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JH

NARRATORS NAME: ALBERT FISHER, VERA FISHER
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FOR: BUXTON PROJECT, ISU

Dup 796

Q. (ES) NOW, LET'S GET BACK TO THAT...YOU SAY THERE'S A FAMILY IN PERSHING.

A. (VF) Yes.

A. (AF) In Pershing. Brother and sister. Agnes Erickson and Alex Erickson.

Q. OKAY, I'M GOING TO WRITE THAT DOWN ON MY CARD IN CASE THAT THING DOESN'T COME OUT. AGNES AND ALICE ERICKSON.

A. (VF) Alex.

Q. ALRIGHT.

A. (AF) I can tell you just how to get to it when you drive in there

Q. YEAH, THAT'S FINE. AGNES AND ALICE..

A. (VF) A-l-e-x.

Q. OH, ALEX. IN PERSHING, IOWA. OKAY. NOW HOW DO YOU DRIVE TO IT?

A. (AF) You go through Knoxville on Highway 5.

Q. OKAY.

A. The sign sayd Pershing 2 miles. Okay, it's bñack top. When that black top turns to your left, you turn to your left. And then there is a water tower there. And then the next two houses belong to the Erickson.

A. (VF) Well, her sister...

A. (AF) Her sister...there's two sisters...there's two women and a man. There'll all sisters and brothers.

Q. AND THEY'RE ALL IN PERSHING.

A. (AF) Yeah, Side by side. But the two that lives the farthest when you're coming in there, they're the ones that give you all the dope on this. They know everything about it. They can tell you more about Pershing than...

A. (VF) No, Buxton.

A. (AF) About old Buxton than anybody that you can find,

A. (VF) Cause she worked at the bank and the company store down there in Buxton and in the bank, Really there's the place you should go, cause they can tell you.

A. (AF) She can tell you just almost how many people lived there.

Q. (JH) HOW IS THEIR HEALTH? ARE THEY WELL?

A. Oh, yeah...

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A.(VF)...She's 90 and he's 84.

A.(AF) They don't get around too fast or anything like that, but...

A.(VF) They're no spring chickens...

A.(AF) They're very alert, I mean, you can bet what they tell you it is true because they're just as sharp as they can be...mentally, sharp. Yeah.

Q.(JH) CAN YOU BOTH STATE YOUR NAMES, SO WE CAN...WE DO THIS JUST A MATTER OF COURSE, FOR THIS. WHAT IS YOUR FULL NAME?

A. Albert W. Fisher.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR BIRTHDATE?

A. August the 28, 1903.

Q. YOU'RE VERA FISHER?

A. Yeah.

A.(AF) Her name was Olson, Vera Olson Fisher.

Q. VERA OLSON FISHER. WHAT IS YOUR BIRTHDATE?

A. July the 10. Just had a birthday. I was born in 1906.

Q. 1906. YOU BOTH WERE BORN IN BUXTON?

A.(AF) No.

A.(VF) I Was born in Buxton.

A.(AF) I was born in Oskaloosa.

Q. IN OSKALOOSA.

A.(AF) But Vera was born in Old Buxton.

Q. HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE IN OLD BUXTON?

A.(VF) Oh...

A.(AF) Well, she was born in 1906 and she left there in 1923.

A.(VF) And then we went to a little mining town.

A.(AF) Buxton 18.

A.(VF) Buxton 18.

Q. WHAT PART OF BUXTON DID YOU LIVE IN?

A.(VF) East Swede Town.

Q. OF COURSE. (laughing)

Q.(ES) EAST SWEDE TOWN AND WEST SWEDE TOWN AND YOU'RE IN EAST SWEDE TOWN. OKAY.

A.(VF) And we was in Mahaska County and Monroe county was across the street.

Q.(ES) NOW WERE GETTING SOMEWHERE.

A.(AF) Right on the line.

Q. EAST SWEDE TOWN AND WEST SWEDE TOWN WERE IN MAHASKA COUNTY. BUT BUXTON IS IN MONROE COUNTY ON THE OTHER SIDE,

A.(VF) West Swede Town wouldn't be in Mahaska county, I don't think

Q. I'LL TELL YOU WHY I'M ALL OF A SUDDEN SO COTTON-PICKING INTERESTED. WE'VE BEEN READING THE CENSUS DATA. AND WE AREN'T FINDING -

Q.(ES)...VERY MANY BLACKS IN BUXTON, THEY... 798

A.(VF) I had a book. I don't know where I got it at, but they was published different things about Old Buxton. And I don't think that we listened to T.V., that lady that talked on television. Well I don't think there was that many Negroes there, course I, it was.. I was just a child. You know, when we lived, when I moved away from there in '23, but I know there was Negroes, alot of Negroes...

Q. LET ME TELL YOU WHO THAT LADY WAS, THAT'S MY WIFE. AND WHAT WE'RE GOING ON IS WHAT WE CAN FIND OUT FROM _____ THEBLACKS ARE TELLING US, AND WHAT THE WHITES ARE TELLING US DIDN'T QUITE MATCH IT. THE BLACKS MAY BE A LITTLE BIT BREAMY ABOUT IT.

A.(VF) This colored lady on television that we listened to...

Q. OKAY

A...from, you know, when we was over at...She talked like there were a lot more Negroes in Old Buxton than...

A.(AF) Than ever was.

A.(VF)...than I ever...

Q.(ES)THAT WAS THE LADY FROM WAERTOWN, WATERLOO.

