

Transcript of OH-00151

Lorina Butler Chambers

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

Agriculture
Race relations
Rural conditions
Segregation

Tags

Food preservation
Habre de Venture

Transcript

[Note: Static in the audio of the tape renders much of it difficult to understand.]

John Wearmouth [J]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Lorina Butler Chambers at her home near Chicamuxen on the western side of Charles County. We're on Route 224. She's living with Mr. and Mrs. Turner here. Today's date is January 18, 1988. This interview is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program. Lorina was born near what today is called Marshall's Corner. Her father was Jacob Butler who owned a piece of land just north of Habre de Venture. His land was part of what had been called Mattingly's Hope for a couple of hundred years. And it was probably about a 500 yard walk from the main plantation house at Habre de Venture to the house in which Lorina was born. Her mother was Georgiana Butler. She was born in La Plata. Her father Jacob was born in Port Tobacco. She went to the elementary school at Pomfret and for about seven years and then moved to Germantown, Pennsylvania. [Inaudible] and attended school there another two years. So you call Charles County home do you?

Lorina Butler Chambers [L]: Mhm.

J: May I call you Lorina during?

L: Yes call me Lorina.

J: So you have every right to call Charles County home?

L: Yeah.

J: Now you've lived here since you were born here April 10, 1896 which means you will be next April 92 years old?

L: I'm 91 now.

J: Okay going on 92.

L: Going on 92. I've been going telling people I was 90 years old. See I couldn't birthday [figured] until I finally thought oh I was this old see because, but [inaudible phrase] this and then the birthday [inaudible phrase] and then the rest. I hear you say—you say they had a little piece of land.

J: A piece of land. How many—

L: Let me tell you something.

J: How many acres was it?

L: God don't I know it. It is some land I got.

J: That Jacob Butler—

L: Oh yeah [all on Rose Hill. All up there Port Tobacco.] [Inaudible phrase] [place called Mitchell] [inaudible]. Up there on [Diamond] Hill Road. On [Diamond] we got land up there all up in [Mitchell]—all up the [Hughesville] up to Port Tobacco. It was back up there. You know where Edna lived? You know Edna? You say you know Edna up there in Marshall's Corner?

Roberta Wearmouth [R]: Elizabeth?

L: No, no I'm talking about Marshall's Corner.

J: Edna Jones?

L: Edna Jones. Well I've got land from where Edna all way down that state road I've got land. My father got land all [inaudible phrase] my land. And all down that state road there. Course Elizabeth has got it now because see I [don't pay no taxes]. I don't pay no taxes I get no land. Elizabeth she's paying the taxes on them. [Inaudible phrase] all that land.

J: So she would know how many acres there were?

L: [Inaudible phrase] but I did know. I forgot because [inaudible phrase] La Plata.

J: Who was the lawyer that your father—

L: Mr. Walter Mitchell.

J: Walter Hanson Mitchell Sr.

L: That's right.

J: And as I remember he bought this land about 1890?

L: But I don't know when my niece—but she was here not long ago and she says she was [paying] and I asked her. I said, "Are you paying taxes on my father's place?" She said, "Yes." She said yes she was paying taxes on it so I don't know.

J: She must be or she wouldn't have it.

L: But if you want to build a house there. She won't build a house up there on that [inaudible] road on the state road where my land is. They won't let her build a house. I don't understand. And another girlfriend of mine want to build a house there and they won't let her build.

J: Maybe it won't [inaudible].

L: Huh?

J: Maybe it won't [work] is there a lot of clay there maybe?

L: [Can't build] on our land. See they won't build. [Inaudible phrase] won't build a house up there [because they won't let her build it]. That's [the funniest thing] you got something and you can't build on it.

J: Yeah did your father build the house where you were born?

L: Oh yeah. He built that house.

J: How many children in your family? Brothers and sisters.

L: I [born my]—all my family [did] all my sisters and brothers dead. I'm the oldest one living.

J: You're the last? Were you the older child?

L: No I'm the baby.

J: You're the baby of the family.

L: Uh-huh of the family.

J: How old would the oldest be?

L: The oldest one?

J: If it were alive?

L: Oh if he were alive he would be now almost 100. Let me see. I'm 92, he would be almost around 98 years, almost 100 years. I mean over 100 years old.

J: What was his name?

L: His name was James Butler.

J: James Butler. Did he live in that house?

L: All of them lived in the house. All of them when they was growing up [inaudible] you know before they go off you know.

J: How many children?

L: 16.

J: 16. And your mother and father stayed together all of their lives?

L: All their lives.

J: No divorce no separation?

L: No, no separation.

J: How did your father feed that family? What did he do?

L: My father, my father raised cows and he raised pork and raised sheep. Every time he wanted sheep he'd go down and kill it. He had a big farm. He had a big farm that we live at right now. He had a lovely big farm. Raising tobacco, corn. I mean big corn and tobacco just like that. They had a [when they thought they had] [inaudible phrase]. [I remember that's what he had and other things.]

J: Do you know how your father accumulated enough money to buy that piece of property? That was a good piece of land.

L: Sure he [done things you see. What did my father do?] He got into [those] pensions but it wasn't much. I guess it was around about 900 dollars. Because then my mother when he died my mother got nine dollars a month see.

J: What was the pension from?

L: [They wouldn't give you—huh?]

J: What was this pension for?

L: I guess for war I guess. From the war I guess that's what it was.

J: The Civil War?

L: Yeah. [Inaudible phrase] The first war—it [couldn't have been this war no?] Must have been in—what's the first war?

J: World War I?

L: What is the last well the second there?

J: Two, World War II.

L: Yeah well he was World War I.

J: How old do you think your father was when you were born roughly?

L: I guess my father around about 80 years or 86 years old.

J: When he died?

L: Mhm.

J: And how old when you were a baby?

L: When—

J: When you were born how old was your father roughly?

L: When well I was born—I don't know when I was born but. When I was born I don't know I guess my father died about 86 when I was born. When he died I was around about six years old.

J: About six years old?

L: I was six years old.

J: So he was a rather old man when you were born?

L: Oh yeah. He's kind of old [yeah he's old].

J: You say you were six years old when your father passed away?

L: Yeah I was about that age.

J: So about 1902 or 3? Your mother continued to live for quite a while?

L: Oh yes she lived a long...lived around about eight or nine years after he died.

J: Alright now we're getting somewhere. Her father could have been a Civil War veteran. We could find this—we could find this out. Okay that's interesting. What Charles County white family had your grandparents as slaves? Did your mother and father, your mother ever talk to you about this?

L: No [I don't remember].

J: Could they have been at Habre de Venture?

R: She mentioned the Jenifer's.

L: [Inaudible sentence].

J: They worked on Jenifer farm would you say?

L: No not as I know. [I don't know Jenifer's and I don't know couldn't tell you anything about the Jenifer's or where]. All I know is [saying we got that farm there because we lived. We lived with them].

J: So when you were a little girl this was a pretty good life? You father worked hard and he was a good provider?

L: Yeah he did provide. [Inaudible phrase] for him. He had a tenant house. Had some people [doing work]. [Inaudible phrase] sister. She had a little house up there on the hill he built for her. He had a cute little you know wedding for her. [Inaudible sentence].

J: How old were you when you went to work? When did you start going out yourself?

L: When I went to work—when I went to work...really have to go to work but I just worked for Ms. Bessie. [Inaudible phrase] [nine then I came up going] [inaudible phrase] I mean and [on and on] like that and stripped tobacco for him but that wasn't long, that wasn't long. So when I went to Washington because I got myself a job. I hadn't worked before no place till I come up to Washington. Then I got myself a job in a cafeteria.

J: Did you come to Washington after Germantown?

L: No I come home. Then I come home and I stayed here till I was married. When [I was married off to] my husband I went back to Washington and stayed there. I didn't want to stay home [it was so lonesome] then I went to Washington and stayed.

J: How old were you when you first worked at the big house at Habre de Venture?

L: When I first started working...I was around about 20 years old.

J: About 20 years old?

L: 20 years old. I worked in Washington. First I went to—I worked in the war in the war you know washing dishes and for them soldiers and things. Because I back then I [didn't] do days' work and never did days' work and I went to the [inaudible] found no work working for the family cooking. I didn't do much work. My husband when I married to my husband, last husband, he wouldn't let me work at all. I loved the job. He said, "No indeedy. I want you home here to cook my meals." So that through me off from work and I stopped working. [Inaudible phrase] since.

J: How many children did you have?

L I only had one girl.

J: One girl.

L: She [did around about a year] a little over a year. And she was just [gone]. One girl's all I—

J: Do you remember Ms. Margaret?

L: Ms. Margaret Sloan? Sure.

J: What was her middle name?

L: I don't know her middle name but I know her first Ms. Margaret.

J: How old you think she was when you first knew her?

L: Ms. Margaret was up in the age. Ms. Margaret was around about I guess 85 years, 85.

J: Yes that's about right.

L: And Mr. Mike he married Ms. Bessie though. But I didn't know Ms. Margaret's husband.

J: She never married.

L: Well she wasn't ever married.

J: She never married.

L: Never married well [inaudible].

J: What sort of a person was she in appearance? Was she small?

L: Yes she's small.

J: Was she bent over by any chance? Did she walk straight up?

L: No, no she walked you know [just bent a little].

J: She had a lot of illness as a little girl.

L: Yeah she had you know. She was raised up [there] on the [plantation] though. Because [her home burned down].

J: How did she treat people who worked for her?

L: I don't know who worked for Ms. Margaret. I really don't.

J: Did you ever meet Mariah?

L: Yeah.

J: Miles?

L: My goodness.

J: Did you know her?

L: They're a friend of mine. She wouldn't go and [inaudible phrase]. See I [used to go to her. She'd visit me. I'd go over there and stay next. To my house there next. She go to my house. I go to her house. So yeah] I know Mariah.

J: Okay so—

L: They were good to her.

J: They were good to her?

L: Yeah they worked a little hard you know. That's what they say I don't know. [Well you gonna work well or you gonna work]. But anyway you got to work. [That's what they say] but I don't know about that. [That what] they say.

