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JH

NARRATORS NAME: MARJORIE BROWN

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INTERVIEWERS NAME: JOE HRABA

FOR: BUXTON PROJECT, ISU

A....but we don't know.

Q. AND THIS WAS WHOM?

A. That lady's father.

Q. YOUR GREATGRANDFATHER.

A. Uh-huh. And he died...

Q. BUT WHEN DID THEY, MARJORIE, WHEN DID THEY COME?

A. That's what I tried to think, cause I knew that man, he didn't die until I was twelve years old. And I was twelve years old in 1916. But of course he was quite ^{an} old ^{man} ~~then~~. And I just wondered if he was along, he must have been along with the last of the slaves and yet not necessarily, because my grandmother was born in 1860, And that was his oldest child.

Q. SO HE MUST HAVE, HE MUST HAVE COME AFTER...

A. He must have come, maybe, if she was born in '60, he was between thirty and 40 probably.

WHAT, WHERE DID THEY COME TO IN THE UNITED STATES?

A. They were slaves in Missouri.

Q. IN MISSOURI?

A. Whether he was brought, I know there's no coast in Missouri, so he must have been brought somewhere else and sold.

Q. WHERE AT IN MISSOURI?

A. They ended up in Bethany, Missouri.

Q. BETHANY.

A. That's just across the state line. Just a little ways across the state line.

Q. FROM IOWA?

A. Yes.

Q. SO IT'S IN NORTHERN MISSOURI?

A. Uh-huh. But they were slaves, they came there after...no,they didn't. It was Bethany Missouri, ^{BE}cause when the...the people that owned them, and that man, I don't know. Him. I know a little bit about his family, ^{BE}cause ^{you see} his ^{is} he ^{is} was white, the reason he was white was because his father was his master. And there ^{OF THOSE} were two ^{OF THOSE} little boys down ^{IN} as ^{IN} slaves quarters. And there were six in what they called the big house, ^{THE MAN} ~~He~~ did have a wife and a family, He was an -1-

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onto

A. (cont.)...Englishman. And he came over here to make his fortune. (part of dialogue inaudible) And...but there were two children in the slave quarters. And that out of eight children, was the one that looked like him. And he wanted him. And my grandmother said no. Because if conditions had been reversed, I would have to agree And I'm sure that wife with her six children would have to hate my child. So, he can't go. Of course slavery was over then, so nobody could make her. ^{let him go. But,} As you know so many of the children that were mixed like that they couldn't send them to school here but

they sent them to France and various places to get an excellent education and that's what the men wanted

Q. (JH) WHAT WAS THE FAMILY'S NAME?

A. His name would have been King. King in Missouri.

Q. AND ON YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S SIDE...?

A. Jones.

Q. JONES. KING AND JONES.

A. And they were both slaves in Missouri.

Q. BETHANY, MISSOURI.

A. Well, she, her folks had got as far as Bethany Missouri because after slavery was abolished and the freedom papers ~~hit/hine~~ had hung on the barn until they were yellow, the slave master died, and the son of the household ^{couldn't take it and he} came and he gathered the slaves around ^{his} I believe my grandmother has said there were four. And told them ^{families} of these yellow papers ^{down} around and went to them article by article

And he said "I'm letting you go. Because my mother and my sisters ^{don't know how to} ~~didn't~~ tell you. But I can't stand it anymore. So I'm going to read it to you. I'm going to tell...explain it to you. I'm going to tell you that you're as free as I am. And you won't see me again." And he divided up ^{the animals} ~~them~~. He gave each of ^{these families} a beast and a cart of some kind. And because my great grandfather had two children, he got a horse and a small cart. And when they ...of course the mother and sister didn't like that. That was a part of their economy, you know in some crazy way, I can understand. (laughs) Because we can get our thinking so twisted. And that was a part of their living. And with both ~~the~~ men gone...the husband dead and his son gone...no, she didn't want her living to go. ^{so she sent people after them} And they just got to the state line and they ^w wanted to know what they were after them for,...well, they're runaway slaves. And the people that patrolled the state lines, because there were situations like that, said ^{they can't be} ~~we can't take them~~, because there hasn't been slavery for some years now.

Q. THEY STAYED ON THE PLANTATION FOR THREE YEARS AFTER.../? -2-

A. Cause they did not know. That they were free, So then they said, well they stole the horse and wagon, and that little tiny black grandfather stepped out of the wagon ^{took} with his wife and his two children ^{oh they} and walked into Iowa.

Q. WHAT...?

A. I'm so proud of that man. (laughs)

Q. THAT'S REALLY A GOOD STORY.

A, I'm so proud of him because he ~~knew~~ ^{know} nothing in the world about being free.

Q. WHY DID THEY HEAD THIS WAY, MARJORIE?

A. It was the next state up.

Q . INSTEAD OF GOING SOUTH.

A. Yes. People had heard about the, what is it?, the underground railway. And this was the next state up. The next place that spell freedom. Because...

Q. UH-HUH. IOWA NEVER BEING A SLAVE STATE.

A. Yes. And so they walked on ~~up~~ ^{up}. And I think about ~~it~~ ^{it} him coming her and he knew nothing in the world about being free. ^{He didn't} ~~He knew~~ where ^{mean} to go to look for a job, he didn't. ^{know what it meant} when to assume responsibility, he had two children, he knew nothing. And those two children finally became six, and when that little man died he was able to leave a four room house, bought and paid for, and an acre of land.

Q. HOW DID THEY GET TO...DID THEY GO TO MUCHAKINOK FORST...?

A. No, that's my father's father.

Q.OKAY.

A. They're the ones that came from Virginia.

Q. OKAY, LET'S STICK WITH YOUR MOTHER'S SIDE.

A. Alright.

Q. FOR A MOMENT. WHEN THEY GOT INTO IOWA, WHERE DID THEY GO?

A. Up around...what county has Leon, in it? Because that's where It's the same one that our Governor Hughes came from.

Q. AHH...

A. It's DAVIS county, ^{I'VE HEARD those names} his ~~name is~~ mentioned. And why I never looked it up in the dictionary, ^{IOWA} I don't know. But my mother graduated from Leon High School. Leon, ~~High School~~, Alberta Pugh.

Q. WHERE, WHAT DID YOUR GRANDPARENTS DO IN LEON?

A. I can't imagine what my grandfather did do. Just worked. Just whatever anybody would let him do, I'm sure.

Q. THEN HE WAS A DAY LABORER, A HANDY MAN OF SORTS?

A. Now, those are the ones that were in Leon. Are you talking about this little slave?

Q. THESE PEOPLE.

A. This little slave. Well, these ones, oh, he was a barber.

Q. A BARBER.

A. Yeah, He became a barber. Not a ~~high~~ ^{GRADUATE} barber because they didn't have ~~any~~ ^{GRADUATE BARBERS}. But an ^{ex}cellent barber.

Q. SURE.

A. One whodidn't have to have a shop of his own. And of course as I tell you, she became a schoolteahcher.

Q. AND THIS IS YOUR MOTHER'S FAMILY. ONE OF HOW MANY CHILDREN?

A. There were six ^{of} them. Two died in infancy and they reade^{red} ~~er~~ ^{fe} four.

Q. SURE YEAH. HOW, ~~YOUR~~ MOTHER...HOW DID ~~SHE~~ MAKE THE CONNECTION WITH YOUR FATHER AND THEN WITH BUXTON?

A. Buxton, Iowa. I know when you hear about it, I know you think we're making it up. Because it sounds like a fairy land. Buxton, Iowa, you've seen the little ^{coal-mining} book I showed you that said theat there were nine thousand people down there, and there was possibly fifteen hundred white people down there. And there was a band, ~~x my,~~ ^{my,} both of may parents were muscicians.

Q. WHAT DID THEY PLAY?

A. My mother was a pianist, and my father played the great big fat tuba. And that band dravelled to various fair^s and gatherings and the fair^s had the Buxton band come to Leon, Iowa. Do you know that's the first time my mother had ^{EVER} seen black folks that was not her own family?

Q. UH-HUH. WE'VE HEARD THAT BEFORE, MARJORIE, I FORGET THE WOMAN'S NAME, NOW, SHE WAS A SCHOOLTEACHER ^{THERE} IN BUXTON AND SHE WAS RAISED OVER BY ANAMOSA. AND I THINK THERE WAS ONE OTHER BLACK FAMILY IN ANAMOSA BUT THEY WEREN'T cLOSE. AND SHE SAID IT WAS AN ALTHGOETHER DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE WHEN SHE THEN MOVED TO BUXTON. WITH HER OWN KIND. NOW..