A.(AF) Yeah. Waterloo.

Q. YES, MARJORIE BROWN.

Q.(JH) WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE NUMBER OF BLACKS IN OLD BUXTON?

A.(VF) Well, I know there was a lot of colored kids that went to school. We, you know, there were colored and white. And, and... there in Old Buxton.

Q. UH-HUH.

A. And we had neighbors across the street, ^{from us} they were colored, but they were nice people.

Q. UH-HUH. NOW SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT UPWARDS OF ALL BUT A THOUSAND OR TWO THOUSAND OF THE RESIDENTS THERE IN OLD BUXTON WERE BLACK. DOES THAT KIND OF JIBE WITH YOUR EXPERIENCES?

A. I don't think it does, there was a lot of Negroes, but...

A.(AF) I don't think they was that much of a proportion.

Q.(JH) WELL, WHAT WOULD YOU GUESS? WHAT SORT OF PERCENTAGE WERE BLACK IN THE POPULATION?

A.(AF) I don't think it was over 50%.

A.(VF) I doubt if it was that.

A. I doubt if it was 50% of them were colored.

A.(VF) There was a lot, there was colored people there, cause we were quite a few colored children that went...there was one school and, of course, at one time that my brother and I had to go to Mahaska county to school, they wouldn't let us go across, and -3-

A.(VF)(cont.)...finally they, cause we only lived about a block from the schoolhouse, it wasn't in blocks like here in town, but ...and finally they changed it and let the kids go across, because.

A.(AF) That time her and her little brother had to walk to the little town of Eveland. Which was another little coal mining town. And you probably don't even know where that is at.

Q.(ES) NEVER EVEN HEARD OF IT. HEARD OF WHITE CITY...

A.(VF) Well, Eveland was over on Mahaska county, on Mahaska side. That's where we had to walk to school.

A.(AF) That's where a lot of people were getting confused. There was Negroes in all those little coal camps, and then they accumulated them all to say they all lived in Buxton. They didn't all live in Buxton, there was Miami, White City, and Cricker...

A.(VF) Cricket. I thought that was a....

A.(AF) They was all, you know...

Q.(ES) BUT THEY ALL CLAIMED BUXTON AS HOME.

A. That's right.

Q. OKAY. SO THAT MIGHT TELL US WHY WE'RE NOT FINDING THEM IN THE ...WE'VE JUST BEEN LOOKING AT BLUFF CREEK TOWNSHIP. WHICH IS WHERE BUXTON SUPPOSEDLY WAS. NOW YOU MENTIONED MINE 18. THAT'S 45 MILES FROM BUXTON, ISN'T IT?

A.(AF) No, not quite that, It wouldn't be that far. It would be, let's see, about 15, 25. Closer to 25.

A.(VF) Well, that's where my mother and I moved when Old Buxton... well, I worked in the company store down there, and when the company store, you know, no more people...people were moving out, why, then this one fella came and asked me if I'd work in the company store at 18. So that's the reason my mother and I moved to 18. My mother was a widow lady.

A.(AF) And they had a miner's train that went from old Buxton over to Buxton 18 and 19 and Con⁵opol.

Q.(ES) AND HITEMAN, AND THE WHOLE...

A. No. It missed Hiteman, and it missed Rex 5 and that's where I worked in the coal mines at Rex 5, which was all on the same mine, but it was a couple miles off. Switched up there where the mine's at. But they called it the million dollar pumpkin line, or the yellow jacket. It was a yellow train, and they called it the million dollar pumpkin line, or the yellow jacket. And it carried the men up to the work in the morning, and brought 'em back at night.

Q. SO THEY WORKED JUST ONE SHIFT, THEN?

A. (AF) Yeah.

Q. (ES) AND THEY COULD LIVE ANYWHERE ALONG THAT LINE AND GET A RIDE TO 18?

A. Well, there was nobody living along that line. Either they picked 'em up at Old Buxton and took 'em right to Comsul. Buxton 18 and 19.

Q. IF ONE OF THESE MEN LIVED ON ONE OF THE SURROUNDING TOWNS, HE'D FIND HIS OWN WAY IN TO...

A. Right.

Q....TO CATCH THE TRAIN, GO TO WORK AND THEN THEY'D BRING HIM BACK AND HE MIGHT WALK A MILE OR TWO OR THREE.

A. Yeah.

Q. OKAY. BECAUSE THIS HELPS US UNDER...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, IF THEY SET UP MINE 18, THEY WOULD HAVE A FEW COMPANY HOUSES AROUND MINE 18.

A. Yes.

Q. SO SOME WOULD BE WORKING, BUT SOME WOULD BE COMMUTING.

A. A lot of them commuted there for a while, but then they done away with that, cause that's when they started to pull the iron out because it was costin' them too much to get the coal out. They could get it out in Wyoming and them places there cheaper than they could mine it here, so they quit. Rex 5, out where I worked at, there's a lot of coal in the ground there, yet. But it was too expensive...they said it was too expensive to get and they abandondd it.

Q. (JH) NOW YOU LEFT BUXTON IN 1923. WHY?

A. (VF) Well, because they...

A. (AF) That's when the town started to fall apart.

Q. IN '23.

A. (AF) The mines were all work'd out, they were all done.

A. (VF) And the company store where I worked at, why, course they moved to...they had a company store at 18.

Q. IT WAS CLOSING, THE COMPANY STORE WAS CLOSING IN 1923?

A. (VF) Yes.

Q. OKAY.

A. And then I worked in the company store at 18 and then they had one in Heydock. Or number 20 was Heydock. They had a company stor there.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BLACK MINERS WHEN BUXTON WAS STARTING TO CLOSE DOWN?