J: Did you ever help Ms. Margaret in the kitchen at Habre de Venture?

L: I didn't help Ms. Margaret in no kitchen. I helped Ms. Bessie.

J: Oh I see. Michael Robert Stone's wife Bessie?

L: Yeah that her. [What you want just call her we called her Ms. Mike].

J: Mr. Mike.

L: Yeah she [inaudible phrase]. Every morning he come and have a little brown dark brown horse coming and going to school. Every morning come through there. But the evenings he didn't come. He went around the other road. I guess that was nearer see. Wanted to get to school earlier but he come every morning. But the other time he come around the road and go round the road.

J: What school was he teaching at?

L: Ripley, Ripley, up there Ripley.

R: The road went past your house?

L: Yeah.

R: The road went past your house?

L: Yes that's right.

J: How far was your father's house from the road where Mr. Mike rode to school?

L: Probably [inaudible phrase]. The width of from here...not so far from here. I couldn't tell you but he road there.

R: Up to the road here?

L: I guess about—oh no not that close.

R: Not that far.

J: Maybe a 150—

L: It was about half a mile.

J: About half a mile.

L: That's right about a half a mile. That's what I'll put it.

J: From the house—from your house you could see him ride by on his little horse?

L: That's right.

R: So it was open. There were fields there rather than woods?

L: Yeah and [inaudible].

R: Between your house and the road?

L: There was a row of a bush you know trees like that but we had an open spot. But he'd come every morning. Wasn't no trees there this [little] lane. Only had—

J: Did he have to cross Hog Hole Run to get to school?

L: No, no water.

J: No water.

L: No water just went straight. No water whatsoever. [Even when he was riding down the] old road because the new road is not the old road there. You could go down the road and go right to Ripley. I passed by there several times and I'd go to Waldorf to the doctors up in Ripley.

J: What did you call that road when you were young? Did it have a name?

L: It didn't have none. All we called it Ripley. Ripley School.

J: Ripley Road?

R: Where was the Ripley school?

L: [Inaudible sentence]. Right on the right hand side the school is. School right on the left hand side and the road, the old road was going down and then...I know [inaudible phrase].

J: How did Ms. Margaret pay you for—did you help out over there at all?

L: I didn't work for Ms. Margaret. I worked for Mr. Mike's wife.

J: You just went over to visit Mariah.

L: Yeah [then I] worked too. You know then I worked for them stripping tobacco. I'd go there and work stripping tobacco. I watched the children [inaudible] the [wheat] you know.

J: That's Mrs. Stone [inaudible].

L: [Yeah we got her permission]. See that's Mr. Mike's wife. She was nice Ms. Bessie was. Mr. Mike too. Both of them were nice people. So I didn't know too much about Ms. Margaret but I knew her and I seen her but I didn't know too much about her. She didn't have too much to say you know.

J: Kind of a quiet?

L: Yeah quiet person.

J: Do you remember where her kitchen was? Did you ever eat lunch in her kitchen with Mariah?

L: Sure. All the time I went in there [I had eat there in the kitchen].

J: Was the kitchen in that connecting?

L: Yeah now look [this is her big rooms back, back] kitchen was right here. Right there she comes down the steps. One, two, three steps you come right in the kitchen. In the kitchen right there. Tables over there we [were on the] tables and the other you know peeling other thing over there. We had a nice garden.

J: So from the main living room she would go down a short flight of steps?

L: Yeah that's the thing that's right.

J: And she would be in her kitchen?

L: That's right. Come by her, come down the steps around about three steps and come right in the kitchen.

J: How did she cook in that kitchen? Do you remember what?

L: She cooked—she had a stove yeah. She cooked and with that stove cooked. [I was there on Sundays] and she'd be cooking big chicken. Cut off a leg.

J: Who did most of the cooking?

L: Mariah. Mariah did all the cooking. Cut a leg off for us. Cut a leg off for Mariah. I didn't eat there because there was dinner at my home you know. I didn't eat [inaudible phrase]. And she cooked that chicken. Mariah she said if I don't eat Ms. Bessie, Ms. Margaret upstairs and eat it, eat [inaudible]. Either eat up there. [She had a nice stove cooked nice].

J: Where did Mariah stay there? Where was her sleeping room?

L: Mariah slept on the first floor. Back she had a little room to herself.

J: You had to go up the stairway?

L: Oh yeah you had to go up the steps to get there. Go up the steps and get there. I slept there many nights. [Inaudible sentence].

J: How big do you think this room was?

L: [My room, my room was] [inaudible] was about like that. Like that [wasn't] up to that door. See right up there by that window.

J: Oh yeah okay.

L: By that window and right there. Mariah had a small room.

J: What would you say? 10 by 10? Between eight by eight? Was it a pretty much square [inaudible phrase]?

L: Yeah.

R: That was up at the head of stairs?

L: Yeah upstairs. Go right back.

R: And Ms. Margaret's room was off to the left?

L: Yeah Ms. Margaret's room was [inaudible] like uh-huh. And she eats in her dining room. Her bedroom is back. I think she had two bedrooms back there. And Ms. Margaret [inaudible] two bedrooms and the dining room and the living room. That was up the stairs you know. And the kitchen as I told you.

J: Who lived in that other house that was attached to the kitchen? Do you remember the name of those people?

L: [Inaudible sentence].

J: Who managed the farm for Ms. Margaret?

L: The man some colored people. Colored people lived over in that old house. I don't know them but that's who worked for them.

J: Far out across the field?

L: Yeah up on the field.

R: Down that gully?

L: Yeah. See [Ms. Margaret] [inaudible] and they lived over there.

J: So nobody lived in that other two story wing?

L: Oh no. Wasn't no two story [inaudible] that I see. There's a meat house there hung on to the kitchen. Built on to the kitchen. Where we keep our meat and potatoes and stuff. There was over [inaudible] have no two story [while I was there]. I remember that. It had a place that dug down [inaudible] and people [inaudible] water down there and get water and for chicken and fish and stuff. Butter take it down there and put in that hole. Down there it's cold as can be. The ice there [inaudible] on the [cold] and the butter [inaudible phrase] or something.

J: Well that was down the hill?

L: Yeah down, down the hill.

J: Between—

L: Her house.

J: The big house and your house.

L: No not my house.

R: No the tenant house.

L: Oh no the tenant's house is up on the hill like I said. The tenants had nothing to do with that. The tenant didn't live near there. That belonged to the house. Ms. Bessie and I used to go down there and put the chicken and stuff in the cold. You had [frogs great big frogs in there. Big old frogs in there].

J: Now when you walk from visiting Mariah back to your house did you pass anywhere near that cold spring?

L: Oh yeah I gotta go right past it. I go right past it [inaudible phrase] right down there.

J: Just to your left as you were going home?

L: Yeah just to my left going home. The spring was to my left, left. Now going home I go right straight out.

J: Okay about how long a walk was it?

L: Well from my home? For me, the spring from this—oh [inaudible] was no [inaudible]. Just [was] from here, [inaudible sentence].

R: From the house to the spring.

L: [Inaudible sentence]. No [inaudible phrase].

J: From the roadway that you had to walk to get home it was just—

L: Yeah I had to go off to the you know. It was through the gate and go right [to] my home. We didn't live far. We didn't live far. We lived no farther than [of course] [inaudible].

J: When you were a young lady growing up there was there a Marshall's Corner then?

L: When I was growing up yeah.

J: Did they call it Marshall's Corner?

L: Marshall Corner. Had a big [hall] right there on the corner. The corner [inaudible] build a hall.

J: St. John's or St. Joseph?

L: St. Joseph Hall. You had meetings up there but it burned down.

J: The road that is there now have you been on that road in recent years between Port Tobacco—

L: I've been there last Thursday going to La Plata. Going to La Plata. And I was going down there and I looked down here and I said oh that's where I lived down there. Down that road. I was telling the girl Mrs. Turner that's where I lived down there.

J: Do you know a John Thompson?

L: John Thompson?

J: John Wesley Thompson. He lives right on the old road but on the side toward Habre de Venture. You can see his house from—so his house would be very close to her father's house but on the Habre de Venture side of the old Ripley Road.

L: [Ripley Road you're on a different—on] Ripley Road. Ripley Road is over this on the road going down state road, new state road. So on the old road too you can go to Ripley.

J: Yeah that's the one I call the old Ripley Road.

L: Called Gambler's Hill. Called it Gambler's Hill.

J: Gambler's Hill Road.

L: Yeah.

J: Okay.

L: [Inaudible sentence].

J: You know where Hog Hole Run was?

L: [Inaudible] no.

J: Gambler's Run?

L: No.

J: Was there a little stream down there?

L: Oh yeah. A little stream. I don't know what it's called. Right there on my father's place. Was right there that stream water right there and my father's place right there, coming on up on the back.

J: I bet that's Gambler's Run at that point.

L: It's a little run there alright because I used to go fish the little perch. The little perch in there. And Gambler's [Hill] you had to go across. We couldn't cross when we had a big rain. It'd be too high you know. You couldn't cross it.

J: Did Mike Stone have to cross that to get to Ripley?

L: Oh no Mr. Mike didn't go down there. Mr. Mike came right past where we were living at. [Right you got to me right across there and] go in the road and go down there on the old state road. [But it's not the] new state road now up near Marshall's Corner, see.

J: You remember when they built that road? The new state road which is 225.

L: Oh yeah. Yeah I know that because my daughter got a—my sister got a house right there on the corner. Had a house right there that red house. That was my sister's house near Marshall's

Corner. Right there at Marshall's Corner. [Inaudible] build a red house on this right there on the same house, red house. Got the same paint on it [inaudible phrase]. Look like this [paint].

J: Is that where [Inaudible] lives?

R: No I think it's where—is that where Thomas's live? Is it next to Thomas's?

J: Tom no. He's somewhere else Thomas. [Inaudible phrase] live on [inaudible] road. Down right down from them.

R: Now you're thinking about the corner?