A. That' swhere she met him. He ^{WENT} ~~was~~ with the band.

Q. HE WAS WITH THE BAND. OKAY. ^{LET'S} START WITH HIS FMAILY AND TRACE IT BACK. WHERE DID HIS PARENTS COME FROM...VIRGINIA?

A. Stonton, Virginia.

Q. STONTON, VIRGINIA.

A. I understand that's up in the mountains, I ^{do} ~~do~~ n't know, but it was Stonton, Virginia.

Q. OKAY. DO YOU KNOW THE REASON THEY LEFT VIRGINIA? WERE THEY RECRUITED?

A. No, I dont know. Because they didn't come immediately to the coal mines, cause I tell you there was an ~~uncle~~ ^{uncle}, a second son -4-

A. (cont.)...that was born up here in Muscatine, Iowa, that had nothing to do with coal mines or anything like that. A hundred and seven years ago. So why they came, I don't know.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW THE ROUTE BY WHICH THEY CAME, EITHER?

A. No, no. I don't know, and I don't know why. They came.

Q. OKAY, WELL, THERE WAS SOME RECRUITMENT GOING ON. BUT USUALLY THOSE PEOPLE CAME DIRECTLY TO MUCHAKINOK OR BUXTON.

A. To Muchakinok, yes. But ^{my} folks were in Muscatine, and I met two old neighbor, I think they were cousins, I guess. About 25 years ago, who were property owners in Muscatine. But why they left Virginia and went to Muscatine, surely I have heard. But I don't remember.

Q. THAT'S OKAY. HOW DID THEY GET, THEN FROM MUSCATINE TO BUXTON?

A. By way of Muchakinok. Now my grandfather was a butcher. And you've heard about these ¹Armstrongs that were in Buxton. They had the Armstrong Meat Market. Now they were a mixed family. Part white and part black. And my grandfather was their...

Q. WAS IT A BLACK WOMAN AND WHITE MAN OR JUST THE REVERSE?

A....I just don't know how that family was mixed up, because when I saw them, they were mixed.

Q. OKAY. ^{WHEN THE MIXING STARTED,}

A. And some of those mixings were slavery time mixings.

Q. YEAH. BUT THAT'S...

A. And some of them chose never to be separated and when they could make it legal, they did.

Q. RIGHT.

A. So how it happened, I don't know.

Q. OKAY.

A. So Hope Armstrong and ²aprt of his family, after he started his family, part of it went white and part ³of it went black. The same thing happened to my family. (laughs) Part of it went white and part of it went black...the black people were generally the ones that insisted on the complete break, ⁴because his (points to picture), he is the one I told you had a white father, and there were two or three mixes in that family, and one of the cousins married a businessman in...now we're back to my mothers people, married a business man in chicago. And she hated to give up her family, she was afraid to tell him ⁵she was mixed. I was part of that fun thing, because when I was born, I had light skin and these light eyes, and I had a little tuft of yellow hair, and she wanted me, and she told my mother what she could do for me, And it's the joke in my family...

A.)cont.)...had she taken me, and I blacked up like I am now. ~~I don't know~~ ^{would} what the poor soul would have done, (laughs) But my grandmother...his mother, ^{TOLD HER} no, you're going to have to ~~make~~ ^{MAKE} A COMPLETE BREAK. You can't run back and hide. You can't live both ways. He will find out, ^{YOU CAN'T DO IT,} and so they insisted ^{ON A COMPLETE BREAK,} that...

Q. THIS WAS THE SISTER OF YOUR MOTHER?

A. No, that was on my father's...

Q. FATHER'S SIDE.

A. No...that was on my mother's side. It was his cousin.

Q. OKAY.

A. But if you want to talk more about my father's side, the people that came from Stonton, Virginia and went to Muscatine, Iowa, and had children there ~~and~~ ^{THEY} went on to Muchakinok.

Q. AS A BUTCHER.

A. He was a butther.

Q. AND WAS CONTACTED BY THE ARMSTRONG FAMILY...?

A. I don't know how he got there, he was a butcher for the Armstrong family when I was born. How it came about, I do not know.

Q. NOW THEY WENT TO MUCHAKINOK AND THEN MOVED TO BUXTON?

A. Yes.

Q. DO YOU KNOW THE DATES?

A. No, I can't tell you that. They went to Buxton, and all of the boys worked in the mines. All of the sons of the ~~man~~ ^{OLD GENTLEMAN THAT} who was a butcher.

Q. HOW MANY WERE THERE?

A. Oh, let's see.

a. HOW MANY CHILDREN?

A. ...MY father, uncle Ed, Uncle Henry, ^{UNCLE HENRY IS THE ONE THAT WAS BORN IN MUSCATINE} Uncle Charles, uncle Clifford, and three girls.

Q. EIGHT. UH-HUH.

A. And we had ^{WE} used up every color that the human skin is capable of. But that little man. He was small, he was black, and he had the shiny hair, ^{but} cause he was american born. But where those people have come from, I say so many times, every now and then you hear..."Oh, let 'em go back where they came from." I wouldn't know where to go! Should I go to England, shall I go to Africa? Where shall I go? So I'll ~~stay~~ stay here. (laughs)

Q. RIGHT. SO THE FAMILY EVENTUALLY MOVED TO BUXTON. YOU DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHEN, DO YOU?

A. No.

Q. OKAY. SO THAT'S YOUR FATHER'S SIDE AND YOUR FATHER WAS IN A BAND WHICH BAND? WAS HE IN?

A. They called it just the Buxton band, and I think they called the ball team the Buxton Wonders.

Q. RIGHT.

A. Yes.

Q. WE'VE HEARD, MARJORIE, THAT THERE WAS A BAND AND ALSO AN ORCHESTRA THAT PLAYED MORE STUDIO MUSIC THAN THE BAND DID. THE BAND BEING A LITTLE BIT MORE POPULAR MUSIC.

A. I tell you that Buxton is something that you wouldn't believe because we had graduate musicians there. We had college trained schoolteachers there. You went immediately from our high school to Iowa State University. It was a place you wouldn't believe. How it happened and how people of that caliber, nine thousand of them got together I don't know. And they were not all of what we call the first class, because people got killed there, there were gamblers there, there was a part of town that was open to that kind of people. But how many got ^{doctors} lawyers, schoolteachers, what we call upper class people, got together and why, I don't know.

Q. MARJORIE, YOUR DAD MET YOUR MOTHER IN MUSCATINE?

A. In Leon.

Q. IN LEON, EXCUSE ME, LEON, THAT'S RIGHT. THEY WERE MARRIED AND SHE ^{with him} MOVED BACK TO BUXTON.

A. Well, she moved with him back to coal mine number 10 because that is where I was born.

Q. COAL MINE #10.

A. My birth certificate says Bluff Creek Township.

Q. UH-HUH. WE UNDERSTAND THAT BUXTON WAS PART OF BLUFF CREEK TOWNSHIP.

A. I suppose, but...

Q. HERE IS A MAP. IT'S NOT A VERY GOOD MAP OF BUXTON, BUT IT'S THE BEST WE'VE GOT SO FAR. WE'RE GOING TO TRY TO MAKE UP A LITTLE BETTER MAP, BUT THIS IS A MAP OF BUXTON. CAN YOU RECALL WHERE YOUR FAMILY LIVED IN BUXTON, ^{did they live in} BUXTON ITSELF.

A. Yes, when I went ^{of} school, I went to ~~cs~~ school in Buxton, I never went to school in a little country schoolhouse.

Q. WHAT SCHOOL DID YOU GO TO?

A. The first one I went to was that swede town school.

Q. WHICH SWEDE TOWN SCHOOL WAS IT THE EAST SWEDE TOWN SCHOOL?

A. The east Swede town school.

Q. WEST SWEDE TOWN DIDN'T HAVE A SCHOOL.

A. No. East swede town ^{School}.

Q. OKAY. WHAT YEAR WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN?

A. Oh, I was born in 1904 and I started ^{to} school when I was 5 years old.

Q. 1909 OR 1910. THEREABOUTS, HUH?

A. 1909.

Q. OKAY.

A. Now I went ~~to~~ the Swede town school, and then ~~I~~ ^{when my mother} went... My father died when I was nine. When My mother died, and my grandparents lived up in the center of Buxton ^{when} The fifth street school. The water ~~tower~~ ^{ANK} and any of those things that you have heard about. There was the fifth street school, there was the water tank, the last teacher that taught at the fifth street school died here just last month. But you couldn't...she was quite ill.