A. (AF) A lot of them went to Des Moines,

Q. (JH) DES MOINES.

A. And that's why, the reason why, if you'll notice now, they have a Buxton reunion that's in Des Moines.

A. (VF) It's mostly Negroes.

A. So most of the blacks went to Des Moines.

Q. NOW WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT THERE IS A SMALL TOWN NORTH AND WEST OF COLFAX THAT WAS ANOTHER BLACK COAL MINING TOWN. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE TOWN? IT NO LONGER EXISTS.

A. (AF) Which direction?

Q. NORTH AND WEST. MR. COX WAS JUST TELLING US ABOUT THIS TOWN.

A. (VF) Oh, he might know more about it, cause he's...

A. (AF) No, I...

Q. YOU DON'T RECALL.

A. Between Colfax and Prairie City there were mines, which that would be south and east. Of Colfax. Mostly south. There were coal mines in there, but I don't think it was predominantly black. I think it was mostly white there.

Q. OKAY.

A. But chances are there were white and black people there, because they followed the mines.

Q. (ES) WHAT WAS THE MIX OF MINERS IN REX 5? WERE THEY HALF BLACK AND HALF WHITE OR WHAT?

A. I'd say not quite as many black.

Q. BUT THEY...AND THEY MAY HAVE LIVED IN BUXTON?

A. At one time.

Q. AND THEN DRIVEN. BUT THEY COULD HAVE LIVED THERE AT ONE TIME, BUT WHEN REX 5 WAS AROUND MOST OF THEM LIVED AROUND REX 5.

A. Right. And it was a coal camp and they had to move, you know, the company houses.

Q. AND YOU...

A. The company stores.

Q. ...MAY HAVE _____ REX 5.

A. That's right

Q. BUXTON...THE GOOFY PART IS BUXTON WAS NEVER INCORPORATED.

A. No.

Q. SO YOU CAN GET MUCHY AND YOU CAN GET ALBIA, BUSSEY, AND SOME OF THESE OTHER TOWNS. BUT BUXTON WAS, IT LOOKED TO ME LIKE JUST A COMPANY TOWN WITH A COMPANY STORE, THE COMPANY, I DON'T KNOW IF THE COMPANY PUT UP THAT BIG Y, OR WHO PUT IT UP, CAUSE THAT

Q. (ES) (CONT.)...HUGE BUILDING, IT WAS REALLY A COMPANY COLLECTIVE AND WHEN THE COMPANY WENT...

A. It went with it.

Q....SO DID EVERYTHING ELSE. TOOK EVERYTHING WITH IT.

A.(VF) They had a big hotel there, too.

A.(AF) Doctors and dentists. Druggists.

Q.(JH) NOW, WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE STREET THAT THE COMPANY STORE SAT ON?

A.(VF) I don't know what the street was on, I don't know what they called that street.

A.(AF) I don't know either.

A. I know that...

A.(AF) Down at the bottom of the hill, just below we lived...

A. Just below where we lived, we went up that little hill there we called that 'A' street. That's where the company houses started. My mother...we owned our own property. And most of the people up in Swede town owned their own property. They...we didn't live in a company house.

Q.(JH) DI MOST OF THE BLACKS LIVE IN COMPANY HOUSES?

A.(VF) Yes.

A.(AF) Yes.

A.(VF)Most of the blacks lived in company houses. Well, there were white people who lived in the company houses, also.

Q.(ES) WELL, THE NEIGHBOR THAT WAS BLACK, DID THEY OWN THEIR OWN HOUSE?

A.(VF) That was the one company house across the street from us.

Q. ONE COMPANY HOUSE THAT HAD A BLACK IN IT. OTHERWISE...

A. Otherwise we were up there in Swede town and they were all white people.

Q.(JH) SWEDE TOWN WAS ALMOST ALL WHITE.

A.(VF) Yes.

A.(AF) It was all white.

A.(VF) It was all white. We had...

Q. WAS IT ALL SWEDISH?

A.(VF) Most of 'em. Yes.

A.(AF) Norwegian, Swedish.

A.(VF) And they had a...Larson's had a store there. You know, they could buy all kinds of groceries, or dry goods, whatever. He handled a little bit of everything.

Q.(ES) IN SWEDE TOWN.

A.(VF) In East Swede Town, where we lived at.

A.(VF) (CONT.)...and they had a, we had a...there was a school-house, and there's where we went to school...

A.(AF) And the church, they had a little church.

A.(VF) They had a Swedish Lutheran church and I think in West Swede town they had a Swedish church there in West Swede town. I wouldn't say for sure, but I...

A.(AF)And the servises were all Swedish.

A.(VF) Yeah, we...when we were all kids at home, why we'd go to English school in the wintertime, and as soon as that school was out we had to go to swedish school.

Q.(JH) IN THE SUMMER?

A.(VF) In the summer. Us kids went to school, studied Swedish, studied the Cachetism and bible history, and things about the bible,

Q.(ES) CAN YOU SPEAK IT NOW?

A. Not too good, I haven't spoken it very much. My mother lived with us for 14½ years after Albert and I was married and we used to talk Swedish and my son said well, we was talking about him, so we just quit talking Swedish.