L: Not too far.

R: Did you think [it was] a house on the corner?

L: Yeah on the corner. Marshall's Corner. On a [bridge] a red house.

R: Okay two stories?

L: Mhm. That's right. Right [when you see] the [coming] [inaudible] yellow. [Inaudible phrase] yellow. [Inaudible sentence].

J: So you haven't sold any of your father's old farm property?

L: Not sold none of it.

J: It's all still in one piece?

L: All still there.

J: That's remarkable.

L: I think my niece sold some of it to build a—what's one of them things you call.... To build [a thing I heard] somebody said [so I don't know that but] [inaudible phrase] a piece. She bought a piece of land from the building one of them high things for—

R: Oh there's one section of that that's owned by the electric co-op.

L: Yeah. That's what she sold.

R: In there yeah. It has a fence around it.

J: Oh a transformer—

L: I don't know [none of that]. [Inaudible phrase] but I know she sold a piece of it.

J: So that's not part of your father's land.

L: Yeah but I didn't [inaudible phrase].

J: Do you know where that is?

R: Near Norris's. This side of—

L: Yeah right near Mrs. Norris that's right. Right near Mrs. Robert Norris.

R: Across the street from [inaudible].

L: That's right. That's right.

J: So Jacob Butler owned a big piece of both Mattingly's Hope?

L: We sure did all down in Port Tobacco and [inaudible] until...[inaudible] one of them [inaudible] telling me about. All over down near [Earl's Hill] we owned that land. Then there's some more land he owned on over there place called Mitchell [Clarke] place. He owned that. I don't know what's come of all of that land.

J: Mr. Clarke's?

L: Mitchell Clarke. You don't know him, colored, Mitchell Clarke.

R: Mitchell Clarke.

L: Used to call him Mitchell Clarke. He had a you know a place over there called Mitchell Clarke. He bought that land. I heard somebody told me my father had land [right down Alabama].

J: In Alabama?

L: That's right. I heard he has land down there. But see I'm too old to look around about that. That is going back to the government. That's what's really going back [inaudible phrase].

J: What things do you remember best about Habre de Venture and Mariah Miles and Ms. Margaret? That's as far back as we can go. What things do you remember today that you think were nice or interesting or uncomfortable or hard?

L: [They want] barbecue chicken [inaudible] like that [inaudible].

J: Anything yes.

L: Well she had chickens. She had about 35 heads of chicken. And they all wasn't from [inaudible phrase] yeah. They wasn't [inaudible sentence]. [They were] free living chickens.

J: Yes, yes I know—

L: And I mean it was good chicken stew.

J: Good eating?

L: Yeah good eating.

J: Who cut their heads off?

L: I don't know who cut their heads. I guess Mariah.

J: Did Mariah do that?

L: I guess so. [I could do it coming up].

J: What did she look like? Was she short, tall, fat, skinny?

L: Yeah short, no she was small. Short, short, short.

J: Smaller than Ms. Margaret?

L: Yeah oh yeah she's shorter than Ms. Margaret she was short. Brown skin.

R: Where did she go to live after Ms. Margaret died? Where did Mariah go?

L: She went to her cousins—my cousin too [because I visit]. Up there La Plata. Josephine Miles that's it. Josephine Miles.

R: So she lived her life out there with her?

L: Yeah, yeah she died there.

J: She never came back to Habre de Venture after Ms. Margaret?

L: No, no. I think [inaudible phrase]. I don't think she [went on home]. [Inaudible phrase] I don't know.

J: Wonder what she ever did with the things she inherited some furniture from Ms. Margaret. Ms. Margaret was pretty good to Mariah in her will.

L: Yeah. Well she did [inaudible] she never did get a [day]. She [leaved] with the money?

J: No she left her all the furniture that was in her bedroom.

L: Ms. Bessie got that. I guess Ms. Bessie, I know Ms. Bessie got that and Mr. Mike. [Inaudible phrase] she gone. [Inaudible phrase] somebody got it.

J: How was life for you as a little girl there living on the farm way out in the country? Did you have any chores to do to help your mother?

L: Oh no [I didn't do] no work here at home. I really didn't. I didn't even cook. Tell what I used to like to do. I just go in the field and work in the field but I wasn't made to do that I went on my own. I liked going and strip tobacco and [pleasure get up in mornings] and the tobacco leaves you know. Strip tobacco. Get the leaves off tobacco. Dew on them call them ground leaves. [Inaudible] used to go hang the tobacco up with my brothers and [things] like that. I always liked to work around the field like that. Strip tobacco, get up in the morning and strip tobacco. And my mother said breakfast was ready I was ready too. I used to go before I eat breakfast see going and get.

J: Oh I see early in the morning.

L: [Knowing that you're close to] breakfast.

J: What was a good breakfast for you? What was our favorite?

L: My table [at my food] was ham and eggs and bacon and then salt.

J: Okay so ham and eggs?

L: Salted fish.

J: Salted fish.

L: Love them.

J: What kind of fish?

L: Just salted herring. Just some salted herring.

J: Herring okay.

L: My mother used to [put them up] by the barrel [inaudible]. I love them. Still buy them. Yeah still buy them [inaudible phrase] I love them. [Inaudible sentence]. [Inaudible phrase] and that's for the biscuits and the corn bread that we used to have. Never had no grits or nothing like that. I ain't never grits until I come to country, grits, till I was in the city.

J: Did you make your own butter at home?

L: Oh yes. We [inaudible] [cows] butters. We have butter [still]. [Cows milk]. Had about three or four heads of cattle.

J: Did you ever milk a cow yourself?

L: One time I milked. It kicked and I ain't milked it since. my sister in law always did the milking. My brother's wife. We [made] butter to sell.

J: Where did you take it to sell? Do you remember? Where did you sell it?

L: All the neighbors around there [inaudible]. [Inaudible sentence]. Eugene Dobb's mother. And I think we sold [inaudible phrase] I've forgotten now there's so many of them.

J: Did you know any of the Mitchell family?

L: What Mitchell?

J: Well—

L: Oh you mean [Mr. Mitchell?] Yes I did.

J: They're right [to you] from Hanson Hill, Ms. Lily.

L: Yeah well I used to go over there and work some too. I used to go over there to work some too, Ms. Lily.

J: That's John Hanson Mitchell's wife, Sr..

L: And I wonder who's living in that house?

J: It's burned.

L: Burned down?

J: It's gone. Hanson Hill is gone. It burned down about 1968.

L: Was anybody living in it?

J: No. Ms. Ruth had gone.

L: Wonder if somebody must have—

J: They set it yeah. [Wanted to burn it].

L: Yeah it must be to tell you the truth.

J: [Hydermont], does that name mean anything to you? [Hydermont] farm? [Hydermont], remember where that was?

L: [Inaudible] Mr. Mitchell?

J: That was one of the Mitchell's lived in [Hydermont].

L: Yeah Ms. Ruth and Ms. Nettie and [Dorothy], [Dorothy] died. [And I heard they go to school at this southern school together]. She's nice and give us flowers, [Ms. Lily did.] Part of the year she cut them down we used to get the flowers and plant them. That whole thing of flowers. Yeah I used to work for Ms. Lily.

J: Who were the people that lived in our house? Do you remember the Wheeler family?

L: You live down there in [Wheeler, where Wheeler] used to live. You live on a [inaudible]. Coming up you live on the right hand side?

J: Coming up from Port Tobacco we're on the right.

L: Yeah, yeah you live on the right hand side.

J: That's right.

L: Used to go [Inaudible phrase].

J: Benedict Wheeler bought that property about the time your father bought his property.

L: No I—

J: And then his daughter was Eunice.

L: Eunice Wheeler.

J: Eunice Wheeler Swann.

L: That's right.

J: She married a Swann.

L: I [Inaudible phrase] I know some people in there that used the name Thomason. Joyce Thomason. And [Mrs.] Florence. Ms. Florine Thomason. I know them. I know the children.

J: They lived there too?

L: Yeah the children all lived there in that whole house there. In that same house you live in. [Got a well right in the back]. Is that same well there?

J: Yeah.

L: [Inaudible].

P: It's still there.

L: Yeah well [in a way that I used to go down and sit on that well as a girl and sing]. She [Inaudible phrase] for a reason. For a reason [Inaudible phrase]. Her house [Inaudible phrase] she moved that's right. I really helped her put the things up and all. Ms. Florence said, "Lorine I don't know where you're going to sleep tonight unless you're going to sleep with me. [Inaudible phrase] [black nigger]." [She said], "I ain't gonna sleep with that damned black nigger beside me. I [Inaudible phrase] put her to sleep." But she kidding see because I and her always kid together. I say [she] [Inaudible phrase] but we always kidding [Inaudible phrase]. I laughed.

J: See this is the family that rented.

L: Mhm. Way back.

J: From the Wheeler's for two years about 1908, 1910.

L: Because [me and her were] a black nigger.

J: And one of those women was still living a few years ago at Pomonkey.

L: Pauline?

J: She was a Gilroy.

L: Yeah Gilroy that's it.

J: So you know her. Is she still alive?

L: I don't know I was [Inaudible phrase] I said all these things.

J: [Will has to stop].

L: Pauline, Pauline [Inaudible].

J: Pauline?

L: Yeah I wonder [Inaudible].

J: We'll check it out. I'll give her your phone number maybe on the way home.

L: I wonder about the [inaudible] Gilroy. [Reverend] Gilroy at Pomonkey.

J: Yeah so they were nice people then?

L: Yeah they was nice.

J: She had some brothers did she?

L: Who's that?

J: Pauline?

L: Yes indeed yeah. Pauline had [Vern]. There was [Vern] and what was the other's boy name? One was [light hair]. [The brother had light hair and the other one dark hair]. [Vern and Rita].

J: Okay those were the two that slept [Inaudible phrase] over the den.

L: That's right. [Vern, Rita...] [Inaudible phrase]. But anyway they were nice to us and we were nice to them.

J: And their name was Thomason?

L: That's right. Ms. [Inaudible] Thomason. And then Joyce Thomason.