Q. NOW, MARJORIE, WHAT STREET...? DO YOU REMEMBER THE STREET YOUR PARENTS LIVED ON?

A. OH...have you heard about Jeffries resturant?

Q. NO, WE HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT THAT. YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON THATS MENTIONED THAT.

A. Alright, have you heard ^{of} about Cooperstown?

Q. SURE HAVE.

A. Alright. One of my fathers ¹ cousins was married to B.F. Cooper. Who took in the town, the little place of Cooperstown. Now when you come through cooperstown have you heard about the two churches, the Methodist church and the white church that were just across the street from each other?

Q. YES.

A. The methodist church was where my mother was the organist. And you come right by that and there was a bridge and across the bridge ~~there was~~ ^{you were} at this Jeffries resturant.

Q. JEFFRIES RESTURANT.

A. And we lived across from that.

Q. UH-HUH. OKAY. AH...

A. And on your way up through the center of town, you're going to go and you pass the ^{JEFFRIES}

Q. TOWARD THE COMP~~NY~~ STORE,

A. Toward the company store.

Q. AND THE RAILROAD TR~~ACKS~~.

A. They're going to pass the Jeffires resturant, then you're going to go on past the undertaker parlor, then you're going to go on past the Armstrong's meat market, then you're going to pass the company store in a straight line.

Q. IT SEEMS TO ME YOU KNEW ~~THE~~ AND REMEMBERED BUXTON QUITE WELL. ⁸ -7-

Q.(CONT.)...THE PHYSICAL SETTING OF BUXTON,

A. Well, yes in a way, I do.

Q. NOW, MARJORIE, IF I MIGHT, I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU TO TAKE US ON KIND OF A MENTAL WALKING TOUR OF BUXTON. USE THIS MAP IF NEED BE. I KNOW IT'S PHOTOREduced, IT'S HARD OT READ, BUT START AT A POINT THAT YOU WOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH AND WALK US AROUND. HOW ABOUT STARTING AT THE COMPNAY STORE AND WALKING TOWARD WEST SWEDE WOWN?

A. Well, ah...

Q. ALONG MAIN STREET, WHAT WOULD WE SEE?

A. Oh, I cant' get you there, because...

Q. OKAY.

A....WHEN YOU LEFT Jeffries resturant and my home, you had done this you had come across the bridge. There were the two churches that you heard about...

Q. AND THAT'S MOVING IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION?

A. Don't ask me north and south. You're going toward the company store. I'll tell you that. So here are the two churches. You come on down and cross the bridge when you get across hhe bridge and you' at Jeffries resturant. But you turn this way to come to our house. There was one house between our house and the resturant. That... have you heard about Gobbler's Knob?

Q. SURE HAVE.

A. Okay, then you're going to go all the way to Gobbler's Knob and and the east Swede town school was over that way.

Q. DOROTHY COLLIER IS FROM GOBBLER'S KNOB, I BELIEVE.

A. Yep. And you you've had to keep on coming this way and not made the turn. If you were going to go on down to the company store.

Q. NOW GOBBLERS KNOB, YOU ASCENDED THE HILL AS YOU MOVED INTO...?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. WAS THAT RESIDENTIAL OR WAS IT ALSO COMMERCIAL?

A. No. Residential and there was a school.

Q. AND A SCHOOL.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. OKAY. AH...NOW MAIN STREET, CAN YOU DESCRIBE MAIN STREET FOR US?

A. Well, let me see. There was the resturant, if your going to...

Q. WAS THAT ALL, WAS THAT ON MAIN STREET, THE RESTURANT?

A. Coming across, yes, it was on the street coming through town, from the two churches and across the bridge. And Jeffries resturant and if you'r going to use this chair arm for main street, thenif you are going to use this chair arm for main street, when yuo get about here, that direction, toward the railroad thack and the machine shop where my father worked after he left the coal mines.

Q. OKAY.

A. He was a master mechanic and he worked in the machine shop. And then if you continue on up this, if you use this as main street, on this side is going to be an undertaking parlor, and ^{ow} up a little farther is going to be the meat market, and up from there is going to be the bank, and the bank and the company store were in a joint building.

Q. NOW THE COMPANY STORE WAS ON FIRST STREET RATHER THAN ON MAIN ST WASN'T IT?

A. Well, yeah, but I'm on...

YOU'RE DESCRIBING...

A. Uh-huh.

Q. I'M JUST LOOKING AT THE MAP HERE, MARJORIE.

A. Then you get to the company store you ^{keep straight} stay on a wooden sidewalk. till you get to the post office. But meanwhile having just passed the company store, I would say about the width of a wide street, if you turn to your left, will find the two YMCA buildings. It was at that time the only YMCA facility in America that was a dual one. One for the adults and one for the ^{girls} juniors. Okay. That is the man that came there from Kansas city, Missouri, as secretary of the boy's department. My husband's father, W.A. Brown, Jr. Well, he was ^{he} W.A. Brown, Sr. And he was ^{the} secretary of the boy's department. Now ^{WHEN} you go talk to Harold Reasby, Right in front of the YMCA was a lunch wagon. And (laughs) that's what his father ran.

Q. THE LUNCH WAGON.

A. Yes, That was my first introduction to a hot dog, (laughs)

Q. OKAY,

A. Alright we have crossed the street now from the company store, We have started ^{up the hill} here, Now you have seen the picture in the miner's book of the brand ^{that}, great big coal chute thing,

Q. YES.

A. Alright. This street is going to take you right ^{up} there, It's going to take you to the water tower, it's going to take you to where my grandparetns lived. It's going to take you to the fifth street schooo, It's going to take you to where the high school used to be, before it burned down and it's going to take you to the Baptist church,

Q. OKAY, I'M GOING TO ASK YOU JUST A COUPLE MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT BUXTON ITSELF, WAS THERE, DO YOU RECALL WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD THAT YOUR PARE NTS OR GRANDPARENTS OR OTHER PEOPLE AROUND YOU INDICATING THAT CERTAIN PARTS OF BUXTON WERE SORT OF ROUGH?

A. Oh, mercy. Ah...Coopertown wasn't so nice,

Q. COOPERTOWN WASN'T SO NICE,

A. Coopertown wasn't so nice. The man, he was a money maker, that's what he was after. So they gambled, and...

Q. WHERE DID THEY GAMBLE?

A. Oh, I don't know. I wasn't allowed to know.

Q. OKAY. BUT SOME OF THE HOMES...

A. There was, there were businesses down there. The one big hotel that was built in Buxton ^{WHEN IT} was just ~~to~~ about to go into a decline. Now these people that you're going to this afternoon, can tell you more about that. Because I left in 1916. They didn't leave until 1921.

Q. OKAY.

A. And there was a dry goods store, a store store, where you could buy things ^{down} in Cooperstown.

Q. SO COOPERSTOWN HAD A REPUTATION OF BEING. *REAL Rough*

A. And the other end of the town, say you're going to lay out the town this way. Alright, there's Cooperstown and you're going to come on through, and have you heard of...?

Q. POINTS END OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

A. No. I cannot think of it because it was just now in my mind. Well that was another one that had businesses, it had another store, it had my, the bakery, the Lucas bakery, and my youngest aunt married into that family. Sharp End.

Q. SHARP END, YEAH.

A. Shapp End.

Q. WHY DID THESE TWO PLACES, COOPERSTOWN AND SHARPS END HAVE THESE MILDLY UNSAVORY REPUTATIONS?

A. ^{FOR} The same reason I'm going to tell you, ^{THAT} I told Dr. Woodard, when he said that the bad place along fourth street ought to close up. Those people had to have somewhere to go. And when I was young, people were extremely class conscious. You didn't associate with people that were not in your place.