A.(AF) Well, we should have kept talking, and we could have picked it up...

A.(VF) Well, I could be around Swedish people and I ~~could~~ understand what they say, but I'd have more English mixed in in than Swedish.

Q.(ES) SO WERE THERE...WE TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT SHURCHES... APPARENTLY THERE WERE FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS, TOO. THE ELKS AND THE MASONS AND SO ON. WERE THERE BLACK ELK CLUBS AND WHITE ELK CLUBS?

A.(VF) You got me...

A.(AF) That I wouldn't be able to tell you.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE DANCES AT THE YMCA? THEY APPARENTLY HAD DANCES AND...WHAT JOE AND I ARE TRYING SORT OF FIGURE OUT IS THAT WE HEARD...WE TALKED TO ONE PERSON AND WE GET THIS INTEGRATED STORY. THEY WERE SO NICE AND EVERYBODY LOVES EACH OTHER, AND THEY ALL LIVED IN EACH OTHER'S BACK POCKET. AND THEN WE GET TO THE NEXT PLACE AND IT TURNED OUT THAT WE WERE HERE AND THEY WERE THERE AND YES WE HAD DANCES, BUT WE HAD OUR WHITE DANCES, OUR WHITE FORMALS, AND THEN THE NEXT NIGHT THEY HAD A BLACK FORMAL. THERE REALLY WASN'T THAT MUCH MIX, BUT THERE WASN'T ANY PROBLEM.

A.(AF) Well, that's the way it was around Rex5. Now what youre talking there, there were colored and white there. They didn't mix. No way.

Q.(ES) THEY DIDN'T VISIT IN EVERYBODY ELSE'S HOME?

A.(AF) They spoke to one another and they was friendly and all that, but as far as really neighboring too close, why they kept to their end of town. It was the same way at Rex 5. The colored folks all lived at one end of town, the whites lived on the other end of town.

Q.(JH) VERA, I WANT TO ASK YOU A QUESTION ON THE SAME TOPIC. YOU SAY YOUR MOTHER WAS A WIDOW. WAS SHE WIDOWED YOUNG IN LIFE?

A.(VF) My father died when he was 56 years old.

Q. BUT AT WHAT...BY 1923 SHE WAS A WIDOW.

A. Yeah, she was a widow in 1918.

Q. 1918. IS THAT...DO YOU EVER REMEMBER YOUR PARENTS HAVING ANY BLACK FRIENDS?

A. No, they, we never...

Q. HOW ABOUT YOURSELF? DID YOU HAVE ANY BLACK FRIENDS?

A. No, we wasn't allowed to...we went to school and we played with 'em in school at that, but we never..when us kids went to play, why we always went up to Swede town to play, there wasn't Negroes there at all.

Q. I WANT TO ASK YOU A FOLLOWING QUESTION ON THAT. WAS THAT THE CASE WITH MOST OF THE SWEDISH FAMILIES THERE, THAT THERE WAS A DISTANCE BETWEEN THE BLACK FAMILIES AND THE SWEDISH FAMILIES?
PAUSE IN TAPE.

A.(VF)...we never, I guess...if they come up to the...if they went to the Larson's store, usually at the store there, there was, they'd go around and take up orders and deliver 'em. I, it didn't seem like there was too many Negroes up in that part. But they had a company store and Dave Peterson's had a store down in Coopertown, and I don't know, maybe they had a...I don't know what all they had down in Coopertown.

A.(AF) I don't think they ever had a store that was owned and operated by the blacks.

A.(VF) No...

A.(AF) They'd go to the company store or...

A.(VF) Well, the company store, why every...most of 'em charged. And I don't think they got any pay when payday come.

Q.(ES) SO WHEN PAYDAY CAME THEY WORKED...

A.(VF) They'd bought all that up in groceries.

A.(AF)...and then they'd bought all of what they had coming in.

A.(VF) Well, I know I worked at the company store and a lot of 'em would come and charge from one two weeks to the other.

Q.(JH) DO YOU REMEMBER BLACKS SPENDING MONEY ON LUXURY ITEMS AT THE COMPANY STORE?

A.(VF) Well, I worked at the grocery department, they didn't...

Q. IN THE GROCERIES, OKAY.

A. And they had the dry goods department and the ready to wear, and things like that.

Q.(ES) YOU MENTIONED THAT COMPANY STORE. WERE THERE ANY BLACKS THAT WERE CLERKING AT THE COMPANY STORE?

A. Yes.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHETHER IT WAS HALF AND HALF, OR...

A. I don't know, I know that, there was one girl that was, took care of the books, she was...wasn't as black as some of the blacks were, she was very nice. Her name, I think her name was Carter, but I couldn't tell you what her first name is. That was so many years ago you forget.

Q.(ES) IN TERMS OF THE, YOU MENTIONED THEY HAD STORES, AND THERE WAS A DOCTOR. WAS THERE A BLACK DOCTOR AND A WHITE DOCTOR?

A.Yes. There was doctor Chester that was down there by the company store, and Dr. Carter, he was colored because my mother had, I had to run down there to get him to come, because my mother had a broken blood vessel in her leg and he had to come 'cause the white doctor was busy.

Q. BUT MOST OF THE TIME THE WHITES WENT TO WHITE...NOW BOTH DR. CARTER AND DR. CHESTER WERE COMPANY DOCTORS?

A. I don't know whether Chester...now they lived down by the company store, I don't know if they were company doctors or what. And then we had a white...we had a doctor in East Swede Town. Dr. Mater was there and maybe you've heard of Dr. Mater, he was the doctor there in Old Buxton for a while.