J: What did they call that property? Did it have a name at all in those days?

L: No. [Last time] [Inaudible phrase] [last times] I was with them [Inaudible phrase], Maryland near Pomonkey. Called a place called [inaudible].

J: Accokeek?

L: Accokeek?

J: Accokeek.

L: But [somebody going to build that up]. I heard somebody say they'll build that place up.

J: Well that's true. You should see Port Tobacco.

L: Now you see I know them all. I know them all so anyway.

J: Did you know Catherine Swann?

L: Catherine Swann no.

J: Sister of Eunice I believe.

L: Catherine Swann.

R: No it's her mother.

J: Oh Eunice was Catherine's mother.

L: No I didn't know. I know Carl Swann. [Edwin] Swann but [he's colored]. [These colored you talk about]?

J: White Swann's.

L: Oh wasn't no I don't know white Swann's. I know the colored Swann's.

J: Do you remember where the old drive way used to be to go into Habre de Venture? Coming from Port Tobacco to Ms. Bessie's place?

L: Yeah you know off the road to Ms. Bessie's place yeah. All you got to do is when you're going down that road, Port Tobacco Road, and on the right hand side that is their gate. Go right on there and go on down the road the, the house right there and the orchard—she got a good orchard. She really had a good orchard.

J: That Bessie Stone had a good orchard?

L: Oh yes indeed.

J: Where was it?

L: Oh it's right there on the same side you go through that gate down. Go on down [Inaudible phrase]. [That's] on the left side.

J: On the left side.

L: She had peaches, apples, oranges, plums.

J: How far from the cemetery was it?

L: Oh the cemetery was right off from it. Right off from the orchard. Right back.

J: In that same field between—

L: The same field that's right.

J: Between the cemetery and the big house?

L: That's right. Between the orchard. The orchard is here and the cemetery over there.

J: The orchard was between the cemetery and the road?

L: Yeah, yeah that's right.

R: How about the slave—

L: And talk about [water cress].

J: Water cress?

L: I used to go there and get many water cress right there. [You know lot about it] but me and my people. I'd go there and get all the water cress I want.

J: Did you ever see the cemetery at Habre de Venture where the black—

L: No I never seen the cemetery.

J: Do you know where Ms. Margaret's buried?

L: Yeah.

J: Right just next to that little cemetery.

L: I don't know where the colored people—I don't think that colored people—

J: Just like that.

L: Yeah but I don't think the colored were buried over there. I think that's just for whites.

J: No well they're near each other.

R: Outside the gate.

J: They're near each other. Not in the same—

[Inaudible]

J: Now did you ever see the little cabins at Habre de Venture where the black people lived? The slave cabins?

L: No I never see that. No.

J: This tenant house you were talking about up that hill?

L: Tenant house oh yeah [Inaudible phrase]. Yeah I've been there.

J: Somewhere in that field.

L: Yeah but I've been up there. I've been up there. I stayed up there. I used to—my cousin used to live up there but he moved. He moved from there and moved to another place but I used to go up there while he was there.

J: What was his name?

L: [Wash Taylor]

J: Tiller?

L: [Taylor T-U-R—]

J: Taylor.

L: Uh—huh [Taylor].

J: Taylor.

L: [Taylor] T-[U]-Y-L-O-R.

J: Okay.

L: His name was [Wash Taylor] and his wife was named [Inaudible Taylor].

J: Do you know Mrs. Taylor who lives near your property now? She lives right on Rose Hill Road.

R: Lula.

J: Lula, do you know Lula Taylor?

L: Oh yeah, yeah I know Lula. Lives there right there by my nieces [inaudible].

J: That's right.

L: [Inaudible phrase].

J: I wonder if her husband was part of this Taylor family.

L: [What Taylor you talking about]? The one I'm talking about?

J: Right.

L: Yeah. Sure it was his uncle [I mean] cousin or something. Yeah they're related. Sure they're related. Johnny Taylor.

R: Johnathan yes that's—

L: [Inaudible phrase] Lula Taylor that's Johnny's wife. [Inaudible phrase]—

R: He was [burned in the barn].

L: That's right.

R: And his tractor.

L: Tractor [inaudible] that's right. [Inaudible sentence]. [Inaudible phrase] over here [Inaudible phrase] let me know and I was so struck because I you knew [I was school together].

J: He was [inaudible].

L: [My elementary] school together.

J: So he went to Pomfret to school too?

L: Yeah.

J: Now that's something. Now what children went to school? Did you walk to school from your house?

L: That's right. Yeah I walked to the school every morning from my house up there to Pomfret.

J: How far did you reckon that to be one way?

L: Two miles.

J: Three miles?

L: Wait now, yes indeed it is three miles. It is three miles.

J: Yeah I would say.

R: It would've been closer for them to go to school in Port Tobacco.

L: From my farm—

J: [Inaudible] white schools that time.

R: Well [they made] a black school [inaudible].

L: You couldn't go there. You better not go there.

J: Was there a colored school in Port Tobacco when you were a little girl?

R: [Where] the Jameson's went.

J: [Inaudible].

L: No I don't remember no colored. The white school right on that corner there.

J: Yeah that's right so that building is still there.

L: Yeah. Used to be a white school then they tore it down made a new one. That what they said. But I saw it the other day when I was going through there.

J: It's still there.

L: My father had a [ballroom] there too.

J: Your father had?

L: Yeah. My father had a George Bush. George Bush had a [whiskey store] and my father had one yeah.

J: In Port Tobacco?

L: Yeah.

J: Do you know Henry Bush?

L: Sure. And my father had a bar. Sell whiskey you know.

R: Where? Where—

J: What building.

L: Right there you know where the school is now? [It's along] right in there [Inaudible phrase] I'll tell you it's on that corner school was there. When they build another one right on that corner. My father had a bar right over there. [That man] George Bush.

J: On that same corner?

L: On that same corner but it was over there. The school was over here this way.

R: [Inaudible] where that is [Inaudible phrase].

J: Could be or could also be where Frank Wade's store was later.

L: Yeah Mr. Wade's store there yeah I know him.

J: Do you know where Wade's store was?

L: Yeah right there.

J: Was the bar in that building?

L: Yeah right not in the building different building.

J: But next door?

L: Yeah.

J: Close to it?

L: See yeah. Now Mr. Wade had a store right here [Inaudible phrase]. This is Mr. Wade's house right there, store right there. [Inaudible phrase] and the school was right over there see.

J: That's right and the road came out between the school and the store?

L: [Inaudible phrase] going on down Pisgah, down Marbury. That's right.

J: Did you ever walk from your house into Port Tobacco?

L: [Inaudible phrase] [going after mail. I get my mail down there].

J: What was that road like? Can you picture it in your mind now the condition of that road?

L: At that time roads were very bad. Mud [if there's some rain] be all muddy. [Inaudible phrase] see. You knew these—see that little post way up on that hill there?

J: Yeah old Rose Hill house?

L: Yeah. Way up on the hill now, way up.

J: Yes I—

L: Who lives there now?

J: Steward.

L: [That's a] [inaudible] been there a many years.

J: Who lived there when you were a little girl?

L: I guess the same place same people.

R: What about Ms. Olivia Floyd? Was she there?

L: I don't know. I don't remember Ms. Olivia Floyd. But I know one thing that house been there a long, long time.

J: Oh yeah.

L: The wind come blow it down. That house been there a long time.

J: Did you know any black people named [Sims]?

L: [Sims]?

J: Right there at that hill going down into Port Tobacco when you reach the ground where the hill starts to go down. And the big old house is off on the right the one you're talking about. Now at the top of that hill down to the left there was a nice little house with a brick chimney on each end. Do you know who lived there?

L: I don't know. I don't remember [Inaudible phrase]. I don't know who it was. I don't [Sims] lived there. I don't know no [Sims].

J: Who were some of the children that walked to school with you from your neighborhood?

L: Let me see. [Inaudible phrase] used to be Brookes, Florence Brookes, Rita Brookes, and Mary Brookes. They lived over in that same house that I was telling you about where my cousin lived, Taylor.

R: On the corner?

L: Yeah up there on that hill with Ms. Margaret. Taylor's lived there. They used to go to school with me. School with me morning and another little girl. She dead now.

R: The house at Marshall's Corner.

J: Oh okay.

L: She's dead now. She used to go to school with me. Was three girls—four girls.

R: Now to get to the school in Pomfret did you go down Marshall's Corner Road or Bumpy Oak Road?

L: No I went down Pomfret Road to get to my school.

R: Pomfret Road okay.

L: Port Tobacco coming and Pomfret Road going up there [Inaudible phrase] Pomfret Road, going up Pomfret.

R: Where was Pomfret—

L: And there was an old house set on the over there in them [Mattingly].

J: Mattingly?

L: Yeah used to live there white people on that house the long house. And used to be, [I don't if it's there now], used to be a pretty holly tree. Beautiful this tree.

R: Is that the—

[Tape interruption]

J: In walking from your house down into Port Tobacco did the woods come up close to the road? Were the woods thick and heavy along that?

L: Yeah right along the road.

J: It came right to the edge of the road?

L: Going up to Ms. Margaret's?

J: Yes.

L: Yeah right up. A big old gate [and losing] that to the road.

J: Okay now to go from your father's house—your house—to Ms. Margaret's you didn't have to go out on the road did you? Was there a path through the woods?

L: No, no [inaudible] road. Used to drive through there. You know right through the road. The road you'd be right on to the house.

J: Do you think that road was a little bit apart, a little distance beyond where the road is today? In other words do you think when you were a little girl the road between Port Tobacco and Pomfret ran exactly where it does today? Do you have any picture of it being a little bit over toward—

L: Well see they done build a new road up there now.

J: Yeah right.

L: See you can hardly tell. They build new roads up there.

J: Now to walk from your house to your school in Pomfret did you go down [Gambler] Hill?

L: No.

J: Alright okay. Did you walk out to the road where the Taylor house is now?

L: No.

J: You didn't.

