—

J: What was the next big money maker?

C: Wheat. [On wheat he made about 300 dollars].

J: And was there another cash crop?

C: No hay fed it to his horses.

J: He needed that. So he didn't have to buy hay from anybody else?

C: No.

J: Now did your father or mother ever take wheat to be ground?

C: That we [inaudible phrase].

J: Where did you go to get?

C: The Mason Springs. We used to—

J: What was his name of the miller down there?

C: Mill, Miller's Mill.

J: That's right. Miller's Mill.

C: That's right.

J: Who've been down there—

C: Oh my. Used to carry wheat down on the horse and bring it back flour on the horse.

J: That wasn't too far away?

C: No.

J: What's that about four miles? Down to Araby and Mason Springs.

C: Yeah it must have been about three and a half miles one way.

J: And this would take what a team of horses?

C: No, it'd take one horse.

J: One horse.

C: Sometimes two of us would carry a bag of wheat, you know a half a bag a piece. We'd bring back flour and we kept it in a barrel. Big old 50-gallon barrel.

J: What was the toll? What part did you have to leave at the mill to pay?

C: Well he took the flour, took a toll off the flour. [And inaudible] shell off the wheat he'd have that too.

J: What did he do with that?

C: Well sometimes we'd get at it too. You have buckwheat cakes. And brown cakes you know. We used to get it—in other words we got what we want out of it.

J: So you get your good white flour plus the buckwheat grain which was brown?

C: Yeah that's right. That's right brown.

J: [After all the good buckwheat cake].

C: No. I still like it.

J: So what kind of a man was Mr. Miller? The man to deal with.

C: Oh he was a nice old fellow. He had a fellow there I guess they'd been working together for years. But they looked like brothers but this fellow was a black fellow by the name of [Bowman]. And Mr. Miller was white and both looked alike and got around real slow. They was old when I was a small boy.

J: Now you're talking about the original Miller?

C: That's right.

J: The Miller who came over from Virginia.

C: That's right.

J: I knew his son and his grandson. His grandson's now about 70.

C: That's right. [Inaudible].

J: You know [Inaudible]?

C: Yes sure he's near my age.

J: Okay now what was the first school you went to?

C: Old [Digg's] School.

J: Old [Digg's] and we looked at the site this morning and that tremendous old beech tree. Wish we took a picture.

C: Right.

J: About how many students on the average there?

C: About 20.

J: Okay and how many of them were related to you?

C: Well just the Water's family my cousins and the rest of them there was no kin.

J: There were what three or four Woodland's there at any point in time?

C: That's right there's four of us there.

J: Now was this the six or eight year school if you stayed there full time?

C: Seven grades.

J: Seventh grade.

C: That's right.

J: Now what caused you to go to another school? Why did you leave?

C: Well we left all the children grown moved away then they closed the school up. Wasn't enough to run the school.

J: Do you remember roughly how old you were your last year at [Digg's]?

C: I think it was about eight years old.

J: So you were there maybe two years?

C: No I started when I was five and half years old. At that time you had to have no age. If you could walk to school you could go to school.

J: You were old enough to go.

C: That's right.

J: How particular were the youngsters in those days at [Digg's] about dress? About dressing to go to school. What sort of clothes did they normally have on?

C: Most of them wore blue overhauls or brown overhauls.

J: Cross straps in back and came off this high?

C: That's right.

J: Real overhauls. Denim?

C: Denim. True denim.

J: And what kind of shirt?

C: Old blue shirts. Some brown shirts.

J: And in the winter what would they put on?

C: They'd have on these heavy jackets in the winter.

J: And did the youngsters in those days ever go to school with tennis shoes on?

C: No, no tennis shoes. They used to wear them shoes called boy scout shoes. [Shoe with a toe on them covered. It was gum shoes.]

J: Was this an ankle height shoe?

C: That's right.

J: Not like this? Not an oxford but an ankle height?

C: No, ankle height.

J: Okay and the girls would wear shoes about the same?

C: That's right. And we wore boots too. We had boots when it got bad in the snow. Wore the boots to school but we carried shoes and took the boots off.

J: Did they call them galoshes? Did you ever hear that?

C: Yeah I know them galoshes but we had regular knee boots.

J: Oh okay the kind your just pulled up?

C: That's right.

J: No laces?

C: No laces.

J: Alright. Now what was the second school you went to?

C: [Harford] School elementary school.

J: Were you able to walk that far?

C: Yeah I could walk up that far?

J: Was there a path cross Cuck Creek?

C: No we walked right up to Marshall's Corner.

J: Alright right along the road. So that would be what a good 45 minute walk?

C: Yeah a long one.

J: Yeah about two and a half miles.

C: But I walked farther than that too. We used to walk up to St. Joseph's Church to Catechism they called it.

J: That's another mile almost.

C: Two miles.

J: That's a very.... Did you generally go with a group of other kids?

C: Group of other children. We'd catch up with them on the road and all of them went up there together.

J: Now after the Pomfret School how many years were you at the Pomfret School?

C: I was at Pomfret School around about four years and a half.

J: Okay now who were your teachers at the Pomfret School?

C: Georgia Butler.

J: Georgia Butler. Was she related to Jacob?

C: No no kin. Ms. Saily Robertson.

J: Saily Robertson?

C: That's right. And Ms. Mayme Ransome.

J: Mayme Ransome.

C: I met her but just a year.

J: What did you think of her as a teacher? Can you remember how good she was?

C: Oh she was good positive.

J: What did she look like in those days? Can you see her?

C: She was a nice looking brown skin woman with good hair. She used to wear her hair sort of short.

J: Do you remember her eyes?

C: Yeah.

J: What color were they?

C: Her eyes were black.

J: I met her a couple years ago. She's very sharp and bright. She had a pretty good education. her family sent her to school over in Virginia near Manassas.

C: Oh yeah.

J: Okay and she's one of the good old timers. Now after Pomfret where did you go to?

C: La Plata School. We rode up there. I'd catch my.

J: About what year would this be when you first went to school in La Plata there?

C: 30's it was in the 30's.

J: And you were able to take advantage of the high school in Pomonkey?

C: Oh yeah.

J: So you got in what 11 years?

C: Something about 11 years.

J: So that was very—

C: Oh yeah.

J: How about your brothers? Were most of them able to go on through?

C: They went to elementary school because my father made us go to school. If you stayed you had to go to school. We farmed but we never did lose no days on the farm going to school. [Everybody making tobacco beds] we used to make them in the afternoon when we come home. We would never say lose a day to.