Q. NOW DID HE...WHAT I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IS HOW MUCH THE COMPANY RAN THE TOWN, AND WE UNDERSTAND THE COMPANY DOCTOR. WOULD ANYONE OF THESE THREE DOCTORS MAY HAVE BEEN THERE ON THEIR OWN? THEY WERE JUST PHYSICIANS MAKING THEIR OWN...

A.(AF) I think the white doctors were on their own, I don't think they was...

A.(VF) Well, I believe the white doctor...I don't know about Chester he was down there in Coopertown.

A.(AF) Yeah, he could have been. I doubt if he was controlled by the company.

Q. WE HEAR STORES LIKE THE HOSPITAL IN ALBIA HAD SOME OF THE BEST PHYSICIANS IN THE COUNTRY. MR. COX TOLD US THAT PEOPLE CAME 410-

Q.(ES) (CONT.)...FROM OTHER STATES FOR BACK INJURIES BECAUSE OF THE MINING AND...IT WAS A REALLY GOOD COMPANY HOSPITAL.

A.(AF) Well, you know, when you started working in the mines, you joined this hospital group. It cost you a dollar a month. And you could get your operations and everything...it covered everything. And this doctor was...course when you worked in the coal mines, there was a lot of broken backs, and things. And he was the best back specialist in the country. And the story was out that one guy...he didn't want to have him to do it, so he went out east to Philadelphia someplace for a back specialist. Well, when he went to the operating room that morning, he looked up and there was...was this guy from Albia was in the operating room. But it cost him all that money to send him out there and back, he could have had it done right here for nothing, practically.

A.(VF) Well, Albert knows more about that 'cause he's a coal miner

A.(AF) I was working for'em. It cost us a dollar a month, that's what it cost us. Broken backs, you know, if you're working in a coal mine, I don't know whether you're familiar with coal mining, but you're stooped over, you're down on your hands and knees, and if something fell on you, usually you got a broken back. He had a lot of experience with broken backs and broken legs and things like that.

Q.(JH) NOW, WAS YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER IMMIGRANTS?

A.(VF) My mother came from Sweden, my father from Norway.

Q. OKAY. WAS BOTH NORWEGIAN AND SWEDISH SPOKEN IN THE HOME, OR JUST ONE OF THOSE LANGUAGES?

A. Well, I think we talked...I never did know Norwegian, we talked my dad understood Swedish, we talked Swedish more.

Q. SWEDISH. UH-HUH. NOW WHAT ABOUT SORT OF THE DAILY ROUTINE IN THE HOME. DID YOUR MOTHER PREPARE MORE SCANDINAVIAN, PARTICULARLY SWEDISH DISHES THAN AMERICAN DISHES, OR...HOW WAS...?

A.(VF) We just had plain food. I don't know whether it was Swedish or what.

Q. TELL US...WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MORE COMMON DISHES THAT YOU HAD WHEN YOU WERE A GIRL THERE.

A. Oh, I don't know. (laughs)

Q. DO YOU RECALL?

A. No, we just had meat and potatoes and a vegetable. My mother, she had a lot of boarders. She cooked, she had about 14...

A.(AF) Baked all her own bread.

A.(VF) She had 13 boarders that she fixed for...

A.(AF) All her cakes and all her pies. Stuff like that.

Q.(JH) NOW THE BOARDERS WERE THERE AT THE HOUSE?

A.(VF) Well, they rented a company store down...a company house down over the hill and there's where they slept at.

Q. BUT THEY WOULD TAKE THEIR MEALS AT YOUR HOUSE?

A. They'd have their meals at our house and my mother packed lunch pails.

Q. WELL, TELL US ABOUT THAT.

A.(ES) WAS SHE WASHING THEIR PIT PANTS FOR THEM, TOO?

A. She did the bedsheets and that, but I don't think they washed their clothes very often. The miners. I don't know. Albert could tell you that. My mother didn't wash miner's clothes. She washed sheets and pillowcases and the like.

Q.(JH) DID SHE...SHE SERVED THEM BREAKFAST...?

A. Breakfast, then fixed their lunch pail and served supper. And then when they wasn't working on Sunday, they'd eat three meals a day at our house.

Q. GIVE ME A...WHAT WOULD BE A TYPICAL BREAKFAST FOR MINERS?

A. It was usually bacon and eggs and oatmeal and...

A.(AF)...gravy and...

A....gravy.

Q. BISCUITS?

A.(AF) Yeah.

A...Well, maybe...seemed like she used to toast bread in the oven, I don't know.

Q. TOASTED BREAD IN THE OVEN. WHAT ABOUT LUNCH PAILS? WHAT WOULD SHE FIX FOR THE LUNCH PAILS?

A. Well, it would be lunch meat and bread and butter, she always had pie and cake and that. She did all her baking. We had to work when was kids at home. We didn't get to play very much.

Q.(ES) I'LL BET SHE HAD HER OWN GARDEN AND HER OWN FRUIT TREES AND EVERYTHING ELSE...

A. No, I...we didn't have all that. She used to send to Sears-Roebuck for big boxes of cookies and crackers and things like that you'd buy in big boxes. And her dried fruit that she'd make her pies out of.

Q.(JH) WHAT ABOUT THE EVENING MEAL? WHAT WOULD SHE TYPICALLY FIX?