L: I went right from my house right out on the road and went [on barn] school, right [off school]. From my house now, that my house sitting over there and the road is coming and going this way. All I had to do was walk straight out and walk onto the road. Onto the main road we called it then walk go on off to the main road and keep on up until you get to the school.

J: Now to get from your house to this Mattingly house?

L: Same road.

J: The same road.

L: That's right same road.

R: Her father built that house on that road. You know we think that maybe that road that came into Habre de Venture was not the road today. The main road could have come past Habre de Venture up to Lorina's parents home and then out.

L: [Well you talking about on the side of the road. You're talking about Mattingly Road. You're talking about Mattingly house?]

R: No we're talking about an old road.

J: We're puzzled because we've seen some old maps. We're puzzled because some of the old maps show that what we call Rose Hill Road which is where we live—

L: Yeah Rose Hill.

J: We live on Rose Hill Road. About the turn of the century when you were a very young girl that road was a little closer to Ms. Margaret's house.

L: [Was it] Rose Hill?

J: Right.

L: Yeah [closer than now] I guess. We'd be closer there now it changed.

J: We think it was a little closer.

L: [Maybe a little closer].

J: It indicates that to go from Port Tobacco to Pomfret you would go down what I call the old Ripley Road past your father's house, cross that small run, and then turn right to go to Pomfret.

L: No [inaudible phrase] ain't no run. You talking about [Gambler] Hill Road and no I don't go there. When I went to school I went to Pomfret school but I went to Ripley school I went through there. I went through on the old road [Gambler] Hill Road when I was going to Ripley school.

J: I see okay.

L: Well I stopped going to Ripley because I went to Pomfret school.

J: After Ripley school—

L: Yeah and I went from my house as I told you up there on the road, state road, [inaudible] road. And I kept going on up until I got to school. Then I passed [a Mattingly's] house on the road and I kept going on to school until I got there.

R: Alright now you tell us that when you went from your house in Habre de Venture you went on this road through the woods. There was a road from your house through the woods to Habre de Venture?

L: What is where is Habre de Venture? What is that?

J: That's where Ms. Margaret lived.

L: Is that what you all called it?

J: Yeah.

R: Yes.

L: See I ain't called that. [Inaudible phrase].

J: Yeah that's where Bessie lived.

L: I know, I know, I know [inaudible] new [prison they had them] build there. [That's the truth] [inaudible phrase].

R: So you when you went from your house to Ms. Margaret's house or to Ms. Bessie's house—

J: The big brick house.

L: I know.

R: You went from your house on that road that went through the woods right past, right to their house?

L: Yeah.

R: Did you also take that same road when you went to Port Tobacco?

L: No when I went to Port Tobacco I went right down [inaudible phrase].

R: Okay.

L: That's when I went to Port Tobacco. That road but Ms. Bessie's road I come right from my house right on, right on, right on. Went through a big gate and kept going till I got to Ms. Bessie's house.

J: Okay did you between your house and Ms. Bessie's house—Mrs. Bessie's house—or Ms. Margaret's did you pass by the barn?

L: Barn? By who?

J: The corn crib and the barn.

L: The barn of the house? Oh yeah.

J: You went past the old tobacco barn?

L: That's right. That's where—

J: Past the big corn barn?

L: That's right. That's where I stripped tobacco at. Right there that barn see.

J: So to go from Ms. Bessie's house to your house you'd walk right by that tobacco barn?

L: That's right [as I said first]. Come right on out until you get to the road and then come right up my house.

R: And there was a road there. She said they drove. They drove from Ms. Margaret's to her house.

J: Now that makes sense because Mr. Mike's son John was born in 1920 in the brick house remembers seeing his father take a buggy along that road to go to Ripley school.

L: No he didn't have no buggy. [Every time I seen] Mr. Mike he was riding a horse. Dark brown horse. I didn't know the sons. I didn't know Ms. Bessie's sons.

J: Yeah you would have been gone by the time they came along. But he's a doctor in Baltimore now. We're talking about—

L: I've never seen Ms. Bessie's sons.

J: But anyway he road that brown horse along that road that you're talking about till he reached the place where he turned left?

L: That's right.

J: To go to where his school at Ripley?

L: That's right. Go right on up [the road].

J: And he'd go right by your house?

L: Every morning. Every morning.

J: And you could throw a stone from that road and hit your house?

L: That's right could hit the horse yeah.

J: A 100 feet maybe? 75?

L: That's right something like that.

J: Okay we've got to get back to [inaudible phrase]. The old maps are not very good so that's why we're asking all these questions because if we don't find out from people like you—

L: [Inaudible sentence] where [Mr. Mike live]? Any people live there.

R: Oh it burned.

L: Oh it burned all down?

R: The house burned.

J: That's the reason we're doing this.

L: I know a Smith, some set of people, Smith's who lived there years ago.

J: Well Steven [inaudible].

R: [Inaudible sentence].

J: Charles Stevenson Smith. You're right about 10 years he owned it.

L: Yeah about then.

J: Then the Vischer's bought it for a while and some of the Stone's lived in our house. Mike's brother Thomas lived in our house for a while.

L: [Inaudible phrase]. Oh yeah for a while [Mr. Mike's] brother.

J: Yeah with two of his sisters.

L: I didn't know Mr. Mike's brother.

J: Thomas well you were probably living in Washington at that time. So this house that your father built, was this a much better house than those that many of your little friends lived in that you went to school with?

L: [Yeah].

J: Do you feel the Butler's were living pretty well everything considered?

L: Yes indeed.

J: How many bedrooms in that house?

L: In my house? Wasn't but let me see three.

J: Three okay.

L: Three bedrooms, dining room, and a kitchen. There wasn't no living room. Three bedrooms, dining room, and a kitchen.

J: And your father had his own barns?

L: That's right.

J: A corn house?

L: That's right.

J: Did he have a smoke house?

L: Everything you could imagine yes indeed.

J: And it's all gone now? All those?

L: Yeah I guess it's all gone now. Had [things that the thresh wheat every year] [inaudible phrase] threshing. People coming around thresh wheat. [Used to come every year]—

J: Did he have one of those machines?

L: Yeah had one of those [inaudible].

J: Steam [engine]?

L: Yeah. You know [that old stuff] [inaudible] [the wheat]. I can't recall what it is but he had that.

J: A threshing machine?

L: Yeah threshing machine used to come thresh it. Thresh the wheat and he had some [he used to take it and put it in there and get all that trash in the wheat].

J: Right the chaff.

L: Yes something like that.

J: The chaff out that way and the kernels in a basket or a bag.

L: That's right. That's right.

J: Where did he take that to be ground?

L: Over La Plata. I don't know what part but over La Plata he'd take it.

J: Alright.

L: And Daddy had the corn. Had his corn, I think he had his corn and [his wine] over there over La Plata.

J: Did he ever take any to Mason Springs?

L: Never did. He always did La Plata. Always did over La Plata. Yeah my father had [inaudible] tell you the truth.

R: Does she remember the mill down....

J: Do you remember any mills near Port Tobacco?

L: No, no, no I [don't know no mills] in Port Tobacco. [Inaudible sentence].

J: Probably not in your time.

L: See no wasn't no mills down there.

R: The closest [would be La Plata].

L: Yeah [Inaudible phrase].

J: Did you ever hear the name Thomas Stone?

L: Thomas Stone no. Mr. Mike Stone, Ms. Margaret Stone and Ms. Bessie Stone [inaudible phrase]. [Inaudible phrase] other Stones down there.

J: How old do you think you were when you first saw Ms. Margaret?

L: When I first saw Ms. Margaret I guess I was around about [15]. No it [would've been] [inaudible]. [When I was about 12, 12 years] 12 years old. Because I know I'll [inaudible] years old.

J: Who took you over there? Did your father or mother walk you over there?

L: No, Mariah I think got me over there. My brother used to go over there to work and I used to go over there to work too but I was older than that. I was older than 12 years when I worked for Ms. Bessie I guess I was around about 13 years, 13. [Three], and 12, and 13 years because I can strip tobacco. I stripped and [hung] there. I stripped good tobacco.

J: What kind of pay would they have paid you for stripping tobacco?

L: [It wasn't good three dollars].

J: Three dollars?

L: Yeah that's a week.

J: A week?

L: Not no day now.

J: Five days?

L: But see I [inaudible] strip [inaudible] [because] tobacco wasn't in—I stripped for three days I get three dollars. My brother got more than I got. Wasn't paying nothing.

J: Were you as good a worker as he was?

L: Huh?

J: Were you as good as he was with stripping?

L: This brother was good yeah. And [because we don't really pay much money] three dollars [inaudible] I thought I had something.

J: It was a lot of money.

L: It wasn't a lot of money.

J: You could buy quite a bit.

L: That's the truth you could.

J: You could yeah.

L: [Inaudible sentence].

J: If you wanted to buy some yard goods could you buy them in Port Tobacco or would you have to go to La Plata?

L: [I would go to Port Tobacco] [inaudible phrase] Mr. Wade's store. [He sell] [inaudible phrase]. [He sold food]—

J: Okay food stuffs.

L: Yeah.

J: Food stuffs.

L: He had [good equipment].

J: Did you ever walk into La Plata?

L: [Then he have] you could go up to Pomfret and get it. Mr. [Higley].

J: [Wiggly]?

L: You know him?

J: Never heard of that store.

R: Where was that store?

L: That was up there in Pomfret.

R: Was that the one that burned recently?

L: No, no I [don't know that]. [I ain't know that burned down]. But we used to get—my mother used to get up in Mr. [Higley's] to get my clothes. And my [inaudible phrase]. And [he] would sell food too, he would sell food stuff too.

R: Do you remember the post office? The Pomfret post office on the corner?

L: Yeah sure.

R: That building on the corner?

L: That's right, Pomfret Post Office.

R: Now was the Wheatley store—

L: [Right on it].

R: Right there?

L: That's right.

J: In the same building?

L: No not.

J: But next to each other close?

L: No it was in the same building. Mr. Wheatley [inaudible].

J: So that's that building that's close to the road and a porch across the front?