J: So he thought school was important.

C: Yeah.

J: Did he ever ask you to read to him at home to see how you were coming along?

C: Yeah we had to read. Had to.

J: Was there much homework?

C: Plenty of homework. Enough to keep you busy. We had no time hardly to play. You had to get that homework out and carry it back the next day. Wasn't that thing didn't have enough for homework. Our father made us get the homework.

J: So whatever the teacher wanted your mother and father supported her and you did it.

C: That's right. We used to try to out study each other.

J: Oh you did?

C: Oh sure. I had cousins over there that was younger than I was. They said you ain't as bright as we is. It was girls you know and they would read right. We used to play school. We used to play school.

J: Oh did you?

C: Yes.

J: Who'd be the teacher?

C: I had a cousin would be the teacher. And she was the only one—and she turned out to be a teacher.

J: Is that right? Here in this county?

C: Yeah.

J: What was her name?

C: Dorothy Waters. But she married a Barbour now she's Dorothy Barbour. She was a good teacher too. Oh yeah.

J: Did she teach for quite a few years?

C: Yeah she teached for 30 some years.

J: [First I had known].

C: Oh yeah.

J: Is she still living?

C: Yeah she's still living. Yeah she's some kind of smart too but she was hard on you. All them old teachers was. We thought they was hard on us. Wasn't hard on us. They just tried to learn us right from wrong.

J: As you look back now you think that they were right?

C: Oh yeah they was right.

J: What were some of the games that youngsters played as you were [coming up]? Going back as far as you could go even before going to school what kinds of games did youngsters play you know four or five six seven years old?

C: We used to play baseball. [Inaudible]. Then we'd play dodgeball. That was a game.

J: How did that [group] dodgeball.

C: You have a ring, draw a ring around, and you get in the ring. Once—

J: How many people? One at a time in the ring?

C: No they put—it was five. They put five in there one time. You hear them they [skin] that you get them out. You get them all out. Another get in and you have to get them out.

J: Was there a ball involved?

C: Yeah a ball. Was a big old ball.

J: Would you throw it at them?

C: Throw it at them.

J: Throw it at them.

C: Yeah.

J: And if you hit one of them?

C: He's out.

J: That one came out of the?

C: That's right. When it went down to the last [inaudible] you won. The one stayed there as long as we wanted that's the one won.

J: Okay one [who dodged real fast].

C: Yeah that's right.

J: That's where it got its name dodgeball.

C: Yeah. And the time could run out on you. You was timed so much. Then there could be three of them in there you couldn't get them out they win. They were tied somebody throws at you [inaudible] one to 10. You dodge them and you had the game. That way we did it.

J: Who were the names of these other some who went to school with you?

C: Well other people were named Brookes.

J: Brooke's.

C: And others was Ashton's. I know all of them by name.

J: Well let's put them on the tape.

C: Okay.

J: Now these are black families?

C: This is black family. It was Maurice Brookes, Joe Brookes, Agnes Brookes.

J: And where did the Brookes live?

C: Down in Mason Springs. Down [inaudible]. And the Ashton's was Josephine Ashton, Annie Ashton, Cole Ashton, [Evelyn] Ashton, Maple Ashton. That was the Ashton's.

J: Any boys in that family?

C: No boys in the Ashton family all girls. That was the named the Ashton family. That's about all of them.

J: Did they go to Dick's?

C: They went up Dick's [inaudible] school.

J: That was a long way for them.

C: Yeah they walked up and rode.

J: What were some of the other games that youngsters played? There wasn't anything like roller skating. Did you ever have bicycles when you were growing up?

C: We had bicycles yeah. We had bicycles all the time. Ride bicycles.

J: Rough roads to ride them on. No sidewalks.

C: Yeah potholes and we bent tires and [inaudible]. And there was another family called [Poole's] family. Leo [Poole], Francis [Poole], Sylvester [Poole], Nellie [Poole].

J: And where was their home?

C: They lived right across from where we lived. Up through the woods there.

J: Did you ever walk to Port Tobacco?

C: We used to walk down to [Weed's] Store. He had an old store down there. That store is burned down.

J: And did you go down there for groceries?

C: No. We'd go down there to get some gingersnaps, candy, balloon candy. That store we used to go get candy. Ripley Store had a store down in Ripley. Fellow by the name of Herbert used to run it. Which is [olive now].

J: In that same building?

C: That same building. I worked there for 15 years in that store.

J: On and off? [Inaudible].

C: That's right. I run it three years and [two] years part time.

J: So was it shorter to go to Port Tobacco rather than Pomfret?

C: Well we used to walk go down by my cousins house and all of us just walk down there to Port Tobacco. We never [paid no account] to distance. We'd go through the woods and walk.

J: So you remember where the old Glymont road used to run through the woods?

C: Oh yeah.

J: From this road up here.

C: That's right.

J: And it came out near present day Ripley about.

C: Glymont.

J: Glymont Road.

C: Yeah. And another way we used to go we had a [Pomfret Store]. There's a store there by name of Mr. Sweeney run that store. Mrs. Bryan run a store up there.

J: At Pomfret?

C: That's right and Wheatley, a fellow called Wheatley, he run a store.

J: Wheatley?

C: That's right. He run the store [inaudible]. That's all he ever wanted. [Mrs. Bryan] had one son, three daughters.

J: When the Depression came along it hurt a lot of communities. How did you feel it here living on the farm? Did it make life any different for you at all?

C: Well I'll tell you we had no Depression here. We had the same food and the same clothes. Had more clothes because as we got older see we got better clothes, more suit. No we didn't no Depression. Not so much a [inaudible]. See them people in the soup line [I just go to why].

J: And you did see that once?

C: Oh yeah.

J: But way out in the country here life was just about the same as it'd always been?

C: Oh yeah sure. Anybody didn't have nothing. I had and Uncle [over there] [inaudible] Water. He'd go in there and get all the food you want. Like cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, and watermelon, cantaloupe. They'd give them to you. And over on our side we didn't see a thing.

You could get anything you wanted to eat. Up [inaudible] you'd get anything you wanted to eat. So the food was no problem. Was no Depression.

J: How about clothing? How much of the clothing worn by your brothers and your sisters had to be bought in the store?

C: Oh we had suits, shoes, and shirts. We had all clothes. We had plenty of clothes.

J: Did your mother make clothes often?

C: No. She'd sew buttons on. Never made no clothes.

J: Now where did you go in Charles County to buy clothes? What stores?

C: We used to go to Bowling's Store.

J: In La Plata?