Q. MARJORIE JUST FOR...WELL, SEVERAL MINUTES, ELABORATE ON THAT. AMONG THE PEOPLE THERE, THEY WERE VERY CLASS CONSCIOUS *IN Buxton*

A. Yes, indeed, they were.

Q. TELL US ABOUT THAT.

A. Well, for instance, I was a Lee, I was a member of what was supposed to be the upper crust.

Q. BECAUSE OF YOUR FATHER.

A. Because of my family. My family the some educational ability that they had. And my father, both of them were what was con- 11

A. (CONT.)...sidered the upper crust of people, And you associated with people who were of like standards, to your own family.

Q. COULD YOU DESCRIBE, HOW MANY CLASSES WERE THERE PERCIEVED THERE IN BUXTON?

A. Oh, there was the money making class, strictly ~~the~~ money making.

Q. OKAY.

A. Now that's the ones that you're going to find that accomodate the gamblers. And it was strange, I didn't see people that looked like some of these tramps on fourth street. Do you know those men, those gamblers wore starched overalls.

Q. STARCHED OVERALLS?

A. Yes, indeed, I never ~~knew~~ ^{SAW} people like this, I really didn't.

Q. STARCHED OVERALLS. WHAT DID THEY WEAR FOR A SHIRT?

A. They wore, they ^{would} possibly ~~were~~ ^{HAVE} a blue shirt, but my heavenly days, it was ^a starched to the nth degree, ^{if} they had a full set of, they called them a deck of overalls, it was the overalls and the coat and this, they may be out in the woods somewhere shooting craps. But that's the way that they were dressed.

Q. WAS THAT CONSIDERED FLASHY ATTIRE AT THE TIME?

A. No, it was just really the style of the day.

Q. STYLISH.

A. When you saw people that were dirty and slovern, well, I tell you how it was said at my house...

Q. OKAY.

A. My grandmother told me, you speak to everyone that speaks to you. You ^{at everyone who smiles at you} smile, you may not go to their house, you may not invite them to your house.

Q. UH-HUH. AND THESE WERE THE PEOPLE THAT WERE CONSIDERED...

A. And there were a lot of us, I wasn't by myself. Dorothy's family The Brown's. Oh, so many. There were nine thousand people there. So you could divide them up into several ^{Classes}.

Q. THAT CLASS, YOU CONSIDERED YOURSELVES SORT OF THE UPPER CRUST?

A. Uh-huh,

Q. THE RESPECTABLE PEOPLE 'OF BUXTON.

A. Uh-huh

Q. AND THEN THERE WAS A CLASS OF PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT SO RESPECTABLE, THEY WERE MONEY CHANGERS,

A. They, yes, they...but do you know that they were sort of in a class to themselves. There were not around with the drunks, cause when

I was a little girl, people could get drunk and lay on the street,

Q. SURE,

A. They could lay in the gutter. And those high class gamblers would walk around them.

Q. SO, BELOW THE MONEY CHANGERS...

A. There were a few that were just low class people. That's what we called them.

Q. YOU WERE ~~NOT~~ EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN YOUR DISTANCE.

A. That's right. That is right.

Q. OKAY. WAS THERE EVER ANY REAL FRICTION BETWEEN THE CLASSES, AH, OTHER THAN SOME SOCIAL DISTANCE?

A. Well, I think the way we noticed it, there were lodges, we had the Masonic lodge, I remember particularly because my father belonged to that. And it depended on who you were whether you'd be accepted or not. If you were black-balled and it was known over town ~~time~~ that you were black-balled...

Q. UH-HUH.

A...that was about the worst thing that could happen to you.

Q. OKAY, NOW LET'S GO BACK NOW TO YOUR HUSBAND'S PEOPLE. THE MAN CAME AS A SECRETARY OF THE BOYS DIVISION OF THE YMCA. RIGHT, MARGORIE?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. OKAY. YOUR MOTHER IN LAW, DID HE BRING HIS WIFE WITH HIM FROM KANSAS CITY?

A. Right. And my husband, who was his son. My husband was 11 years old at the time. AND...

Q. SO YOUR HUSBAND WAS ~~BORN~~ IN KANSAS CITY, NOT BUXTON?

A. My husband was born in Kansas City.

Q. OKAY.

A. Yes.

Q. NOW...

A. He grew up, we say he grew up in Buxton, because he came there when he was 14, I think And then he went back to Knasas City to go to school. And then when he went to college, he went to Western College that used to be in Macomb, Missouri, ~~It~~ ^{but} is now in Kansas City.

Q. I SEE.

A. But his people were living in Buxton all that while, so he called it home.

Q. OKAY, BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER, INCIDENTLY WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT FAMILY, THE BROWN FAMILY WHEN BUXTON ENEDED?

A. Mr. Brown came to...we all came to Cedar Rapids.

Q. CEDAR RAPIDS.

A. Yes. That's where I grew up.

Q. WHY CEDAR RAPIDS?

A. An uncle, my mother's brother had heard about the starch works that was in Cedar Rapids. He had heard about the Quaker Oats. That was in Cedar Rapids.

Q. THERE WAS WORK.

A. So he and my brother-in-law came. One went to work at the starch works, one of them went to work at the Quaker Oats. And they wrote back and said that there was work. So they came. A number of ^{Buxton people} Buxton people came to Cedar Rapids. A number of ~~them~~ went too.

Q. AND THEN SOME OF THE PEOPLE FROM CEDAR RAPIDS CAME UP HERE TO WATERLOO.

A. Now quite a few of the Buxton people, now this Mr. Reasby you're going to talk to, I think came straight from Buxton.

Q. STRAIGHT FROM BUXTON. OKAY.

A. We would maybe find a ~~free~~ ^{FREE} way ^{thing} out.

Q. NOW BACK...TELL US ABOUT MEETING YOUR HUSBAND. THAT PART OF YOUR LIFE.

A. My goodness, I didn't know him in Buxton, I wasn't but three years old. He came at fourteen. And then I didn't meet that man...

Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU LEFT BUXTON?

A. 12.

Q. OKAY 12, SO IT WAS IN CEDAR RAPIDS THAT...

A I didn't meet that man until I was in Cedar Rapids, I was about 14 years old, his mother was ^{brilliant woman} exceedingly ~~protective.~~ (?)

Q. WHY DO YOU SAY THAT, MARJORIE?

A. She was. She was. She had not what you'd call an education, but she was a learned woman and she had done it herself. And she could sway people in ways that you couldn't imagine. She came during the depression, became President of the Iowa State Baptist state convention and the year she took it, when they got through paying their bills, they had 17 dollars. And when that woman got through with that ~~depression~~ ^{CONVENTION} ~~depression~~, through the ^{DEPRESSION} ~~convention~~, the year she gave it up, they had ^{# 35} (amount of Money). She could move people. I despised her. Because we were both determined, I have the highest respect for her. For what she was able to do with a small amount of education. I had the highest respect for her. But because she was such a power, she was ^{OF} ~~under~~ the impression that everybody should mind her. And I'm a born rebel, so you see where we came out. I feel so sorry for my husband cause he was caught in the middle.

Q. THAT CAN HAPPEN, CAN'T IT?

A. He was an only child.

Q. OH, WOW. YES.

A. And I was the same as an only child, because there were only two of us that lived, myself, I was the oldest, and my brother. My father's people raised my brother. My mother's people raised me. So I came up just about as an only child.

Q. NOW I THINK I FAILED TO ASK YOU ABOUT EDUCATION. DID YOU FINISH HIGH SCHOOL IN CEDAR RAPIDS?

A. High school. And I can't prove it. Do you know that is the meanest thing, because the high school that I finished from, burned down. Do you remember when Washington ^{burned} ~~was~~? Washington high school in Cedar Rapids ^{AND} ~~had everything and~~ every record that was there.

Q. I'VE HEARD OF IT.

A. Burned down. Dr. Ferguson, he was the doctor here. His wife, and I went to the same high school. She was coming out the year I went in. And our records were burned. She had a hard time getting in UNI when Dr. Ferguson died, when she decided to go back to school. But Washington High School.

Q. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL. UH...HOW ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND?

A. My husband is a college graduate. I still have his diploma. From Western University.

Q THAT'S RIGHT. WESTERN. AND WHAT DID HE DO AS...?