A. Oh, sometimes she'd serve vegetable soup at first. She was... and then they'd have meat and potatoes and a vegetable.

Q. MEAT...WHAT KINDS OF MEAT? DID YOU HAVE BEEF AND PORK, OR...?

A.(VF) Well, it would be either one of those, one or the other, or chicken.

Q.(JH) CHICKEN.

A. We had chickens of our own at home.

Q. HOW MANY BOARDERS DID YOUR MOM SERVE AGAIN?

A. She had 13.

Q. THIRTEEN. WHAT...SINGLE MEN?

A.Yeah.

Q. UNMARRIED MEN?

A. Yeah, they were single.

Q. WERE THEY ALL SWEDISH?

A. Most of 'em, uh-huh.

Q. MOST OF 'EM. WHO WAS THE MAN THAT WE FIRST INTERVIEWED?

Q.(ES) GUSTAV HOLM.

A. Who?

Q.(ES) GUSTAV HOLM. H-O-L-M. Gus Holm, they called him.

Q.(JH) DO YOU REMEMBER HIM? NO? WERE THERE A LOT OF UNMARRIED SWEDISH MEN IN THE MINES?

A. There were Swedish men that was board~~ing~~ at my house that I know.

Q. WAS IT COMMON FOR A WOMAN TO TAKE IN BOARDERS?

A. Well, my mother had to. My father wa~~s~~n't very well, she had to make a living for us kids some way.

Q. SO IT WAS OUT OF NECESSITY, HUH?

A. Sure.

Q.(ES) THIS IS SORT OF THE TYPICAL PACKAGE, THOUGH, _____ THAT'S WHY I ASKED ABOUT THE PIT PANTS, IN SEYMOUR AND NEWTON AND CENTERVILLE WITH THE ITALIANS THERE WERE... _____ THEY OFTEN BOARDED IN THE HOUSE, BUT SHE GAVE THEM THREE MEALS A DAY, AND THEY SLEPT IN SHIFTS, IF YOU CAN IMAGINE, IN BEDROOMS. ~~ONE~~ GUY'S IN BED, THE NEXT GUY'S IN THE MINES AND THEY KEPT CHANGE~~ING~~ OFF, BUT SHE DID PIT PANTS AND WASHED THEIR CLOTHES AND SHE TALKED ABOUT THE LYE AND THE BOILING WATER AND THE BUCKETS, BET SHE'D ONLY HAVE MAYBE THREE, BUT THE TYPICAL STORY ^{WAS FOR AN} ~~WERE~~ ITALIANS TO SEND FOR ~~A~~ ^{or father} BROTHER TO COME OVER HERE AND WORK FOR AWHILE AND GET MARRIE~~D~~ OR MAYBE ALREADY WAS MARRIED AND HE'D SEND FOR HIS WIFE, AND I'M WONDERING IF ANY OF THESE...IF IT WAS TYPICAL OF THE SWEDES...IF SOMEBODY ~~B~~STARTED THE PACKAGE AND AS SOON AS ~~THEY~~ GOT OVER THEY SENT FOR BROTHERS...HOW DID THE~~SE~~ YOUNG MEN GET OVER HERE?

A.(AF) I think you'r'e right on there, because I think there was a lot of that done...I don't know.

A.(VF) They do it all now, don't they ? (laughs) And you get some of the Vietnamese, they bring their relatives over.

Q.(ES) YEAH, I THINK WE'RE SEEING SOME OF THE SAME...

A.(AF) Yeah, I think you're right because a lot of the people that worked in the mines ,there was a wife still over in the old country And then some of them got enough money to have them come over here and then they'd come over here. And then they'd move out and maybe another single guy'd move in. If you had a place where you could board, buddy, you'd better take care of it, because they weren't easy to come by.

Q.(JH) VERA, YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU DIDN'T GET MUCH TIME TO PLAY, I'D BE IN...VERY INTERESTED IF YOU'D DESCRIBE A TYPICAL WEEKDAY AS A GIRL. CAN YOU RECALL MAYBE BETWEEN TEN AND THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN YEARS OLD...AH, HOW FAR DID YOU GO IN SCHOOL?

A.(VF) I went to seventh grade and then I had to go to work.

Q. OKAY, AND THEN YOU WENT TO WORK RIGHT TO THE COMPANY STORE,

A. I went and worked at Larson's store for awhile and then I went to the company store,

Q. OKAY, SO YOU WERE EITHER...DURING THE DAY YOU WERE EITHER IN SCHOOL OR YOU WORKED, WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE EVENINGS.?

A.(VF) OH,...

A.(AF) I've heard her say a lot of times she washed about thirteen dinner pails.

Q. YOU HELPED YOUR MOM?

A.(VF) Yes. My brother and I...

A.(AF) It would be the kids job to do the dishes.

A....my brother and I we had to take turns, and we did the dinner pails while the boarders ate and we ate afterwards. And I've stood on a box many a time and had to wash dinner pails. Cause they had buckets that the bottom part was for the water and the other was for the food, and we'd wash those...we had to work, we didn't get to play much.

Q.(JH) WHAT ABOUT ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AND SUNDAYS?

A.(VF) Why on Sundays, we'd go, get to go...when we'd get home from church, I'd go up to my cousins...I'd mostly just walk around. We didn't do too much. There wasn't much to do.

Q.(ES) DO YOU REMEMBER GOING TO SHOWS IN THE Y?