C: That's right. P. S. Bowling. That's about the only store really out there.

J: Did you ever go to Indian Head?

C: We used to go down to Eli's sometimes.

J: Do you remember Eli's?

C: Yeah. I remember Eli.

J: [Esther] [Inaudible] both still alive?

C: Yeah they're both still alive. Eli's an old fellow. Now I used to go down to Eli's when I must have been around 12, 13 years old. So but he had a store on the hill not down the hill. The old store's up on top here. You ever hear that?

J: No.

C: Yeah [little old small store.]

J: Not where it is now?

C: No [and he's stand on the front]. [Inaudible] [you stand out on the front]. He pull you in. Always had something to sell you. But you could get a good suit of clothing for 10 or 12 dollars.

J: What year are we talking about roughly? During the Depression?

C: Yeah during the Depression.

J: How old were you when you got your first real suit?

C: Must have been about eight years old.

J: Eight years old?

C: Yeah.

J: These long pants or short pants?

C: No they were short pants. I didn't get no long pants until I was 16 years old. I got a full suit long.

J: Good long pants. How many pieces?

C: Three pieces.

J: Did it have a vest?

C: [It's been] two pair of pants and a coat. It had no vest.

J: Was that something that the boys really looked forward to that first long suit?

C: Yeah. But I had a suit before that, blue suit, but it wasn't long but after I get out from home I let them down and make them long like knickerbockers. You ever hear of knickerbockers?

J: Yeah. [Hang] down just below the knees.

C: Yeah.

J: [Inaudible sentence].

C: Right but I just let them down but when I go back home I pull them up. You couldn't wear no long pants. We used to play up there too, Ms. [Haddy] Martin's place. She had a place over there where you go in this building. They had pianos and they played it. Some payer sit on the—

J: Up on the corner?

C: That's right. Sit on the seat and played the piano. But six o'clock you had to leave there and go home at six o'clock.

J: Did she live there alone?

C: She lived there. She had one boy and two girls.

J: Her name Ms. [Haddy]? [Haddy] Martin?

C: That's right. She had a son called Joseph Martin and Agnes Martin. [Inaudible phrase]. I remember them near as well as I do the day I was working for [Mrs. Rison].

J: What ever happened to the Martin family?

C: They moved away to Washington.

J: How many of the young people that you went to school with did not stay in Charles County? Went away and never came back? Any of your brothers for example?

C: No my brothers came back. They went away but they came back. I had a—my grandmother raised a boy by the name of Blair, James Blair. He went away and never came back. He went to Washington and stayed [inaudible]. When my mother died I didn't know where he lived. Sis said he'd been by one time and he said he'd be right back and he never come back.

J: Was this grandmother your mother's mother?

C: My mother's mother. She raised several children.

J: Mrs. Beard?

C: Her name was Blair.

J: Blair, Blair I'm sorry. Where was her home?

C: Right up in Pomfret. [Inaudible sentence]. My grandfather I think he come from old hill top. Henry Blair.

J: And this is your mother's father.

C: That's right.

J: Did you ever know him?

C: Oh yeah I know him.

J: Did you ever meet your father's father?

C: No. He is dead, white bone.

J: And he was Cornelius?

C: Woodland.

J: What was his middle name?

C: What was it—James Cornelius. [Inaudible] must have been. That was my brother's name, James Cornelius.

J: I'll bet that's what it was. And he was buried at Habre de Venture?

C: That's right.

J: And what do you think he did for a living? Your father's father.

C: He used to work for the Diggs's. He used to drive a stage coach.

J: What Digg's family was this now?

C: That must have been the Diggs's around La Plata. Judge Diggs [inaudible].

J: Because there were some Diggs family living up here coming up the long hill.

C: Over here? Yeah.

J: So maybe he worked for them?

C: I think he worked for them at La Plata though.

J: After they moved from here?

C: No when them Diggs's was in that house it was over La Plata too. Was a bunch of them though. Diggs's and Mitchell's.

J: Do you remember going into La Plata during the 1930's and spending some time?

C: Oh yeah. Yeah I visited La Plata. I used to go to La Plata and my father used to drive a horse and buggy over there and tie at the store. Cochran's Store used to have a rack there where you tie your horse.

J: What did Cochran sell at the store?

C: They sold some clothing—

[Tape Interruption]

J: What memories do you have of La Plata? What did the town look like? About how old were you when you first went to La Plata?

C: I bet I was six years old. Used to go up there with the store on your left hand side near the railroad track called Farrell's store. They used to sell clothes too, not much clothes. And Bowling's on the right hand side. It was and another place up there was the store called [Barry's] store. A Jew run it across by the [Oak Avenue] right on the corner. That's right.

J: How old were you when you first went into Barry's Store?

C: Oh Barry—the Jew Store?

J: Yeah.

C: I must have been about eight years old.

J: So that was there a long time?

C: Oh yeah did. There was another Jew around there called [Ruth Martin?] He had a store around there too.

J: Ruben?

C: Ruben but he wasn't no grocery. What'd he sell? He sold shoes or something.

J: Was he on the same side of the street as Barry's?

C: Barry's? Across the street from Barry's.

J: Across the street from Barry's. Near where the movie house?

C: That's right. It was back where that movie. They tore that store down.

J: Do you remember any blacksmith's being in La Plata? Did your father ever?

C: Yeah we used to carry horses over to the blacksmith.

J: Oh yeah what was the name of man who ran that?

C: McArthur.

J: McArthur?

C: McArthur. He had a blacksmith shop you know where you turn into the courthouse? That courthouse was on the right hand side going down where the garage at now. Blacksmith shop used that [inaudible].

J: Near Mitchell's Garage?

C: Oh no. On round back of the courthouse.

J: Back of the courthouse?

C: Yeah like on the side of the courthouse like when you turn into there where they tore that ground all up. That's where the old blacksmith shop—

J: What was the blacksmith—

C: Shop sitting up in there.

J: On Washington Avenue?

C: That's right. I was a small boy then. Then we used to carry the horses to be shod down. Miller's Mill.

J: Oh they did it down there too?

C: Yeah he had a—Mr. Miller's son had. He was named [Orville] Miller. I remember him.

J: Oh [Orville] that's right yes.

C: He used to shoe horses. [Inaudible sentence].

J: He did good work with metal?

C: Oh yea he was good with any kind. Wood too. He could build [bodies].

J: And that's [Ebs] Miller's daddy.

C: That's right. Plus I used to drive the bus to school. And this fellow Jackson had the bus. He tore it up. So we had to go down every day, have him work on the bus, and he would cut all this wood out, straighten it out, build the bus body. [Inaudible sentence].