A. That is one of the pitiful things that came out of slavery. My husband retired as a janitor...when I met him, he read Latin ^{better} than I could read English. And he had the chance to be in on the the starting of Pine Wood University. The man who started it and my hisband were friends. And he wanted Mr. Brown to go. And he asked me, he said Marge, are you a graduate musician? I said I am not. He said ^{IF} ~~when~~ you ^{ARE JUST} start ^{at} the school you don't have to have a graduate, but ~~for~~ ^{IF} the time ~~being~~, you do have to have, and if you continue with your studies, you will be a graduate ^{MUSICIAN} of the school and every time, we planned to...well, we didn't plan to go ^{there} ~~to~~ TWICE one time we planned to go, and Brown's mother sort of interfered. Then the next time we ^{really} planned to go there was that horrible race riot in Waco, Texas.

Q. DON'T KNOW OF THAT ONE. WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

A. Ah...'22.

Q. '22.

A. They...the Chicago Defender...have you ever heard about that?

Q. OH, YEAH.

A. If you can find any back copies of that you know why we feared.

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Q. YOU FEARED GOING SOUTH.

A. There was the report that pregnant black women were strung up by their heels and their bellies split and the fetuses allowed to fall to the ground.

Q. YEAH.

A. And we feared. We just couldn't handle it. We couldn't face going to a place where things like that could happen. Even though we had come to Cedar Rapids and that's where I got my first taste of being a second class citizen.

Q. WHAT WAS THAT? WHAT HAPPENED?

A. Well, I was a little musician. I played a little, I sang a little. At my house you had to learn things. And I said all the long speeches, I had to learn to ^{READ} speak well. That little woman refused to speak to you if you used a sentence with 'ain't' because she said ain't is not a word, it's a sound. (laughs) So when I went to school in Cedar Rapids, there were ^{gathering up the} children that could do things, you know, that could play or could sing ^{for the little choruses and all.} I said I could play and I could sing and that's the first time in my life that I have ever been looked through rather than looked at.

Q. YEAH. THAT DESCRIBES IT VERY WELL.

A. Yes. Nobody told me I couldn't take part. I was just looked through. I didn't exist and I wasn't there.

Q. UH-huh.

A. And this little woman who had become a schoolteacher took me through that horrible, horrible time. ^{ONE HECK OF AN}

Q. UH-HUH. AND THAT MADE A REALLY ^{UNHAPPY} IMPRESSION ON YOU.

A. Yes. That is the first time I hadn't been Marjorie Lee. My goodness, I, that's the name I always heard. Marjorie can do it, Marjorie can play, Marjorie can sing, Marjorie can be in this one. Why, I didn't know I didn't exist. I was one of the little smart alecks.

Q. RIGHT.

A. And then all at once, with no warning, I no longer existed.

Q. WELL, MARJORIE DID YOU MOVE, DID YOU MARRY IN CEDAR RAPIDS AND THEN MOVE TO WATERLOO?

A. I married in Cedar Rapids...

Q. WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

A. I married in 1922.

Q. 1922. AND THEN WHEN DID YOU MOVE TO WATERLOO?

A. We moved to Waterloo that same year. That's when Mr. Brown's mother had come here. And as I tell you, Mr. Brown was an only

A.(cont.)...child and he still minded, (laughs)his mother. That was a strange thing, as I tell you, she was brilliant she was forceful, she was a matriarch, and when we married...
END OF SIDE ONE MARJORIE BROWN 11-A

SIDE TWO

A....black skinned ^{MAN} ~~the way I am~~, with the small, even features. And he would be so cordial to the ladies that they thought ^{HE WAS} ~~that was~~ ^{that was} ~~possibly a~~ ^{that was} way for him to,..all these girlfriends, ^{MIGHT HAVE BEEN A WAY} ~~I wasn't in the way~~. I wasn't anything but a kid. I was no competition to them, I was just a child. But that was a way for him to establish his identity as a man.

Q. HE HAD TO REALLY DO IT OUTSIDE THE FAMILY...

A. Yeah, Because he...

Q. THAT'S A GOOD INTERPRETATION.

A. See, I didn't realize it then, and I was terribly abused. I was, well you wouldn't believe it but I was about as big as that kid. (Hraba's assistant) ^{my husband} ~~he~~ used to put his arm around me and put his hand in his pocket. And I went upstairs and ~~he~~ let this happen while I was finishing growing up. Because I would take lemonade and cake and what not and go up there, and I always read. And my books and my food and I would be up there. So this happened.

Q. HOW LONG WERE YOU MARRIED?

A. I,..now that's quite a story. I was married to that man 25 years then I got a divorce from him living in the house with him.

Q. OH, REALLY.

A. It took me that long because I was the end of an era where you were supposed to stay married no matter what happened.

Q. RIGHT.

A. But as I tell you, I was right and after 25 years of that brilliant woman,..I ^{seriously} ~~didn't~~ know what was the matter, ^{with her} I thought it was plain hellishness. But it was arterialsclerosis, her mind went and my husband could not st,..he couldn't handle it, He just couldn't hack it to see that woman like that. I'd have to call him from work to come home and get her out from under the bed. And he began to drink everything in the world he couldn't chew. And finally I realized I had had enough of the whole family. I worked hard and got his ⁶ mother in the nursing home in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I got a divorce from the man when he was living in the house. I got rid of the whole thing including the migrane -16-

A. (cont.)...headaches. And then cause I finally...I don't get angry quickly, and when I do, I don't get over it easily. And I had gotten to the place where I was no longer angry, I was ^{just} through. There was't anything there. But that went on for lacking one month of fourteen years; he had reached retirement. I always kept some sort of house with my name on it. He was living in a room in somebody elses house. He was old. He had gotten to the place where he no longer slept in bed, he sat up all the time. ^{I MARRIED him AGAIN.} And I took care of him until he died. Five years ago.

Q. I LIKE THE STORY.

A. Well, don't try it. I'll tell you...

Q. I'd LIKE IT FOR OTHER PEOPLE.

A. Don't try it, because that woman that married him again, after fourteen years was altogether ^{different}. It was one friend taking care...see we had one child, he was that child's father. That baby died when it was five days old. So it was one friend taking care of another. ^{But} So if you're thinking about a love affair, we talk about a love affairs ^{that} grow and beautify as ^{PEOPLE} we ^{get} older,

That's _____ . Don't try it. And that was so hard for him to understand.

Q. DID YOU MAIN...YOU TALKED ABOUT MAINTAINING A HOME. DID YOU WORK IN THE...?

A. Oh, my, yes. My, Yes! Oh...

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO?

A. What is there to do? I have scrubbed floors, I have washed walls during the depression. I guess one of the things that's getting me just about...so upset about is the presidential election we're coming up to again. I don't like anybody, that's my problem. And I think about Mr. Reagan and the things I hear about him. And ^{SOUNDS LIKE HE'S} ~~somebody's~~ ^{going} to take me back to one of the most bitter periods of my life. The ~~period~~ ^{period} of the depression. I'm one of the people that sat in their house..or stood and watched the house full of furniture be taken to be reclaimed. If there had ^{with} ~~have~~ been a stairway, I'd have had ^{SAT ON THE FLOOR} ~~not stand~~. I have worked seven days a week doing housework, and that includes washing, ironing and ^{COOKING} ~~cleaning~~, and believe me we'd do ^{windows} ~~this~~ for five dollars a week. Because it was two years, almost two years that Mr. Brown didn't have any work. I don't mean that he didn't work a day or two. He had NO work.

Q. NO WORK TO BE HAD.

A. No. And it took a long time to recover. Because he finally -17-

A. (cont.)...and I'm sure somebody grabbed me, So Christmas was quite something. Thanksgiving...

Q. HOW WAS CHRISTMAS CELEBRATED?

A. Oh, there were the programs. The...

Q. AT THE CHURCH.

A....the church programs. There was always the gift giving.

Q. WHEN DID YOU DO THAT? CHRISTMAS DAY (NO) CHRISTMAS EVE?

A. Ah, some of the children, this will show you the difference in families...some of the people hauled a lot of the presents down to the church, so that their children's name could be called off and they'd get these presents. My grandmother was a very reserved and dignified little lady. You got your presents at home. Except for those ^{that} your sunday school teacher or ^{some} a person like that might have put out. So I felt terribly abused because my name wasn't called out for all these things. But they were at home. And then there was going out from house to house. Visiting during the holiday. And one of the things ^{that} I remember people saying, they'd knock on the door and say "christmas gift". And when you went in, there was all food. Oh, dear, I don't see how many of us managed not to weigh a thousand pounds. Because there were fruitcakes, there were...home-made ^{WINE} ones.