L: That's right [go] down the road. Right.

J: Alright that's it. It's gone it's finished. Burned.

R: Burned.

L: How come [these] houses burned down? [They burned down]?

J: Kids do it for fun.

L: [You shouldn't burn, shouldn't] burn the houses down.

J: But anyway we remember them.

L: [This is very, very strange. Yeah Mr. Wheatley] had a nice place up here. Mrs. Wheatley died. She was as sweet as she could be. She had a little girl named [Maurice] or Lisa. [I don't know they come over here and Mr. Wheatley] was nice. Both of them were nice people.

R: Did they live above the store?

L: They lived right at the store.

R: Above the—

L: They had a house on the store. You know the building was on to the store.

J: Do you feel that in spite of the fact that life for colored people was pretty difficult, people who worked, black people who worked as hard as your father did could still make a pretty decent life for themselves and their families?

L: No.

J: What did he have to overcome?

L: Who my father?

J: Yeah. What disadvantages were there to your father's making a good living for his family? What made it more difficult for him?

L: [Inaudible phrase] [wasn't no difficult. Glaze went on and all of the children and stuff went on working and had people working for him]. [Inaudible phrase] told them what to do. But how do you want it done and all. [Inaudible sentence].

J: So the white people and their attitude didn't bother him that much?

L: No, no, no but they liked him.

J: They liked him. They respected him?

L: Oh yeah. [Told you he had] [inaudible] [people about him]. They were real nice. They liked him.

J: Do you have an obituary notice for your father?

L: No.

J: That's too bad.

R: What year, what year did he die?

L: Well I couldn't tell you. What year did my father die?

R: You said you were about eight?

L: 80, 80 something.

J: Your father was about 80?

L: Yeah I know he died on a—let me see. I know he was buried Christmas Day.

J: And you were a little girl when he died?

L: Oh yeah. I [was six]—

R: You thought you were about eight years old?

L: Yeah [inaudible phrase].

R: [So she would've been about 1904].

L: [I may not have been] [inaudible].

J: I think I have seen an obituary notice. We will if we ever find one we'll make a copy for you. We could because we're doing that kind of work. Jacob Butler.

L: Yeah that's right. Yeah.

J: Did your mother or father have any special advice for you children in dealing with white people? What did they tell you to be careful of?

L: No yeah [inaudible] [I know that, "Children now look] you all treat them nice. You treat them nice now and go over there they tell you the thing, yes or no sir. Never say no [and yes] [inaudible phrase]. Yes sir, no sir and treat them nice and you [let them], and you [like] them." We did it. [She go to white people that are nice]. A lot of white people I know now [love me].

J: And did this come back to you that they treat you—

L: And the times [same way]. [Like me], visit me, eat with me. All the preachers and [inaudible] come here. They been here. All have [inaudible] like me.

J: So the fact that you were born black hasn't really made you an unhappy person?

L: By being—no, no indeedy, no indeedy. I'm satisfied with my color that God gave me colored. Yes indeedy.

J: How about your brothers and sisters? Did they feel pretty much as you do?

L: Yeah they feel pretty much as I do. They treat white and colored altogether [inaudible]. [Inaudible sentence]. My father was [inaudible phrase] respect all everybody white and colored. [We went to] church every Sunday, every Sunday and walked.

J: Now Pomfret Catholic church—and that's where you went, St. Joseph's?

L: St. Joseph's.

J: Was that more black than white? More white than black? About half and half?

L: Both [of them]. White and colored.

J: Okay and they got along pretty well?

L: Yeah they got along but you couldn't sit together.

J: Yeah.

L: We didn't sit together now.

J: What was the seating arrangement? Where did you sit?

L: We had our own pew.

J: Were you upstairs or downstairs?

L: Upstairs with the [inaudible phrase].

J: Upstairs. They seated you a little closer to heaven [inaudible phrase]?

L: That's right yeah. Seated me with my father bought the pew, bought our pew for our own [inaudible]. [Then they buried our burial grounds]. The Pomfret our [burial] my father bought that. I go [buried] I don't have to pay nothing. I go right in my father's grave because I'm going to bury [inaudible phrase] [where my] husband was. [Inaudible phrase] and I've got a burial over there I don't pay for that. In fact my daughter paid for.

J: Where is this?

L: [Inaudible sentence].

J: [Burgundy]?

L: [Harmony]. It's a nice place.

J: Now we went to a wedding at St. Joseph's Church December 12th. So we've been there recently.

L: What year?

J: This year. Last year, last December. It's beautiful. They have done a nice job.

L: Yeah [because see they tripped it over see. They done picked it over]. Well that's where I used to go to church right there. I made my communion there, baptized there and the communion there, and the confession I go there and the priest.

J: So you were baptized Lorina Butler?

L: Butler that's right.

R: Did they ever have a black priest?

L: No.

R: Never?

L: [Now]. They have one now. One come here everyday. [Inaudible] [singing here at] communion. Father [Barnes] and the—

R: Choir?

L: [Inaudible sentence]. Come here and give me communion. Father Kavanaugh he down in Port Tobacco. He comes here. Brought me a big bag of fruit. Father Kavanaugh—

J: Is he at Hill Top or St. Catherine's?

L: Who that? Father—

J: Father Kavanaugh?

L: Father Kavanaugh right down in Port Tobacco at St. Thomas. No, no—

R: Oh yes.

J: Oh we know him. We know him yeah.

R: But there're no black priests? There're no black priests?

L: No. Oh there's plenty of them but not here.

J: Not here.

L: Plenty of them in the city in Washington but not here in [inaudible]. Ain't but one I know. I know who it is Father Barnes he come here. But Father Kavanaugh comes here all the time to see me. Lives down in Port Tobacco.

R: Yeah St. Thomas he has—

L: Yeah he brought a big bag of fruit. I just had the last one yesterday.

J: That's nice.

L: And Father [Aniston] he was in Washington. He come to see me too.

J: Who were some of your teachers there at Pomfret? Do you remember any—

L: Yeah I know my cousin was one. Florence [Inaudible] she was one.

J: [Gillum]?

L: [Gillum] yeah. Florence [Gillum] and Ms. Rosa. What was her last name, Ms. Rosa? She might not [have told us]. I mean she married here, married my cousin.

J: What was his name?

L: His name was Arthur Taylor.

J: Taylor?

L: Yeah Taylor my cousin. But Ms. Rosa I forget her last name. That's [inaudible phrase] my teacher. And [Judy] Butler, she was from Baltimore. She was my teacher. [Rachel Williams] she was from Baltimore. That's about the only one I know, Rachel Williams and Judy Butler.

J: Did you ever hear of Ransome? Mayme Ransome?

L: Mayme Ransome?

J: She must have been—

R: She taught in Pomonkey.

J: Oh okay.

L: [Inaudible sentence].

J: Yeah she would be about a 100 years old now.

L: I guess so.

J: She's still living last time we heard. We talked to her like this. Well do you look back on your life as having been a pleasant affair for you? For the most part you've been a happy person?

L: Happy very happy. I've been [inaudible phrase] and I feel alright [all suffering is] arthritis. If I didn't have [this arthritis] I feel like I would be 16 years old in my feelings.

J: That's marvelous. Your memory is very, very good.

L: I eat good. I eat good [inaudible phrase]. I feel like [inaudible] here. I'm doing alright [inaudible phrase].

J: Was your father ever called on to help out at the Stone's house in an emergency to furnish—

L: No, no and my mother either. Only one worked for Mr. Mike and them was my brother Clarence and myself. I believe my other brother [inaudible phrase]. [I got a brother in France] I think he used to work for Mr. Mike he did.

J: Is he alive?

L: Oh no he's dead. All of them dead.

J: You're the last?

R: She's the last.

L: Mhm.

J: You're the last.

L: Yeah all of them dead. But they used to work for Mr. Mike.

J: Did any of your sisters work in the tobacco as you did?

L: Yeah oh yeah they stripped tobacco. My sisters did. Mr. Mike had a big sort of [beards].

J: A beard? He had a big beard.

L: Yeah uh-huh.

J: Did you know their little girl Betty?

L: Betty Jean oh yeah.

J: We know her.

L: And [Bly. Bly] one of them is dead. A lady told me.

J: Margaret's dead.

L: Yeah Margaret [inaudible].

J: Yeah Margaret.

L: With black hair. [Inaudible phrase] long curly hair. Yeah [inaudible phrase] talking to a social worker. [I got to talking] and she said something I don't know.

J: That's Diggs's wife. Bev. See she's the one that told us we should get in touch with you.

L: Yeah that's the one talked to me told me that—

J: She married the youngest of Bessie's children. Richard Lee Stone, he's a teacher.

L: I didn't know Ms. Bessie's children. I didn't never know them. [Fact] they move I guess [before I could] [inaudible]. I didn't know the boys but I know them girls. They're pretty girls. Pretty little children. Ms. Bessie has some pretty little girls.

J: What do you remember about La Plata? What stands out in your—what stores did you go into?

L: Mr. Farrell.

J: Farrell by the railroad track?

L: Yeah right there a friend of ours. And Mr. Cochran and Mr.... What's that store there that used to sell right on the corner as you're going into La Plata?

J: Bailey's?

L: Bailey.

J: Leon Butcher Bailey.

L: That's right. That's right. Mr. Bailey.

J: Next door to the bank?

L: Yeah and let me see another one ice cream Mr....

J: Bowie?

L: Bowie.

J: Bowie's ice cream store right by the railroad tracks.

L: Yeah Mr. Bowie.

J: Near Farrell's across the street.

L: Yeah, yeah that's right [inaudible]. And—

J: We remember La Plata.

L: And [inaudible phrase] many times and ate ice cream there. He didn't serve everybody. He didn't serve, served me].

J: They would serve anybody in there that walked in with the money?

L: [Inaudible] [Diggs's daughter]. Mhm yeah but he was particular but he would serve me.

R: Could you eat there?

L: If I want to.

R: Did you?