J: I remember some of the word he did.

C: Mhm he'd bring it back. He was a nice fellow. [Inaudible].

J: Were there any other blacksmiths in La Plata?

C: Some on this—

J: Just this McArthur?

C: There was another blacksmith up near [Glymont]. Up here his name was Mr. [Kronk]. Is up here by Lee's Market. You know where Lee's—

J: Yes, yeah.

C: Like me now this blacksmith's shop set on the left side at his house, he shod horses, we used to carry them up there too. Ride horses up there and have them shod.

J: And what was his name?

C: I don't know his first name. I don't got his first name but last name was [Kronk]. A big tall fellow.

J: Kronk?

C: That's right. That was [Inaudible] Kronk.

J: Did he give a K or C?

C: It began with a K. Kronk.

J: Do you remember what they charged for shoeing a horse?

C: 50 cents.

J: For the whole thing? All four of them?

C: That's right. That's right. I know we used to take—see my brother was older than I was. We'd take two horses. We'd ride two and would lead two horses. So when they finished you would...[inaudible phrase]. [It's just a horse.] I remember that well.

J: Sometimes did your father send you in alone with a horse?

C: My brother and myself. He was older than I was.

J: Your brother and you. And you would ride the horse?

C: I'd ride one and lead one. He ride one see and lead one. He'd shoe them keep them shod all the time.

J: So you would take four horses at a time?

C: That's right. Two dollars. I remember that. Them was big dollar bills. You remember had them big dollars?

J: I've seen them.

C: They look funny beside these dollar bills now. I remember that.

J: They would buy more too.

C: Oh yeah. But we used to carry them [send them out] my brother would carry the money and sometimes I would carry it.

J: So your father trusted you?

C: Oh yeah.

J: Was there ever a time of the year when cash money began to get a little tight?

C: No we always had money that'd last till crop time. He managed it, had money lay over till crop time. And all of us had been [shown]. All of us along said people [like shown. But laws when] first come out I remember.

J: Did you remember that your father ever had to go to a bank and borrow money?

C: No he didn't borrow no money from the bank.

J: So he used to manage his affairs.

C: Yeah. He wasn't much about borrowing into it I guess. But the late years it got so that a farmer could make a farmer's loan. Because I know a man that went and made a loan farmer and this man couldn't read or write good. So he comes to my father and asked him about it. He [advised not to fool with it.] But the old fellow fooled with it anyhow and he lost his place. Wasn't much must have been about two or three hundred dollars. Could be that was during the Depression. Depression caught a lot of them like that. But right round in the neighborhood where we at was no Depression. Because all you could get something to eat and we had no electric. We had them carbine lights. I don't know whether you ever seen them or not?

J: Yeah.

C: I believe they used to be in this house too somewhere on this roof. They'd be real bright. Had them pipes. You'd light your lights on the wall. My father had them in the house.

J: Burned brighter than kerosene.

C: Oh yeah. You could light the house up. But that's all you could get the light. We didn't cook with it see. Now I know a fellow by the name of Mr. Brown. Over here he cooked with it. He had a gas stove. But now we got one tank of gas would last us six months. That tank of gas would cost you but four dollars for a hundred.

J: Four months?

C: For six months. It was a hundred pound of [carbine]. I remember how you put it in there. You take it out of this round can was all sealed up. Take that can top off and dump it down in the hole. If you dump fill it in the hole then you [tear] the pump on the side you pump this white wash out.

J: What did it?

C: White as lime, just come out like lime.

J: Was it a paste or powder?

C: No it was paste like [paper]. Pump that all out then take that white wash and paint the barns with it. Paint around the trees with it. You never seen nothing like that?

J: No.

C: Yeah the tag, [I'd be the tag down there yards now]. See you had a pump. Like a picture pump. When you load it up with that carbine well you let it drop down there. You take it pump all the stuff out. It'd be a while. [Inaudible sentence]. We had a big old barn down here. You could paint the barns with it.

J: And the carbine was used for the lamps?

C: That's right.

J: Was it shipped in this white stuff?

C: It come in a can. It come in cans. We used to buy it down in La Plata. I don't know where but in La Plata we used to get it. But it come in cans so this thing was down in the ground. And down in the bottom of it it had a like a generator. Elevated or something by water. It bounced up and down. And made the carbine turn. When it burning you'd go back down in there and there'd be white wash. We used to have to keep it water. You'd fill it up with water. You'd have to put a little more a couple times a year. That thing would keep that stuff going out of it. Come out as [pretty]. I mean it wouldn't wash off now. It was white wash but it was like paint. White wash will wash off unless you put salt in it. We used to put salt and a blue in it. [Did you ever use it? White wash?]

J: No.

C: You put it on trees.

J: How long would it last?

C: It'd last a long time.

J: That would keep the insects off?

C: That's right. We used to paint all the apple trees and everything.

J: Did your mother do much canning?

C: Yeah she used to do canning.

J: Did the boys ever help her in the kitchen at all?

C: No I had one sister who used to help her.

J: She was a little older than you?

C: Yeah she was older than I was. About four years older.

J: Did your mother can meats?

C: Used to can country sausages. You put them in a quart jar or half gallon jar and put them in there. You know how they seal them and turn them over. That sealed them.

J: She made her own sausages?

C: That's right.

J: Your father butchered at home?

C: Oh yeah we used to kill six hogs.

J: For the year?

C: Yeah.

J: What was the average weight of those hogs?

C: They run around about two and three hundred pounds.

J: That's a lot of pork. That's almost a ton of pork.

C: Yeah. We used to give it away too.

J: How did he cure it?

C: We had a big old meat house in there. First we'd salt it down in barrels and take it out of them barrels and put it, hang it up.

J: Wood barrels?

C: Yeah.

J: About how many hams would fit into a wooden barrel?

C: We used to get around five or six hams in a wooden barrel.

J: Is that the only part of the hog that he?

C: No we salted all of that. Then he'd take it and put it on a shelf.

J: Side pork cuts [all and everything]?

C: Yeah and dry it out. When it dried out take wipe that salt off it and hang it up in [inaudible] old place. Take it [had an old barrel]. You put this like [inaudible phrase] fill it up with this old hickory wooden stuff and smother it [in bark]. Kept it smothered. Smoke it all day long.

J: Not much flames?

C: No flame. Try to keep just enough flame to get that smoke going. Kept it smoked.

J: About how many days would you keep that going?

C: We'd do one day.