Q. OH, REALLY FRUITCAKES?

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT ELSE DO YOU REMEMBER? WHAT OTHER KINDS OF FOOD?

A. Oh, well, everybody baked their own bread. They ^{we} had a bakery, but at our ^{house} there was the bread baking twice a week. And just huge quantities of food. There was a goose, or a turkey. I don't remember a duck when I was a ~~dt~~ child. But I oh my daddy liked GREAT big things there was a big turkey or a big goose. He was big Bill Lee.

Q. AND HE HAD BIG THINGS.

A. Thats right. That colored his thinking. And ^{when} he married this little musician. I never in my life lived in a house without a piano until I got too poor to have one during the depression. It was in the house. I never lived in a house that didn't have carpet in the floor until I got too poor to have any. Big Bill Lee's house was carpeted!

Q. WAS...WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HOME?

A. Well, let's see, the one ^{that we} ~~be~~...

Q. DID YOU OWN THE HOME, FIRST OF ALL?

A. No.

Q. IT WAS A COMPANY HOME?

A. Yes. It was a company house. And there were two bedrooms upstairs. There was a kitchen and dining room and living room, ~~and a~~ a front porch, and a back porch downstairs. Plumbing was outdoors and it happened that our house was kind of on a hill. And you had to go down the hill to get to this outside toilet.

Q. DID YOU HAVE RUNNING WATER INSIDE?

A. No. There was a pump.

Q. PUMP OUTSIDE.

A. There was a pump. I pumped the water. There was a coal house out there. And our living room as I remember, there was a piano, there was my father's big chair, a library table, and a lamp on it. Because all of us read. We were a reading family. And there was my mother's smaller rocker. And there was a davenport...couch thing. But it was one of those that ~~was~~ ^{would} ~~open~~ up, because we had just the two bedrooms, and two children were in one bedroom and mother and father were in the other bedroom.

Q. THIS WAS YOUR PARENTS HOUSE?

A. This was my parents house. Then there was the dining room with a dining room set in it. An oak dining room set. Buffet and china closet with all that glass in there. ~~all~~ ^{all these} dishes...all that stuff had to be kept clean. Even though I wasn't but ten years old when my mother died, ^{see} I wasn't trusted with the washing of it, but I was entrusted with the handing it back and forth. And in that dining room, there was an icebox. A refrigerator. An oak refrigerator. The kind you put ice in. And we had that little pan under it that constantly ran over.

Q. YEAH.

A. If you didn't...that was my job to watch it and see if the pan kept empty. But if you're ten years old, who cares about a pan. So you took a spanking if the pan ran over. In the kitchen...oh, in the living room, there was this big buck (?) heating stove. With izing glass. That was the most beautiful thing.

Q. ~~IZING~~ ^{LASS} GLASS.

A. ~~IZING~~ ^{LASS} glass all in the door, and at nighttime when the lights were turned low, you layed on the floor and watched that. It was like watching a fireplace.

Q. BEAUTIFUL.

A. Yes. And in the kitchen there was a cookstove, because Big Bill Lee was who he was, it was a cookstove with an oven and a warming oven up on it and a water tank beside it that Big Bill Lee was -20-

A.(cont.)...supposed to have. He worked hard to become who he was. He dug coal to become an engineer. And he was fond of who he had become.

Q. HE WAS A MAN WHO APPEARS TO HAVE ENJOYED LIFE.

A. He did. He was a ^{great} very big man. He was...I wish I could have known both of them longer. Because I think I understand why I am a rebel. The determination that was in those people. That little dignified lady. I remember one time, children were wearing plush coats and crocheted scarves and ~~hats~~ ^{caps}. That had come in style for the year, or for the winter. And I asked my mother for one. Cause the other kids had them. Oh, she said..."You may have one for Christmas". So, since I was her ~~determined~~ ^{determined} child, I sat out on the gatepost and waited until I ~~saw~~ ^{SAW him} my father come, when he was coming home from work. And decided to set up a crying jag. When we got there, this little girl was sitting there..."Oh, all the other kids have plush coats and stocking caps, and I don't have one. Why Bill Lee wouldn't stand that. He took me right on to the store and bought it. In September when it was still hot. I came home in an hour. My mother got so mad. She sat down.

Q. YOU OUTFOXED YOUR MOTHER.

A. Uh-uh. She said what have you got on. "I've got a new coat and cap and scarf." She said come here and let me see how it fits. I strutted over to her. She adjusted it all around. She said that's nice. She reached in her pocket and took out her trunk key. She said I told you Christmas. ~~We will~~ ^{TAKE IT UPSTAIRS AND} put it in the trunk until christmas.

Q. AND YOU KNEW THAT THING WAS IN THAT TRUNK FOR...

A. I had to go to the Christmas program on Christmas eve with a little outgrown brown coat on. Because she told me I could have it for Christmas. And then Bill Lee with all his bigness turned right on around LEFT. So if I am a determined person you can see why.

Q. RIGHT. DID I ASK, DID YOU HAVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

A. There were five of us. I ^{am} was the oldest. And ~~three~~ little girls that followed me died in infancy.

Q. DIED IN INFANCY.

A. And then came a brother. The reason I haven't sent you to him was because he wasn't but five years old when we left Buxton.

Q. TRUE.

A. But he lived. And ~~you~~ of course you couldn't have made my mother believe that she hadn't performed a miracle, because not only had she had ~~it~~ ^{and IT LIVED AND IT WAS A BOY} - 21 -

Q. SURE. WERE THERE ANY AFTER HIM?

A. No.

Q. THAT WAS IT. WHERE'S YOUR BROTHER NOW?

A. He lives down on Webster street. *HERE*

Q. OH, HE'S IN WATERLOO, TOO?

A. Yes.

Q. OKAY.

A. And that's when I say that, what is this cryogenics (?), that they're trying to freeze people now? And then bring them back.

Q. UH-HUH.

A. That's a horrible thing. That man as hard as he worked to be an engineer, and then died at 43. The whole community went into mourning. That marvelous young man, young engineer, died so early. He lived to be a somebody in his age. Alright...his, my brother's children...I didn't have but that one and it died...my brother's child, the oldest one was an electronics engineer. Don't you know the most horrible thing that could have happened to my father was for him to have been brought back and not be able to read his grandson's books. He'd have become an utter nothing again. And he had worked not to be that.

Q. HOW DID HE WORK UP TO THE STATUS OF AN ENGINEER?

A. Ah, there was at one time, there were...and I see they're getting it back again...what is the training that comes by post?

Q. (JC) Correspondence?

A. Correspondence! Correspondence courses. And he worked through correspondence courses.

Q. THROUGH CHICAGO?

A. Some of his. I used to have some of his books and some were out of Chicago and it seems to me like there was ^{a school in} ~~some out of~~ Ohio. Uh-hu and that's how he became...he became a master mechanic. I understand I don't know cause I never looked it up. But I understand that my ^{FATHER} ~~fa~~ is a registered master mechanic in Des Moines. I don't know.

Q. BUT AS HE GOT MORE TRAINING, MORE EDUCATION, THE COMPANY MOVED HIM UP?

A. Yes.

Q. WERE THERE ANY OTHER ENGINEERS IN TOWN?

A. No.

Q. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE. ~~HE WAS THE~~ ~~HE WAS THE~~ ~~HEAD MAN~~.

A. He was the head man. ^{Bill} Buxton turned over the machine shop and all of that thing to Big Bill Lee.

Q. YOUR DAD WAS ALMOST...SECOND IN COMMAND, FIRST IN COMMAND OF ALL BUXTON?

A. Of the coal mines, of working in the coal mines. That was his job.

Q. OKAY. I CUT YOU SHORT, I THINK EARLIER, MARJORIE. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HOLIDAYS. YOU MENTIONED CHRISTMAS. THANKSGIVING WAS YOU MENTIONED...

A. Another big holiday. Easter was a big holiday.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE SUMMER MONTHS?

A. The summer months...were picnic months. There were a lot of church and school picnics. And there was an awful lot of family things. That went on when I was a little girl. Families were big families. And let's see, with that lady, when she got herself and her husband, those two, my grandparents together. Then there was my mother and her two children. Then there was the second daughter, Aunt Effie, that had eight children. Then there was Uncle Carl, the one son in the family, and he raised four children. And all those children would get together most any evening that there would be...there used to be big black skillets, iron skillets. And there was always butter and eggs, and that sort of thing. There would be ice cream, homemade ice cream. And the great big butter cakes made in the big black skillets.