A. We went to shows when we got a little older because mother wouldn't let us go unless we went with some of the older ones. But we didn't have electricity there and everything was pitch dark. They didn't have street lights like they do here.

Q.(ES) WERE YOU AFRIAD AT ALL IN BUXTON? WERE THERE ANY PARTS OF BUXTON THAT YOU JUST STAYED OUT OF BECAUSE THEY WERE TOUGH PARTS OF TOWN?

A.(VF) Well, mother never allowed us to go unless we were with someone older, you know, to go to the show, and then we only got to go there once a week.

Q. I THINK WE GOT THE PICTURE THAT SHARP'S END WAS KIND OF A QUESTIONABLE PART OF TOWN, OR COOPERTOWN OR SOMETHING.

A. Well, Coopertown, I think...

Q. HAD KIND OF A BAD REPUTATION. BEER HALLS AND MAYBE PROSTITUTES AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE...

A.(AF) Anything you wanted, you name it.

A.(VF) That was mostly colored people down there.

A.(AF) That was your colored section...Coopertown.

Q.(JH) WHAT WAS ALL...YOU SAY ANYTHING YOU WANTED WAS THERE, WHAT WAS ALL THERE? DO YOU RECALL EVER HEARING ANY STORIES...?

A.(AF) Well, the stories you get out...if you wanted to gamble, you could gamble, if you wanted something to drink, you could get it. If you wanted a woman, it was available.

Q. OKAY.

A. And it was nothing to hear of someone getting knifed during the night or shot or something like that. That was an every payday occurrence, when people got money and they have any cash to spend. It was nothing to have a big...but they were done, usually in their own part of town. If you went over there looking for something, you found it, whether...maybe not what you wanted. You could find trouble if you were looking for it, if you wanted pleasure you could get it.

Q.(ES) BUT THAT WAS PRETTY MUCH, SORT OF A BLACK ROWDY AREA,

A. Yeah.

Q....AND YOU STAYED BACK OUT OF IT AND KEPT YOUR NOSE CLEAN... OR ELSE IF YOU WENT DOWN THERE...

A. If you wanted trouble, you was going to get it. If you didn't want trouble you stayed away from there, why then there...I don't think they molested too many people in their own neighborhoods, but I think if you go over in their neighborhood, then you would be asking for trouble, and chances are you'd find it.

Q.(JH) THAT WAS A BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD, WERE THERE ANY WHITE PEOPLE LIVING IN COOPERSTOWN?

A. Not to my knowledge.

A.(BF) It was mostly...

A.(AF) There might have been, but it would have been very few,
 Q.(ES) REMEMBER THE NEWSPAPER CALLED THE BYSTANDER? IT WAS A
 BLACK NEWSPAPER THAT...THERE ARE COPIES OF IT AND WE'RE READING
 THEM NOW. AND YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE WAS KIND OF A WEEKLY OCCUR-
 ENCE, OR AT LEAST A PAY DAY OCCURENCE...I REMEMBER HEADLINES THAT
 SAID ANOTHER KILLING IN BUXTON.

A. Well...

Q. AND IT MENTIONED THE BYLINE, COOPERTOWN. IT WAS KIND OF THE
 ROUGH PART OF TOWN, YOU GO DOWN IN THE BRONX OR IN THE GHETTO, OR
 SOMETHING AND...

A.(VF) Well, we...when we went to the show, we never went through
 Coopertown, we went to 8th street and down, where the, mostly
 where the white people that we knew, you know, and...

Q. COOPERTOWN WAS FAIRLY CLOSE TO DOWNTOWN BUXTON...

A.(VF) Yeah.

Q....I THINK KIND OF A SECTION...

Q.(JH) COOPERSTOWN WAS KNOWN AS A BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD. WHAT WERE
 THE OTHER BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS IN BUXTON? OR WERE THERE ANY?

A.(AF) I think that was about the only one of 'em...Cooperstown.

Q. UH-HUH. WELL, WERE BLACK FAMILIES DISPURSED ALL THROUGH BUXTON,
 THEN?

A. Yeah...

A.(VF) In the company houses there were.

A. Wherever your company houses was, that's where your blacks
 settled.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY BLACKS OWNING THEIR OWN PLACES IN BUXTON?

A.(VF) Oh, I think there were some that owned it.

Q. HOW ABOUT A CHAPMAN FAMILY? DO YOU REMEMBER A CHAPMAN FAMILY,
 LIVED OUT ON A FARM, OUTSIDE OF BUXTON. NO? NOT AT ALL? OKAY.

Q.(ES) SO WE SORT OF GET THE PICTURE AGAIN THAT YOU SAY THERE
 MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOME BLACKS. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE RICH BLACK
 MAN WE PICKED UP?

Q.(JH) ARMSTRONG.

Q.(ES) ARMSTRONG.

A. Yeah. He lived out by Tate's corner

End of side one. (note: a large portion of side one of this tape is
 blank. Pauses are intermittent.)

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SIDE TWO

Q. (ES) DO YOU REMEMBER ANY...WE KEEP PICKING UP THE PICTURE THAT IT WAS A PRETTY COMFORTABLE COMMUNITY, THAT THERE WASN'T ANY RACE RIOTS OR DIFFICULTY IN BUXTON AT ALL, THAT THINGS WENT PRETTY PEACEFULLY. THERE WERE TOUGH PARTS OF TOWN, BUT...