J: One day? Huh.

C: We got a lot of old [saxbee?]. You know what them [saxbee]?

J: No.

C: There's a bush called a [saxbee] bush. Pull that out and it smelled like medicine. Cut that and let it dry out. When you start smoking this meat put it on stuff right in there in that barrel and it would come through smoke and it would season the meat. Make it taste like [saxbee] like a—

J: What's the flavor?

C: Was like a root beer. You know how a root beer?

J: Yeah.

C: It would smell good.

J: Are we talking about sassafras?

C: That's what I'm saying yeah.

J: Sassafras.

C: Yeah. It comes over—has big roots into it.

J: Yeah it does smell—

C: Yeah.

J: You can chew on it—

C: That's right yeah. But it smells better than chewing. Yeah because it chewing a little bit—

J: I've had tea made out of it.

C: Yeah but the tea didn't taste good. It's the smell.

J: Did your mother have any home remedies for medicines that were passed down from her mother and her grandmother?

C: Used to take this [for the] marrow of the bone but yeah.

J: Bone marrow?

C: That's right. And you used to take it that marrow of the bone and put it on your chest [inaudible] yeah and make a poultice.

J: Poultice.

C: Poultice out of it and put it on your chest for a chest cold.

J: Did it work?

C: It worked. Only thing about it you had to keep wear that old [inaudible] all at once. You'd catch a cold when you take it off.

J: What did your mother do for bad cuts? Cut yourself with a knife or axe?

C: She'd say you was a—

J: What'd she put on?

C: She used to put peroxide on it. You could get peroxide then. Then she'd take the ashes out of the stove and she'd put on it. Tying it to stop it from bleeding.

J: I see [wrap it].

C: That's right. Wrap it in white cloth.

J: How did you handle toothaches?

C: Well a toothache we didn't have much trouble with toothache but we used to use some stuff called [lemon cola].

J: Cloves?

C: No [pain cane]. You ever hear of [pain cane]? It was a [hot like it was hot]. You'd put it—

J: Would it burn?

C: Yeah it burned. use it for toothaches.

J: Sounds like oil of cloves.

C: Yeah that's right.

J: Didn't taste too bad?

C: No it burned your tongue but then the quicker we'd get to a dentist then we used to have a whole lot. Never kept no [fillings]. Used to go and get them pulled.

J: You didn't drill them and fill them?

C: No I'll tell you now. I filled mine after I got grown. Fill them out but some of them teeth come back see when they was pulling them was young you pull them before you shed them. Then they come back. Then we had toothache we pull them out. [But in after we] [inaudible phrase] I never remember having toothache on the one day. At night started aching next day go to dentist pull it out. Had some dentist down in La Plata. One old dentist.

J: What was his name? [Sasser].

C: Yeah I know him too.

J: Posey?

C: No. Sasser was a dentist and was another guy down there dentist we used to go to.

J: [Inaudible].

C: [I never went to] [Inaudible]. No I was scared of him. The one we had was another guy [inaudible phrase]. But after I got—I said I ain't pulling all my teeth out. I wouldn't pull no more. I went to a fellow by the name of Doctor Williams. And had him fill all my teeth.

J: Where was his office?

C: He had an office—he was down [inaudible] from down McConchie. But he lived there with the [wife] [inaudible]. On [inaudible] Avenue. And I had him drill all them teeth out and fill them. My father wouldn't let us fill them. [Just take them out].

J: Did your father and mother have good teeth? [Inaudible sentence].

C: Oh yeah they had good teeth.

J: How about cleaning and brushing teeth? What did they have you do?

C: We used to brush them with that bread baking soda. Didn't have no—

J: No fancy toothpaste.

C: No you got baking soda.

J: And a real toothbrush?

C: That's right. [Baked it, shake it up, put that baking soda]. Damp your brush put the baking soda on it. [Inaudible].

J: Do you remember how old were you when your father got his first car? Do you remember?

C: How old was I? Oh yeah but I must have been around about—because we had a date version old buggy with three seats.

J: Three seats? Four wheels?

C: Had a front seat, middle seat, and a back. Had them things would pull out of the side.

J: You had a curtain of some sort in case it rained hard?

C: That's right yeah. That's right let them down. My father must have got the first car—

J: Now how many people could you carry in that thing?

C: It was seating for—you could carry about six people. Two up front, two in the middle, and two in the back end of it.

J: And this is how you got to church once in a while when you were very young?

C: Yeah we went to church in that [date].

J: Drove it into La Plata once in a while?

C: Yeah because he had places up there too where you could tie them, horses. Now first car we got was a Model T Ford 1916 and 17. Old Model T Ford with a brass hood on it. And I was a small boy then. Real small. Then from then on when I first about five years old. When I was five years old my father had a car. And the [automobile] drive and you could [old enough] to drive. Most of—my sister didn't drive. Brother, two brothers, three brothers could drive. He was old enough to drive.

J: How old would your oldest brother be today?

C: He'd be about 88.

J: 88 So he was born in 1900?

C: Right. That's what it was.

J: Okay so he'd be 88. Now your father was doing pretty well as a farmer to be able to buy a car at that point. Do you remember if it was new or second hand?

C: Well I don't know but the next one I know was new. Was an old—now went from that curtain business and it was curtains on [our] car call it [toying]. Put your curtains down. Then they had a got an old sedan. An old sedan was the Model T. That was new but it didn't cost no more than five or six hundred dollars.

J: About what year was that?

C: That was back in let's see and we got that brass colored car. The next car must have been in 20, 1920. Because my grandfather had gone and got one and I had an uncle that got one. And he just got [everyone]. Then the next but he still kept the old brass one.

J: Oh yeah so he ended up with two Ford's. You had a Sunday car and an everyday car we used to call it.

J: Where were they buying these cars? Who was selling them?

C: Guy called Mathews and [Powell].

J: In La Plata?

C: That's right. I'll tell you without pictures of it. Right cross let's see. It's [inaudible] a big building down there. You know where that—you go down Post Office? That big building right as you turn right at Post Office. That was a Ford place. Mathews and [inaudible].

J: [Inaudible sentence].

C: Yeah that's right. It was like that when you come down here.

J: Still there. [Inaudible sentence].

C: Yeah like old hand made [inaudible].

J: Yeah that's right. [Inaudible sentence].

C: That's right. I [build them like] [inaudible]. This is slow progress but they had it—they come out a factory what they got. We got them phones and put them [together].

J: When you were going into La Plata shopping where could a black family go in and eat?

C: Couldn't eat.