Q. UH-HUH.

A. Cause they were easy to stick in. And the two or three other kids that were ^{around} found in your neighborhood. Bring 'em along So almost any evening you had a houseful of kids. A yard full of children.

Q. NOW YOUR DAD WORKED DURING THE SUMMERS?

A. HE WORKED all the time. He was a workaholic. ^{he was} One of the workaholics.

Q. WE UNDERSTAND, MARJORIE, THAT A LOT FO THE MINERS DO NOT WORK DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. DOES WHAT FIK WITH YOUR RECOLLECTION?

A. No, it ^{doesn't} wasn't. Maybe that was after the mines began to slow down

Q. SLOW DOWN.

A. Because they were still doing wery well when...

Q. WHEN YOU LEFT.

A. UH-huh.

Q. SO WHEN YOU WERE THERE, PEOPLE WORKED YEAR AROUND.

A. They worked.

Q. ALL OF THEM. ALL THE WAY UP AND DOWN THE STATUS LADDER.

A. You know when I heard that...I heard some of the nasty things that I've heard about being black...it was such a surprise to me. ²⁴ I heard that they didn't take baths, they were dirty.

A. (cont.),...My lord, those miners took a bath every day.

Q. SURE.

A. Every day! That was a part of the evening routine. To put that great huge kettle of water on the stove so it would be hot. The miners took a bath every day. They couldn't come in the house if they didn't with those black clothes. And the children ^{wk} went barefoot. I loved to go barefoot. I think that's why I managed to be this old and don't have any corns yet. But we liked to go barefoot. My land, there was a bucket of water under the pump. That carly use to come in. That bucket sat under the pump and as you pumped water, it would drip into the bucket. And in weather like this that water would be warm by evening. You had to wash your feet before you ^{to TAKE A BATH} came in the house. I didn't know we were supposed to be dirty. Because you had to wash your feet before you could come in the house. Take a bath, go upstairs and get in that bed ^{with} under the sheets.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER CELEBRATING EMANCIPATION DAY, IN AUGUST?

A. I didn't know so much about that until I left Buxton. And I found people in Cedar Rapids doing it. Now ^{Probably} maybe the Buxton people ^{if} do it.

Q. WE'VE HEARD SOME PEOPLE MENTION IT.

A. There's a possibility that they did. That's why I'm trying to tell you, a twelve year old girl has a splintered memory. Yes.

Q. OR HAS A PERSPECTIVE THAT THAT'S A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT THAN ADULTS.

A. And because as I tell you, my people were class conscious, it's tunnel vision.

Q. WHAT ABOUT FOOD IN THE HOUSE? WAS THERE ANY CARRYOVER FROM SOUTHERN COOKING? AH, IN THE FAMILY?

A. I would imagine so, because we ate corn bread...

Q. FRIED FOODS, CORN BREAD?

LIKE THAT

A. Yes, there was the fried chicken, the whole bit. But I wonder, is that a carry over, or is that American food?

Q. I MEANT A CARRY OVER FROM THE DAYS IN THE SOUTH. REGIONAL COOKING IN THE SOUTH,

A. Well, I don't know.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW.

A. Because there was the same things that I know about now. There were the sweet potatoes...there's are so many things. That I learned about here, from the deep south. That I didn't know anything about,

Q. BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE LIVING HERE...

A. Yeah, I didn't know anything about collard greens, I saw my first collard greens when I came here, I saw my first black eyed peas.

Q. UH-HUH.

A. I knew an awful lot about the navy beans, white beans and the butter beans. But black eyed peas and collard greens and okra,..never saw a pound of okra until I came here.

Q. UNTIL YOU CAME HERE.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. THAT'S INTERESTING. HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP, IN YOUR MEMORY ABOUT BUXTON, WAS IT A GOOD PLACE TO HAVE LIVED?

A. I wish I could have stayed. In Buxton. The Buxton that I knew, I wish it would have lasted forever. And continued. I can't imagine Buxton not being one of the most ongoing places in the world. If it had stayed alive. Because that was back in 1910. But it had grade school and high schools and bands and ball teams. That was then, so what would it have been now?

Q. WOULD YOU AS A GIRL GO DOWN TH THE Y?

A. That was boys territory.

Q. BOYS TERRITORY.

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT DID YOU....?

A. Now we went, there was the moving pictures.

Q. YOU COULD GO THERE?

A. Yes. I had the thrill of my life because my Aunt Eva played for the movies. And when she would take her breaks, all 11 years old, I got to play during the...well, I had an awful lot of fun. And then Buxton, that's why I say I've never lived in a place like Buxton because the important people both white and black came to Buxton. They had the speakers of the day. They had the singers...

Q. WELL, WHO WAS...THE SPEAKERS...

A. Of the day.

Q. WHO DO YOU REMEMBER COMING THERE TO SPEAK?

A. Names do get away from me now. But the musicians, there was the one blind Boonie that came there. And a beautiful woman I can remember, I don't remember her name now. That's when the sopranos used to be big girls. And she was a big girl. As I remember her, she was about the color of maple candy. That beautiful woman, she was one of the singers. And we had the,..now the George Woodson, that the president said, I don't know whether he was the governor or what over in Virgin Islands Louis. Used to eat ice cream in my grandmas

A. (cont.)...back yard. He was a lawyer, Dr. Eddie Carter, that one from Buxton. He dug coal and graduated from the medical school. Now whether he graduated from Iowa or where he graduated from, I don't know. But he graduated from ~~any~~ school, medical school, he was a doctor in Buxton for awhile. Then when Buxton went down, he went and was the department head ⁱⁿ at ~~one~~ of the hospitals in Detroit. Thats the kind of people that we had.

Q. UH-HUH. GOOD LEGACY. OKAY. TWO LAST QUESTIONS. DO YOU RECALL ANY FRICTION BETWEEN THE RACES IN BUXTON, AND IF SO WHAT WAS IT?

A. ~~Now~~ Not in Buxton. ~~No~~ I have heard that there was going to be a lynching in Ottumwa, Iowa.

q. UH-HUH.

A. I have heard about that. And I have heard that the black people in Buxton, Muchakinok, all around in there, gathered up ~~everything~~ in the world they could think of in the way of a weapon, even to the poles, axes and that sort of thing, and started on a march to Ottumwa.

Q. WHEN WAS THIS?

A. I don't, I can't tell you. Because I was an awful little ~~girl~~ ^{girl}.

Q. BUT IT WAS WHILE YOU WERE LIVING THERE?

A. Yes. I had heard about it. And the word that these people were coming reached Ottumwa before they did. And all signs of this lynching was over by the time they got there. That is what I ~~learn~~ ^{hear}.

Q. NOW, WE'VE HEARD THAT THE KU KLUX KLAN WAS ORGANIZED IN SOME OF TOWNS AROUND BUXTON. DO YOU RECALL...?

A. That I don't recall.

Q. WE'VE ALSO HEARD, MARJORIE, THAT THERE WERE SUNSET LAWS ABOUT BLACKS BEING IN THESE TOWNS AT THIS TIME.

A. Oh, my goodness, some set laws about blacks being in this town. Do you know that right here in this town. Because I came back here in 1951. That you couldn't eat at the Bishop's ^o resturant that used to be down on fifth street. And you couldn't try on clothes in ^{Black} a ~~black~~ store. That's since 1950. So I'm sure that there was in the surrounding towns...

Q. THERE WAS THEN.

A. There would have to be.

Q. BUT YOU DON'T RECALL.

A. No. No. Because the first ime I ever stayed ^{all} the night away from home was with a little Swede girl.

Q. THAT REMINDS ME. DID YOU PARENTS AND OR GRANDPARENTS EVER HAVE WHITES INTO THE HOUSE?

A. Well, AS I tell you, these Swensons were back and forth in our house.

Q. THEY WERE?

A. Yes.

Q. THEY WERE SWEDES. FROM WHERE? WEST OR EAST SWEDE TOWN?

A. Just up the street from us.

Q. JUST UP THE STREET.

A. Meah. She stayed all night ^with me and I stayed all night with her.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OTHER NATIONALITIES OF WHITES THERE?