L: Sure but I never [wanted enough to eat] but he would serve me. He wasn't keen on letting the colored people in I'll tell you that. But he would serve me because he know my father see. Like I tell you my father was well known in there. All them people Mr. Farrell and all of them know me

around there. Mr. Cochran, [inaudible phrase], Mr. [Inaudible], Mr. Louie. [Inaudible phrase]. Just know all of them.

J: Now tonight—

L: And I'd go and, "Oh hello Lorine. How're you Lorine?" And all that [inaudible phrase]. Yeah they're nice people. [Ms. Georgia] was nice.

J: Maybe when the weather gets better we can come over and figure out [inaudible phrase].

L: [Inaudible phrase].

J: Now tonight—

L: On account of my legs see I don't go no, only place I go is the doctor. I have trouble getting in the car see.

J: Oh that's hard.

L: [Inaudible phrase]. [Maybe run down her home that other day].

J: Mr. Cochran's granddaughter is coming to visit us tonight.

L: Oh she is?

J: See we're helping the town of La Plata write it's history. It's 100 year history.

L: Oh yeah well she gonna visit you all tonight?

J: Yeah she lives in La Plata and we got to plan this history.

L: Oh yeah.

J: What sort of food preservation did you do at home as a girl? You and your mother and sisters? Such as smoking and salting and drying? What did your mother do to get the food ready to last through the winter?

L: She put up canned goods.

J: In the glass mason jars?

L: Yeah. Tomatoes and [apples] and pears. I used to do it. When I was Washington, living in Washington, I [put them] like my mother but I got [to the place] wasn't nobody but my husband, my son, and daughter I didn't do it. I didn't do it but my mother she [inaudible] [some up far as I could] [inaudible] nothing but canned goods. Smoke the meat. [Four and four, five hogs] cured. Salt them down my father he salt them down had meat last real winter. [Inaudible]. Ham, great big ham. [Talking about southern good].

J: Was that good eating that ham?

L: What you talking about? Now the meat you get now even if you salt it now. [I know a man down in that country there] I buy hams from. Up in Marlborough. He [inaudible phrase] but don't taste like my mothers, uh-uh.

J: What did they do? Your father butchered his own hogs?

L: That's right.

J: About how many to last the year?

L: About five, about five of them. [It'd be] five.

J: Were these big hogs?

L: Great big fat ones.

J: 150 tons, 200?

L: That's right. Big, big, 200, 300. [I bought one year I was down here in the country I bought a hog it was] 300 pounds and I only paid eight dollars for it. It was eight dollars, four dollars. I mean it was four dollars for it. Then I bought me a great big shoulder cow. Only gave 16 dollars for it. And you know what I have to pay for my roasted beef? 17 dollars. [Inaudible] [go and buy] roasted beef I have to pay 17 dollars for it. I bought roast beef one time cost me 30 some dollars right here at [inaudible] market. And look what I got for 16 dollars. [Inaudible sentence].

J: Did you have an orchard on your property?

L: Oh yes. [Oh it] has three of them.

J: What kind of fruit now?

L: It has peaches, apples, pears, all kinds. Plenty of peaches. Apples and pears, all [this now].

R: What kind of apples? What?

L: Oh they had cooking apples. And had a crab apple but we didn't [buy no crab apples they just grow.] [Inaudible phrase] we didn't own them. We had apples, we had apples, all kinds of apples. June apples, fall apples, had [good big] tree. We had [inaudible] October still on there until October. Go down and fall down you know we'd go get them [inaudible phrase] was real [black]. Skin on them was real dark.

J: Sounds like [inaudible] apples.

L: Just dark.

R: [Inaudible].

L: I don't know what they called them but any size was [inaudible] and juicy as could be.

J: The outside didn't look too pretty?

L: Yeah. This [inaudible].

J: Once you get inside?

L: Inside.

J: Okay. [We'll have to bring her some of those after we have] [inaudible] [next year we'll have those].

L: Yeah. But anyway that's our [we used to raise] pears.

J: Now what did you have to buy at the store that your mother couldn't put out?

L: Well we had eggs tell you the truth. [Inaudible phrase] got eggs [by butchers]. Well we bought...what my mother used to buy?

R: Sugar?

L: Sugar and coffee, tea, no lard. Sugar, coffee, and tea. Rice [inaudible] and bought rice.

J: Did you use corn syrup very much?

L: Yeah but dark molasses. That's right molasses and...molasses we used to didn't have to buy no flour. We kept barley, and get flour and cornmeal.

J: Where was that kept? Right in the house?

L: Right in the house in the meat house. We had two of them. Little meat house and big meat house because our hogs would have [inaudible] cook them put them in a jar. And lard sealing the jar.

J: The lard would seal it?

L: Yeah. Put in the jar that's right.

J: And it would keep?

L: Yeah it kept. Had [inaudible phrase] over in the meat house. Kept the meat in a jar. [Inaudible phrase] and sausage. You didn't have [sausage buy now like that.] [Inaudible phrase] you know. Other things hanging down [just for the sausage].

J: You made your own sausage?

L: That's right. Put it in [inaudible].

J: The casing and everything.

L: [Beautiful] so good.

J: [You liked them]?

L: Yes [me too]. [Inaudible phrase] and see I'm kind of used people don't understand me. I'm kind of used to that kind of eating. [This eating here now] I eat it but I ain't keen on it. [Now those] chickens my mother used to raise—my father used to raise chickens to sell over in La Plata. He used to raise strawberries to sell. By this time of year he had a great big piece of [inaudible] with chickens [inaudible phrase]. Take them over to La Plata. I have raised ducks and take them down to Indian Head. [Before I could turn] around all my ducks be gone. [I didn't get but] 50 cents a piece for them now you gotta pay seven dollars for a duck sometimes more than that. [My aunt paid]—they only paid me 50 cents a piece for a duck and I mean a big old one [the boy ducks].

J: [A dressed out of what]—

L: I dressed them. I dressed them yeah. [Inaudible phrase] [no pound]. [Today how much] a duck? Like 50 cent a piece. I didn't know no better.

J: How about wash day?

L: Wash day my mother washed.

J: Once a week?

L: No we washed twice a week.

J: I see.

L: [On yeah] too many of them. Too many of them they had to wash twice a week.

J: For 18 people at one time altogether.

L: 16.

J: 16 children, mother and dad?

L: Yeah well that is 18 alright. Yes indeedy.

J: How she'd heat the water for all that?

L: Kettle stove that heat the water. My mother, father bought a stove and heat the water [very slow] the water one of them great big [arms] things like that. Put a pump in it. Water run into it. Had the water run in it. All you got to do is come out and get the water. [Then it put in there when anything got water]. He put a pipe down in the ground. Right down in the ground.

J: Did it come from the roof?

L: No, no it come from the ground. [Just a pull] and made it so the water can run in. Then he had a pipe he made go down in spring he made a white great big white thing for the water you know. To get our water, drinking water, that great big white had a top over it. If your cement was white [then water run into you]. That was some good water.

J: How was the house heated?

L: Then they put ice. They had an ice house. Sold ice.

J: You sold ice?

L: Yeah [inaudible phrase] sold ice. [People come up there] [inaudible phrase]. [Inaudible phrase] bring ice [with] ice. Cut ice and bring that there. [Inaudible phrase] ice house.

R: Where did you cut the ice? From the pond?

L: Yeah it come from the pond. [Bring it in] [inaudible].

R: What pond?

L: The pond right there, right there by [me there, by me there's a super big great pond]. The pond is there now. Somebody fell into it one time and drowned.

R: Near you house? Near the—

L: Yeah near my house. That's where they cut the ice. [That pond and boys would put them] in the ice house. My father sold ice all the summer. People coming there and buying ice, [inaudible phrase]. I'll tell you he had everything that anybody could live with. Sheep, 25, 30 head of [cattle] sheep. Him and Mr. [Cox] used to raise them together see. He'd take half and Mr. [Cox] take half. He raised [from my house to] way down and had them way down from my house. Every time one of us caught a sheep to sell he would go down and kill one and take it over to La Plata and sell it. Put it in [inaudible] for us. But most of it take it over to La Plata and sell it. [We did have this] [inaudible phrase].

R: You said he would take things to La Plata and you said you would take your livestock—

L: To Indian Head yeah.

R: Did they have some kind of [inaudible phrase].

L: No [inaudible sentence].

R: Where would you just take the buggy and stop some—

L: I take a buggy. I raised my own ducks.

R: And you would just stop along the road somewhere?

L: No just take them right down to Indian Head. Right into Indian Head to sell them.

R: To a store?

L: No the people around. I didn't take them to no store. Just you know people walking around.

R: Just park along the street?

L: Yeah and keep on going around and telling people, "You want any ducks today lady?"

R: I see okay.

L: Yeah I sold every duck I had and could have sold more.

J: And some of them would look for you to come into town?

L: That's right.

J: They bought one they waited for you?

L: Uh-huh another lady too. Cassy Smith she used to raise stuff and take down to Indian Head.

J: Where does she live now?

L: She live right up on the road there by Marshall's Corner. Back down that road. She's dead now but she used to carry the nicest things around Easter time. She [inaudible phrase] Easter things would be [inaudible phrase] cold. Go in the garden and cut your greens, and cut cabbage [first], onions and stuff, and strawberries at that time.

R: Did you ever stuff a ham with—

L: Oh my lord I stuffed [sometimes] [inaudible phrase]. Yes my mother [inaudible phrase] always kept one for that. Kept one for Easter, kept one for Thanksgiving, kept one for you know Christmas. [Very good because I stuffed my ham with] couldn't get no cabbage [for it] I had kale. But my mother had cabbage first.

R: Water cress? Did you ever use [it for ham cress]?

L: No I don't like it. I like kale in my stuffing. Yeah you could get it but I liked kale. Ton of kale. [Inaudible phrase] I don't understand [inaudible phrase]. I don't know what's wrong with [kale] so tough.

J: What did your mother and father think about education for their children?

L: Oh she sent them to school. [She] [inaudible] yeah.

J: She felt very strongly about it?

L: Huh?