J: This was a real problem?

C: Yeah you couldn't eat around here. They had a place called Stumble In you could go around the back side and get a bowl of soup. Wasn't no place you sit down and eat.

J: Did you sometimes take a lunch with you if you knew you were going to be gone?

C: No we never took no lunches. We used to go over there and get on back and come back from La Plata. And I'll tell you now my father never let us go around La Plata. We never when we went to La Plata we had money in our pocket to buy what we want and come right on out of there.

J: Just get it and get?

C: Yeah didn't loaf around there.

J: Why did he feel that way?

C: Well he just figured he wasn't supposed to be loafing around places like that. Lot of people go down and set on the rail fences. Not rail but was an old fence by that courthouse. Huh?

J: [Inaudible sentence].

C: Old fence by the courthouse. They'd sit on the rail. My father—

J: What did that fence look like then [that's interesting]?

C: Say it looked like it was—

J: A couple of pipes?

C: Yeah it was pipes.

J: Round?

C: Yeah it was round big on the top and big on the middle going around. Round pipes.

J: So people would sit up there with their feet on the middle one?

C: Yeah that's right.

J: Pass some time up there.

C: My father used to say they looked like buzzards. He never allowed us around them. Not even [dinner]. We used to go down there [inaudible]. We went down to La Plata I get over there at times [Ms. Norris] be coming back home. Go around through the shopping but go on back around [Ms. Norris].

J: Where was this place?

C: [He's was around]—you know where Mitchell's Supply? Cross from Mitchell's Supply. Had it next to—

J: The old main road?

C: Yes faced old main road. But your fire—it run back next to that [fire department].

J: Oh yes alright not a big building.

C: No wasn't no big building.

J: And later [inaudible] got a building.

C: That's—yeah that's right.

J: Okay now what did Mr. Norris sell?

C: He didn't sell nothing but feed.

J: Feed.

C: Feed u-huh he used to sell feed.

J: And this was your neighbor from out here Robert V. Norris?

C: That's right. That's right. He sold fertilizer and grain.

J: Did he have a truck of some sort?

C: He had a truck. He delivered fertilizer. I know one fellow he used to drive for. I know two of them. [Herr] Jimmy [Herr] used to drive a truck. Richard B. Gross he drove the truck home and worked out on the farm. He was a good man too.

J: Was Gross a black man?

C: Black man.

J: Okay now there's some living off towards Hughesville today. Grosstown Road.

C: Yeah that's some of his people.

J: This was a hard working man, Gross?

C: Yeah. Now he's got—he worked—he lived in independent village now. Ben Gross do.

J: Where is that?

C: That's you know where this prison camp? Over near that prison camp. That was there.

J: Excuse me. What was Indian Head like? How often did you folks get way over to Indian Head?

C: We used to go there once or twice a week.

J: So you'd go to Eli's once in a while?

C: Yeah used to go to visit some people down there too. They was Swann's, Washington's, and the Thomas's. We used to go over there.

J: Was there any place for you to eat over there?

C: No, no place to eat. Only visit people there at their homes. Wasn't no lunch rooms. Wasn't nothing in Indian Head hardly for the white people.

J: And Waldorf about the same?

C: All of them places about the same. There was a few [hot dog] places but you couldn't go in there. Couldn't go nowhere near them.

J: Times have changed.

C: Oh yeah.

J: Did you ever take a train ride?

C: Oh yeah.

J: Where did you go?

C: Atlantic City.

J: Atlantic City?

C: Yeah.

J: When?

C: That was back in 25.

J: How did this come about?

C: Well [inaudible phrase].

J: I see. Who went?

C: Well I went with my uncle and myself. Just us two. And next time I went was an uncle and a couple of his boys went.

J: How old were you when you first went?

C: I was about 12 years old. I'll tell you what it cost you to go. Three dollars round trip.

J: Three dollars all the way to—what was in Atlantic City?

C: Boardwalk. We used to go down and walk up down the boardwalk. Buy whatnots on the boardwalk. Then you could—

J: Was it fun for a youngster?

C: Yes. And you would get them buggies. You'd ride in buggies. You'd pay so much a ride.

J: Somebody pushed you?

C: Yes they'd pull you up, push you up.

J: Do you believe they're still there?

C: Yeah I know it.

J: We were there two months ago.

C: I don't care much for that in there.

J: What was the difference in attitude towards blacks up there? Did you have any problem eating?

C: No wasn't no—

J: If you had the money?

C: Yeah. You could eat up there but it was at most a hot dog. You know stand on the outside.

J: Typical boardwalk.

C: Yeah, yeah. Didn't go to no lunch room. Boardwalks had them hot dog stands. You go up and you get a hot dog back then.

J: So that was a pretty big adventure.

C: Yeah, yeah. I—

J: What time did it—did you get on the train in La Plata?

C: In La Plata.

J: At what time of the day?

C: It would leave sometime in the early in the morning. And leave that early in the—early the next morning you'd be coming in [last].

J: So it was all night trip?

C: Well like you said we left there I say 11 or maybe 12 o'clock and we'd get down there early in the morning. You'd be riding because them trains be blowing and stopping at Bowie, stopping all the way.

J: At Bowie did you get onto another train?

C: No it was pulling in to pick up some. See this would be a [skirting] train. Wouldn't be putting—wouldn't be taking—wouldn't be changed. You still on that—

J: Same train all the way.

C: Yeah excursion. That's the only time I went on there on excursion. And after that I would go right along.

J: What was your full—our first full time job? What did you do?

C: Full time job was driving school buses.

J: When did this start?

C: 1930.

J: Who hired you?

C: The principal of the school and Mr. J.C. Parks. He was the education supervisor.

J: You met this man? Did you—

C: Mr. Parks? Oh yeah. I know him well he was a nice fellow. Him and—

J: Where was his office?

C: Well he's just ride up and down the road going from school to school. Don't know if he had no office. He was the superintendent. Be a superintendent.

J: So he interviewed you?

C: Yeah.

J: You had been driving for how long at that point?

C: I drove about three years but see he knows me now from going to high school. They bought the buses and they picked people out to drive. [It was three of us to drive].

J: How old were you?

C: I was 16.

J: That's a lot of responsibility.

C: Yeah it was a lot of responsibility. Well you had to be able to take responsibility to drive the bus and [children was definitely]—

J: What kind of a bus was this? What kind of machine? How many would it carry?

C: It carried 30.

J: And what make?

C: Ford.

J: A Ford.

C: That's right.

J: Dual wheel on the back?