A. No, the Swedes are really all...

Q. ~~THAT~~ YOU RECALL?

A. Yeah.

Q. I ASK IT FOR A GOOD REASON^S. BECAUSE WE HAVE SOME CONFUSION. SOME PEOPLE RECALL POLISH PEOPLE THERE, OTHERS RECALL SLOVAKS THERE. THEY BOTH COULD HAVE BEEN THERE.

A. Now that word, I remember.

Q. SLOVAK?

A. Slovak.

Q. YOU REMEMBER THE WORD. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY ITALIANS?

A. No.

Q. NO YOU DON'T. OKAY SWEDES AND SLOVAKS. YOU RECALL.

A. The word Slovak^{I RECALL}. The Swede people I recall.

Q. OKAY. WHAT ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF SICKNESS AND DISEASE IN THE HOME? HOW DID THAT GO ABOUT? WERE THERE ANY REMEDIES, AND FOLK MEDICINES?

A. Oh, please. Don't take me bakk to castor oil! And to asphidity. That stinking stuff.

Q. WHAT'S ASPHIDITY?

A. Oh, I don't know, It's, it was supposed to keep you from catching cold. And they put it in a little stinking sack and hung it around your neck. And I hung mine up in...I tell you I was a rebel...I hung mine up in the tree on the way to school and then picked it up on the way home. (laughs) And goose grease. Oh, my Lord have mercy!

I hate ~~goose/grease~~ to rub with ^{ANYTHING} ~~it~~. There was goose grease with turpentine. You caught a cold ^{you get} well in self-defense, because they

put that goose grease on. And they put red flannel on, and they covered you up in the bed. And I tell you ^{well} got well in self-defense ^{in there with all that} you would have died. You and long underwear. Of course it got

cold. It got cold But yes there were home medicines, a lot of home medicines. And my grandfather ~~was~~ was one of the

A. (cont.)...horrible accident cases in the coal mine, Coal fell on him. And, oh, ^{the top of his head,} you can't see them. You may be able to see just a little bit of scar. All the top of his head, the skin and what little flesh there is on the skull was torn loose. And hung down. and there was no hospital. That little lady took care of him. The doctor came. To put him back together. But then the doctor just came every day, She did the nursing.

Q. SURE.

A. We did the nursing, of keeping clean and ^{all} that sort of thing. And he got well.

Q. OKAY. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, JERI?

Q. (JC) Yeah, I have a question on the classes. Can you categorize the classes by occupation?

A. NO. Because everybody...it was a coal mining town/.

Q. But like...

A. Now the only people that didn't dig coal were those that worked in ⁱⁿ businesses. There were grocery stores there, there was the company store there, there was the bank, there was the meat market, there was the bakery. And that would be a small percentage.

Q. You were talking about the butcher, etc. Would they be in the upper classes?

A. My GRAND FATHER Yes, they would be, they were. They were. Now this man you're going to talk to, Mr. Reasby, his father was a businessman, he had the lunch wagon.

Q. BUT IT WAS PRIMARILY BY STYLE OF LIFE THAT PEOPLE WERE CLASSED?

A. It was the style of life. It was...and when I say ^{people were} it was class conscious, it was not going around with your nose stuck in the air kind of thing. It just happened. Me and my friends ^{and} my church and my choir. It was ^{at} a thing that happened. And if you were not in my church or my choir or in my lodge, you just weren't.

Q. WERE CHURCHES SEPARATED BY THESE CLASS DISTINCTIONS?

A. You either were a Christian or you weren't. ^{segregated}

Q. UH-hUH.

A. It was just about like that.

Q. BUT IN YOUR CHURCH, WERE THERE OTHER CLASSES THEY CONSIDERED LOWER CLASS?

A. Hardly.

Q. HARDLY.

A. No, no. At that time the church people were given the highest respect. A drunk or a man who swore or ^{that sort of thing} anything would apologize if he did it in your presence. Uh-huh,

Q. ANYTHING ELSE? NO? WELL, THAT'S ABOUT ALL WE HAVE FOR NOW.

A. Well, I'm glad to have been able to give you something. I tell you one thing that I noticed the difference now. Is... we talk about the generation gap and there is one. Because even though I was a rebel, I minded. Because just like that little woman made me take that coat upstairs. I knew who was in authority, And I respected authority, I didn't like it. But in my house it was one of those things. They didn't ask you to like it. And that was just about the way with the children. You minded. You didn't do a lot of questioning, Out loud, You did a lot of wondering, I can remember... I see children now, running ^{back & forth} around, maybe in church... and I can remember when I was a little girl, they had the bathroom urge between sunday school and church just like ^{they have now} everyone else. But ~~that~~ the parents gathered them together "Go ^{CAN} now. Because you're not going to run back and forth in church," And I ^{WHEN} remember ~~I~~ finally... I was almost born in a church to be honest with you... but I finally got big enough to sit with the children. And my mother never ^{did} said anything. It seemed to me that woman had eyes in the back of her head. Because I HAD ^{big girl to get where I was a little} smart-alecky, she would just clear her throat.

Q. I BET YOU CAN STILL HEAR IT.

A. I knew it from every other throat, And I think of one time she was giving me a genuine good, it wasn't a spanking, it was a whippin on a Sunday, because I had refused to pay attention to her clearing her throat. I had got to the point where I felt I was big enough... smatty. And I was getting a genuine whipping one Sunday afternoon, a the old lady, the old mother across the street from us came out and say Mrs. Lee, it's a shame for you to be whipping on that child like you are on Sunday, when there are six other days of the week. I wish you could have seen my mother, about that high. And she stood back in all her dignity and said "^{SISTER} Mrs. Watkins, this child can go to hell just as well on sunday as she can any other day." (laughs) And I wish the old lady hadn't stopped her, because she started all over again. And I think of some of the questions that we had to answer at out house. Maybe, because we were all readers. We all liked to read That grandfather had a habit of... my grandfather had table manners that you wouldn't believe. He used a knife and a fork and a spoon, just like the rest of us. But my grandfather could line up peas along that knife and never lose a one of them, And after we had dinner we always had grace at dinner. After we had dinner, I can remember him pushing back from the table, clearing his throat and saying

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A, (cont.), . . . "Well, what did you learn today?" And we never knew when we were going to hear that, My brother and I were there sometimes. I was there all the time. We never knew when we were going to hear it. But don;t tell him that you had spent a twENTy four hour period and not learned anything. If you do, _____ . SO that's the way I grew up.

Q. WHERE IS THE...?

END OF SIDE TWO, MARJORIE BROWN

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INTERVIEW CONTENTS

NARRATOR'S NAME Wynnie Brown

TAPE NO. _____

TIME	SUBJECTS
_____ to _____	1. Her great grandfather
_____ to _____	2. Slavery in Missouri
_____ to _____	3. Racial Composition of Buxton
_____ to _____	4. Musicians in the family
_____ to _____	5. Residences before moving to Buxton
_____ to _____	6. Hope Racial mixing
_____ to _____	7. Hope Armstrong
_____ to _____	8. Cultural life in Buxton
_____ to _____	9. Schooling in Buxton
_____ to _____	10. Downtown Buxton
_____ to _____	11. Cooped town
_____ to _____	12. Sharp End
_____ to _____	13. Status distinctions in Buxton
_____ to _____	14. Her husband and his family
_____ to _____	15. Mother-in-law
_____ to _____	16. Race relations in the South
_____ to _____	17. Prejudice in Cedar Rapids
_____ to _____	18. Depression
_____ to _____	19. Church in Buxton
_____ to _____	20. Holidays
_____ to _____	21. Food
_____ to _____	22. Company house

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tape 11A

INTERVIEW CONTENTS

indexed

NARRATOR'S NAME Majorie Brown

TAPE NO. _____

TIME	SUBJECTS
_____ to _____	1. <u>Lee Family in Buxton</u>
_____ to _____	2. <u>Father's death</u>
_____ to _____	3. <u>Father's education and work</u>
_____ to _____	4. <u>Miners worked in the summer</u>
_____ to _____	5. <u>Food</u>
_____ to _____	6. <u>Movies</u>
_____ to _____	7. <u>Speakers and entertainers in Buxton</u>
_____ to _____	8. <u>Lynching in Ottumwa Stopped</u>
_____ to _____	9. <u>Parents visited with Swedes</u>
_____ to _____	10. <u>Home remedies</u>
_____ to _____	11. <u>Status rather than class distinctions</u>
_____ to _____	12. <u>Authority in the home</u>
_____ to _____	13. _____
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