J: She felt that this was something we had to—

L: Yeah, yeah she sent us to school every last one.

J: Who was the best student in the family?

L: Tom my brother, Thomas.

J: And what did he do in life later?

L: I don't know what Tom did.

J: Did he remain here?

L: [Inaudible phrase] I don't know what he did. He worked but I don't know what kind of work he did but I know he was awfully smart. Smartest one in the family. He died.

J: Where did he live here in the county most of his life?

L: [He worked down in this country right down in] Port Tobacco. [Inaudible sentence].

J: Now are you related to the Port Tobacco Butler's? There are Butler's down there too and a lot of Sims down there.

L: I don't know. I know some, but one Butler I used to know lived down was a [tall brown skinned fellow]. I forget his name now because he knew my sister. That's the way I come to know him. [You see] [inaudible phrase]. So I didn't [inaudible].

J: And you did know Henry Bush?

L: Yeah, yeah.

J: What sort of a man was Henry Bush?

L: His son George Bush is way up there McConchie Road married to Alice Mason. I mean Alice...who he married? He married a [name I know] [inaudible]. George Bush married Alice.

J: Did you know Margaret Jameson?

L: No [inaudible] but I know George Bush. I know Mr. [inaudible] George Bush. I know him. I know them. I know that George used to live up there on McConchie Road. Going down to McConchie. Yeah I know [a man] George Bush and [his] father [peddled, bought] together. [Inaudible phrase] my father [used to raise hogs and things. Corn plenty of corn stuff yeah. We had a real nice land there. We had] [inaudible].

J: Do you remember being a little girl white families that really weren't as well off as you Butler's were?

L: [You say that I know]?

J: Yeah did you meet some in the neighborhood?

L: No, no. [Inaudible from 1:25:30 to 1:25:36] talking to Pauline [Simon] her mother use to live off [inaudible phrase]. I'll tell you about give me this, give me that. She didn't have the stuff we had [inaudible].

J: They were poor whites?

L: Yeah. Poor whites but [inaudible phrase] give it to them. My mother give it to them [inaudible phrase] [great big piece of meat to give them] my mother did. And the people [inaudible phrase] come right here want something to eat. My mother say, "Sit down there and wait. I get you something." Going there you're always cooking a great big pan of biscuits have plenty left over. [She going down to the meat house] cut the ham, cut the slice of ham and eggs and fry them. Get this man you don't who he was [whites we called them tramps] feed him. Feed him and let him sit down there. [Let him] sit down there and eat. Ham, eggs, coffee.

J: White or black?

L: White or black doesn't matter to her, to us. They get up and say, "Thank you Auntie." Wouldn't call you [wifey] no wouldn't call you Mrs. Butler or Ms. They [would call you that Auntie]. They would call you that and call you [Mrs.] you know that yourself. "Thank you Auntie." Momma say, "You're welcome." Here comes another one would come sit down, "Something to eat." Would you let somebody come in now and ask for something to eat. They'll take you away. And we wouldn't be scared. My mother never [would be] scared. [Inaudible phrase]. We used to see them [inaudible phrase]. [White people] [inaudible phrase] [eat each other] call them tramps.

J: Raw? Right out of—

L: Right out [inaudible] would just be so hungry. But they didn't come. Them that did it didn't come into my house. They kept going.

J: What was Christmas like at the Butler house? What were the special things that your mother and father did?

L: Give us Christmas. Give us a Christmas Tree and sent us [tiny clothes] and great big Christmas Tree taller than the house. See George used to work for a person named Ms. Mayme Paget over La Plata. Her name was Mayme Paget. And when she fixed her Christmas Tree she would have a lot of stuff left over and give it to George and George bring it home and my mother and them put it on my Christmas Tree and then we had a beautiful tree, beautiful tree.

J: What kinds of decorations?

L: Oh all kinds. Ms. Mayme was able to buy all that stuff. We bought too. We bought bows and stuff but Ms. Mayme had expensive stuff [inaudible].

J: Where did she live in La Plata?

L: I don't remember where Ms. Mayme lives.

J: Mayme Paget?

L: Mayme Paget that's right [inaudible] Mayme Paget. We used to go over there.

J: Did you ever ride on the train?

L: Who me?

J: Yeah.

L: No [inaudible] I went to Philadelphia.

J: That one time.

L: That one time.

J: Did you ever go down to Chapel Point?

L: Then I used to go—yeah I used to go back and forth walking on the trains. Or Chapel Point yeah we used to go down there every summer for a picnic, church picnic. We have it down there now Father Kavanaugh. [Inaudible phrase] they sent me an invitation but I can't go every time. They even [inaudible phrase] I'll come and I'll get you. [Inaudible sentence] but my daughter go down there. But I didn't go. But they sent me my dinner see and they have all kind of eats and [inaudible] my dinner. Father Kavanaugh wants to come pick me up and bring me take me down his own self. I told him no I don't think I'll make it there at Chapel Point. I used to go down there [to dance] but [inaudible phrase]. [Inaudible phrase].

J: When you were a young lady did black people in Charles County know the names of some of the more famous black people? Did they try to instill in you a pride in black people? Did you ever hear of Mathew Harrison?

L: No.

J: Did you ever hear of Josiah Henson?

L: I [hear no] [inaudible phrase] they're colored. [Isaiah Henson] used to live in Pomonkey. All I know is Isaiah Henson.

J: Isaiah.

L: [Inaudible phrase].

J: You heard of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? *Uncle Tom's*?

L: Yeah I heard of—

J: He's from Charles County.

L: Yeah.

J: But he ran away and went to Canada [inaudible].

L: [They would come back].

J: [Inaudible] the Civil War. So there was no great effort to bring young black children up to know something about their own history? That's changed. Did you ever hear of Harriet Tubman as a little girl?

L: Harry what?

J: Harriet Tubman.

L: Tubman.

J: A black Maryland lady, a heroine of the Civil War period. [Inaudible phrase].

L: Harriet Tubman yeah.

J: How about Frederick Douglas?

L: Yeah I heard stuff in school. In fact I [been] in Catholic school Frederick Douglas school. That's there over there in the [inaudible] I think yeah on the hill [inaudible]. Frederick Douglas [inaudible phrase]. [Inaudible sentence].

J: So you just naturally came by having this pride in being yourself?

L: That's right.

J: And knowing your mother and father were good substantial people?

L: People that's right.

J: That were doing very well. Not asking any help from anybody.

L: That's right no help from nobody.

J: Just making it on their own.

L: He'd give and help. He'd give people [what do they call it] he'd give. [Inaudible phrase] come over there [inaudible phrase] he'd give it to him.

J: What would you tell young colored people today who feel that life is just going to be too unfair for them to go on?

L: I don't know what I would tell [the colored children even now]. They're doing so bad now for the colored people and white both of them. I wouldn't know what to tell them. Only thing I could tell them live a good life and don't kill nobody. And there they're killing and going and coming. All that wasn't there when I was coming up. [I had nothing like that]. Nothing but coming and going [inaudible phrase].

J: And all of your brothers and sisters 16 children lived good honest productive lives?

L: Oh yeah ain't never none of them been to jail. Not a one.

J: How many nieces and nephews do you have?

L: Oh lord [Inaudible sentence].

J: When did you [began] a family reunion and all [inaudible]?

L: No we never had no family reunion. [I got 20 nephews and cousins too].

J: Do you know where some of them are?

L: Oh yes I call them up from on the phone and [inaudible]. When I was in Washington they come and visit [and all] yeah.

J: How long have you been back here since living in Washington?

L: [Oh I've been back for a long time] for a long, long time.

J: Are you contented here? Glad to be back home?

L: [I'm contented but I don't know I liked Washington better].

J: You miss the city?

L: Yeah.

J: Where did you live in Washington?

L: I lived on 330 Rhode Island Avenue NE. And I lived right [37 or 33 or 1st Street]. That was the only place I lived.

J: In north east?

L: North east, north west. One of them was north east. I lived at [this place that I moved from]. I've been there quite a while but then I bought a home up there in [eastern garden]. I lived up there 20 years. Bought a home up there.

J: Do you feel Mrs. Chambers that being raised a black Catholic was a good thing for you and your family?

L: Why sure.

J: Okay this is important. I think the Catholic Church and the black people have been close together for a long time.

L: Yes [inaudible] white and colored.

J: And the church simply laid down the law.

L: Huh?

J: The church called all the shots, said this is the way it's going to be.

L: Be uh-huh.

J: Do you ever remember the day when there was segregation in the Catholic Church?

L: Wasn't much segregation in [inaudible] but we didn't lie [was segregating too that's] segregated. But they treat us all nice. And treat us just as nice as they could be. [Inaudible phrase]. They wouldn't let us sit together but I used to go down there and sit right down at the front. Sit right down there and say now they're going to make me get up and leave. Because see I had been to Washington and sat there with my friend who's colored there in Washington. Said when I'm down here I'm going to sit too.

J: Did you?

L: They didn't bother me. I went on up and [inaudible] come on [out]. They didn't say you couldn't sit there or nothing.

J: Who's your favorite priest at St. Joseph's in your entire life?

L: [Inaudible] you don't have [inaudible]. You don't have that. You don't ain't no difference. We can't do that. I like them all just like I do. I like Father Kavanaugh, I like Father [Aniston], I like Father John. I like them all like I do for them I give them what I've got money to give them.

J: Do you remember the name of some of the priests at St. Joseph's when you were growing up and there as a girl?

L: Father [Tawney] was up there but he's dead. [Inaudible sentence]. [Inaudible phrase] this one time [didn't I know one but the colored people in there and] [inaudible phrase]. But they would go there.

J: This is in Washington?

L: Yeah. But now white and colored got [a say in there. Deacon and all in there and all]. My daughter go there. Used to go there. They come over to eat. I fix dinner for them. [Inaudible] when they come so [inaudible phrase] at home. [She just so] nice [but she's real nice]. But then [I say you go to serve dinner.] I don't [they ain't got it now]. They ain't got it now. You can go there. You can go any the place now.

[End of Tape]