C: It had dual wheels on the back. Then I drove one with single wheels too on the back.

J: What was the heating like on those buses? Could you keep it warm on a real cold day?

C: No. You couldn't keep it warm.

J: That's changed a lot.

C: Yeah. The heat was right up there. The driver keep warm but.

J: Yeah right off the metal for you.

C: Yeah.

J: [I remember that right off the metal].

C: I remember we used to put lamps in a car to keep heat. [Like a lamp you got out there] see put one in the front, one in the back. They'd cook your legs up.

J: [Inaudible sentence].

C: Yeah.

J: So how many miles was this route?

C: Well I had the longest route. It was about 20.

J: You were still living at home?

C: No I stayed in the bus route. I was down Rock Point. I drove from Rock Point up here. 23 miles from Rock Point to La Plata. You know the Lancaster's down there? Well I was living not too far from them.

J: Very, very close to Rock Point.

C: Yeah it was on the point. I was right down on the point. I lived that old—

J: Did you know some of the Butler's down there?

C: I knowed all the Butler's.

J: Did you know [Mooksey]?

C: Yeah sure. [Mooksey's] a working hard working ma.

J: I've got some a good picture of him taken about 1930.

C: Yeah? Oh Yeah. Now his brother was hard working. Louis, he died.

J: They worked in the cannery?

C: Yeah.

J: So where did you live exactly?

C: Down in the hotel I guess. Called Bell's Hotel. I imagine that building fell down and is gone now.

J: Do you have any pictures of?

C: No pictures of it. Now down there Mr. Lancaster lived cross over the point from there. We used to go around there and fish. Go fish around there.

J: Which Mr. Lancaster was this?

C: I think it was the [Don] Lancaster. Or Spearman's.

J: Spearman.

C: Spearman Lancaster.

J: Brother to Charles.

C: Yeah I know all them. I know they were Lancaster's down there but they was real fine people. One of the brothers used to give me cakes, cookies. His wife could cook nice cooking. We good friends. I say we're good friends because he kept me in cookies when I was on the job.

J: How long did it take you to cover that route?

C: About two hours.

J: Each way?

C: That's right two hours each way.

J: Now were you going to school yourself?

C: Oh no I come out of school when I started driving the bus.

J: Okay.

C: I was in the school but I didn't graduate. I just come out of school. I was 16. You had to be 16 for you to get the driver's license. To drive you had to get a different license. A chauffer license.

J: And you took a test for that?

C: That's right.

J: Who tested you?

C: Over here the state troopers coming out of La Plata and give you the test. Give you a driving test. Wasn't enough [to have a] driving test. You get in the car and just go around that circle go around by that school and as long as you didn't choke out you know. Put the hand signaler to stop at a stop and turning you know. I was a happy when I got the chauffer's license.

J: Was that a rather tough job managing one of those buses? No power breaks, no power steering.

C: Wasn't no but it wasn't no. Was a good job because see I had boys on there larger than I was. Anything went wrong with the bus they'd jump out and give me a hand and they admired you. [They'd do so I] tell them sit down or something they sat down.

J: So you were bringing those kids up from Rock Point to?

C: To Pomonkey.

J: To Pomonkey all the way to Pomonkey.

C: Yeah past a lot of schools. We passed all these schools through La Plata.

J: So that was the only black high school?

C: That's right. And they had it on account of them black people with the money.

J: They did it themselves.

C: Uh—huh yeah. Got the land and—

J: Who were some of the black families who really did a lot for that school?

C: Reverend Key, Wesley Key. Jenny C. Marshall, he married my aunt. [Mayor Brawner]. I know a bunch of them up there just did work, donate their help and labor and stuff to clean up and clear up. Miles, [Reverend] Miles [and that bunch].

J: What did they pay you? How much money [inaudible] for driving those kids?

C: 30 dollars a month.

J: 30 dollars a month.

C: And room and board.

J: And room and board.

C: Yeah.

J: Who paid your room and board?

C: The principal and Mr. Parks.

J: I see and he paid for you staying down at the hotel?

C: That's right.

J: How was the food down there?

C: They had good food. Yeah. They had a lot of seafood.

J: Now was this a white managed hotel?

C: No managed by a black woman.

J: And what was her—

C: Ms. Bell.

J: Bell?

C: That's right. She had a big diner where you sit out and eat. But I had a wing on the side, one side of it. Had a bed room and bath and everything right in the room.

J: How long did you—you had your own bathroom?

C: Yes right in—

J: Good modern plumbing?

C: Yeah.

J: Was there electricity at that time?

C: Yeah there was electric. She had electric in there. See over from there she had electric was a lot of them big rich people down there had electricity.

J: Oh I see.

C: And I imagine she got it [inaudible] the white people's hotel and she got it. She was the oldest one down on that point, black.

J: Did you stay down there weekends or come home?

C: No when Friday come I come back as fast as I could come back.

J: And how did you get back here?

C: Car. I had a car yeah. I bought a 1931 Ford.

J: A Model A?

C: Mhm.

J: Two door, four door?

C: Two door. Man I got that car. When I got that car by the time Friday come I get down there as quick as I get down there, lock the bus up, and come on [inaudible] till Monday.

J: Did you buy it new?

C: No I didn't buy it new but it had no mileage on it. Was old lady around in La Plata had it.

J: What was her name do you remember?

C: No I don't know what her name was but she got rid of the car. I got that car.

J: Sounds like a good buy.

C: Yeah was same as new yeah.

J: I wonder what you paid her for it?

C: I believe I paid four hundred dollars for it.

J: [How'd you like to] have it right now.

C: Oh my. Well you know I had a mini car though. I'd had a mini car. I bought it 31 Ford with them old spare tires on the side. And I got a 34 Ford convertible.

J: V8?

C: V8. Had a 34 Ford Roadster. Lord knows how many cars [I buy].

J: [Inaudible sentence].

C: I don't know what it—I had a mini car.

J: [Inaudible sentence].

C: Huh?

J: Which one of those do you like better right now?

C: I believe I really had a convertible. Ford convertible.

J: What year was that?

C: That was in 34. But I used to go all over [Washington]. Go on up to the zoo. I had a bunch of [bother me] because I could go anywhere. See if you can travel to town they will—I'd go to [suburban garden]. You ever hear of that? It's a summer resort. It was like Glenn Echo Park for [inaudible phrase].

J: And where was it?

C: It was going out in Maryland like out [Deanwood]. You know where [Deanwood] at?

J: [Inaudible].

C: No [Dean] Avenue would carry you out there. It's a [inaudible phrase] in there. Nothing but woods out there like Glenn Echo Park [inaudible]. Glenn Echo Park you went out Fox Hole Road. You been out there.

J: Yes, yes.

C: I've been—I worked all around those places.

J: What were the fairs like? There was the black fair at Pomfret?

C: Right.

J: And I suppose your father and mother used to see that you got there?

C: Yeah.

J: Did your mother ever enter anything into the exhibits for the [contest] in canned goods or baked goods?

C: No she didn't bother.

J: Did your father take [things]?

C: Tobacco. He used to [cure] tobacco. [Inaudible sentence]. Put some hogs [inaudible phrase]. I used to put [hogs on] [inaudible].

J: [Your own]?

C: Yes indeed. Had a [race] [hogs]. [Had a Tamworth] [inaudible phrase].

J: What kind were they?

C: They was [Tamworth]. [Big red hogs]. [Bacon] had them big long sides slabs bacon. [Inaudible sentence].

J: Anybody raising those anymore?

C: I ain't seen none no. I think it was in [inaudible]. Mr. Norris used to have them Hampshire. That hog with the white back. Black hog with the—

J: That was a pretty heavy—

C: Yeah they was big but you don't see them no more either do you. But that Tamworth was expensive hog. I believe I paid 50 dollars for the male and 35 dollars for the sow and raised pigs.

J: About what time was this?

C: It was back in let me see now. It was back in 30 something. I could sell them pigs as fast as [inaudible]. They would buy them because they [was the greatest hogs] but they sold for good money. See you could buy a pig then for five dollars and I used to get 25, 30 dollars.

J: [Inaudible]

C: Huh? Yeah it was good money. I had cows too had calves. I used to raise calves. But see the way I made my biggest mistake—see but you never know it until too late. See my brother used to farm. He used to raise a lot of tobacco.

J: Which brother was this now?

C: It was one older than I was his name was Francis Woodland. He owned that big—the white house beside there before you get to me. After the house burnt down back in then my father built a house. Didn't build it [that big]. He built that house over in 1924. He was coming along then. I still [inaudible phrase] sometimes. [Why getting this house built]. Then when he got it built up then we got them carbine lights I tell you about put it. Most beautiful place then had a nice looking yard. my father didn't believe in no shade trees. What he did he planted fruit trees for shade. See you could eat the fruit and lay in the shade.

J: Did you lose everything when the house burned?

C: Everything. Everything except [our organ]. We had an [inaudible]. Saved that and had—

J: Where's that today.

C: I don't even know where it's at. And they had a closet old clothes hanger and they—you know setting right in the hall way. Looked like it had a devil's head on it. Hang your [inaudible] on it. You ever seen one of them? I don't know where that went. We saved them two pieces. Then my father went and bought a lot of antique furniture for the house we [found a lamp]. Don't know where that went. He had a—my brother had a chair. The Mudd's over here had it over in Bryan Town. Heard my father got a lot of furniture from them people. They gave it to them.

J: You know this is true [inaudible phrase] black people everywhere that ended up with some pretty nice antiques because the white people wanted to get new [wonders].

C: Yeah right.

J: But the problem was so many of these black [didn't] realize what they had. [Inaudible sentence].

C: They had it.

J: [Inaudible sentence].

C: I know my father had it. I was suited out. I mean but he didn't buy it. There was a guy called Henry Mudd used to buy tobacco he [give me] a whole lot of antique furniture. And old man never [Mudd] on there [give me plenty. He didn't] buy nothing. Only thing he bought after building the house was the things in the kitchen. Stove and stuff like that and up the beds. He had to buy all new bedroom suits.

J: So this is interesting. In 1924 he was doing this?

C: Yeah.

J: What did he buy for the kitchen? How did he furnish that kitchen?

C: We had an old [home comfort] stove. Bought that new.

J: Was it a wood and coal burning?

C: Was wood and coal and it was a big tank on the side for hot water. Was over ten gallons of water. You seen them like that?

J: [Inaudible].

C: [Home comfort] [inaudible] had that kind was a copper lining inside. We still had to keep water a little bit of water unless it burn out. Then you had some cabinets in the kitchen. He had this fellow called [tip] built the cabinets all around the walls. And closets, big closet in that house down in there. They had closets put in—

J: Who's living in that house today?

C: My nephew's living there. That house [hold out better than the house I got]. Yeah cause these houses built then was better material. You can get a look on them houses but you ain't got the material into them.

J: Yeah. How about an ice box?

C: We had an ice box. Great big ice box. But where all that stuff went I don't know. See wasn't no electric along near then when that house was built wasn't no electric out here.

J: When was the electricity put in?

C: Must have been around about in the 30's.

J: Were your father and mother still living in there?

C: No my mother was dead then. My father was living. My mother died 1940. We had them carbine lights in there. It must have...she died...electric must have come here a couple years after that.

J: Did you get a telephone in the house? [Foyer phone in the house]?

C: Oh yeah we had a telephone. One of them crank, one you crank it up. [You picked it see you thing up in and cranked it down on. You see] [inaudible]. You know I don't where that [inaudible]. See when I left there see I had a brother stayed and farmed. When my father was giving away everything dividing the land up and everything he said he was gonna buy the [acre]. I had a sister she said she had—she wanted eight acres. So he give her eight acres. Give my brother eight acres. Give the older one 16 acres and then come back and give me what I want. I said I only want three acres how dumb I was I took three acres. I said I don't want no back lands back over there because then my brother have it all. See my brother had around about 40 some acres that he could. We had a pasture 30 acres of pasture. And he's telling me [getting some better land] I wouldn't take it. At that time I was raising hogs and anything over in that on that side there.

J: How old were you?

C: Oh when my father divided the land up? I was in my early 20's. I wouldn't take it because I say now my brother did all the farming if we left he would [inaudible phrase]. He had tractors and everything. My father had tractors. I had a step mother. My father got married again. And what he did when he got married before he got married she had three houses over in Indian Head so she take her houses and give it to her children. Divide up everything. She had a place there on 301 she divided that. So what my father did all everything he had he divided amongst us so neither one had nothing to nobody to fight over. No more than a [that house] he had a room the lifetime stay in the house there where my brother lived at and also she had a lifetime to stay there if anything happened to him she would come there and stay.

J: Do you remember when your father got his first tractor?

C: First old tractor he got was an old Model T tractor. Old tractor with a flat iron wheel but he had to crank it. [Inaudible phrase].

J: Were these made by Ford?

C: Yes indeed old Ford.

[End of Tape]