A. (VF) Oh, yeah there was, I guess, but then as I say, why, I think most of the ones up in Swedetown, we wasn't, particularly us kids, we wasn't allowed to go down and around in there, you know.

Q. (E\$) HOW FAR WOULD SWEDE TOWN BE FROM THE Y? JUST GUESSING.

A. Oh, I...

A. (AF) _____

A. Oh, five or six blocks, I guess. All we had to do was go up one hill and down another one, and on by...

Q. FIVE OR SIX BLOCKS.

A. Oh, we never went to the Y. We always went where they had the show. The Langloys, the women, had the show hall.

Q. WHAT KIND OF SHOWS WOULD THEY HAVE? REVIEWS, DRESS REVIEWS, OR...?

A. No. It would be moving picture shows. We'd go there and the show as supposed to start at a certain time, then the machine would break down, sitting there, and...(laughs)

Q. OH, MY. BUT THIS WAS NOT IN THE Y/?

A. I don't think...not unless the Y...I don't recall, I don't know.

Q. I WONDERED IF THEY SHOWED MOVING PICTURES IN THE Y, TOO.

A. I don't know. I don't think Albert knows anything about that.

A. (AF) What's that?

A. Where they had the show at in old Buxton. Was that the Y building?

A. (AF) No, I think it was a separate building. I'm pretty sure. Most of your company owned places like that...they had the stores, they also had the union hall where they had the union meeting, and a lot of their activities was held in the union hall.

Q. UH-HUH.

A. Now that was the way it was over at Rex5, they had the dance hall and the movie hall and the whole thing was combined, but it was up over the company store. And I think that's the case at a lot of them places where they had the entertainment up over the company store.

A. (VF) They didn't have...the show wasn't up over the company store.

Q. (JH) WHAT WAS THE PAY OFFICE?

A. Hmmm?

Q. WHAT WAS THE PAY OFFICE?

A. (AF) In old Buxton?

Q. (JH) UH-HUH.

A. I Was never sure of that, cause I went down there and I never worked down around there, then.

Q. DO YOU KNOW, VERA?

A. (VF) Well, the cousins could tell you where the pay office...

A. (AF) If you can find the Ericksons, they'll tell you exactly...

A. (VF) They'll tell you.

Q. (ES) LISTEN, THE MOST DELIGHTFUL THING IS TO TALK TO PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF, CAUSE THEN THEY KNOW SOMEBODY WHO KNEW SOMEBODY.

A. (VF) Well, I'm telling you, you go down there...

A. (AF) You go down there and I am sure that you'll get...

A. (VF) Maybe you wont find...

Q. (ES) WE'LL FIND THEM. WE'LL FIND THEM.

A. (VF) But...

A. (AF) You can't miss 'em if you turn that corner and follow that black top, and you pass that water tower.

Both AF and VF talking at once.

A. (AF) There's two houses right together, they got a fence around them. You go right in...

Q. YOU WENT TO SCHOOL TO THE SEVENTH GRADE. YOU WENT TO SCHOOL WHERE AT? I DON'T REMEMBER YOU TELLING US.

A. Well, I went...I was there in old Buxton. They finally let us come form Mahaska county over to the Monroe county school.

Q. (ES) IS, BUT THAT WASN'T BUXTON NUMBER 5, WAS IT? THE NUMBER5 SCHOOL. WE'VE HEARD OSME OF THE BLACKS TALK ABOUT ONE DOWN AT THE END OF THE BLOCK THAT WAS ALMOST ALL BLACK AND THEN THEY SAID THERE WAS A SCHOOL HERE AND THERE WAS A SCHOOL THERE, WELL OF COURSE WHAT THEY REMEMBERED WAS THEIR OWN SCHOOLHOUSE, ON FIRST STREET...

A. (VF) Oh, this was right there close to the arch of the Swedsih church, was the school. I remember that. A two story building.

Q. (ES) DID YOU HAVE A BLACK TEACHER OR A WHITE TEACHER?

A. I had white teachers.

Q. OKAY. CAUSE MRS. REESE WHO TAUGHT THERE WAS BLACK.

A. (VF) Maybe they had a colored school down there in...

Q. (ES) THE HIGH SCHOOL BURNED DOWN, NOW, DIDN'T IT?

A. That school burned down?

Q. THE HIGH SCHOOL. _____ BUXTON HAD A HIGH SCHOOL.

A. I think you only went to eighh grade there and if you wanted to go to high school, why I know...

A.(AF) You had to go to Albia.

A.(VF)...either Albia or Bussey. The kids went.

Q.(ES) OH.

A.(VF) I don't remember of any high school.

Q. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT A BLACK HIGH SCHOOL?

A. There might have been a black high school

Q.(JH) WELL, THEY TALKED ABOUT A HIGH SCHOOL. NOW WHETHER IT WAS BLACK OR NOT...

Q.(ES) BUT THEY TALKED ABOUT A HIGH SCHOOL.

A. I know that a friend of mine, _____ Larson, course she's dead now, when she graduated out of eighth grade in old Buxton she went to Bussey high school. Course they could have had a colored school, I don't know.

Q. THE THING BURNED DOWN, TOO, CAUSE THEY TALKED ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL, TO HIGH SCHOOL UNTIL IT BURNED DOWN AND THEN THEY WENT... AND BOTH OF THEM TALKED ABOUT ALBIA.

Q.(JH)VERA, BACK TO YOUR HOME LIFE...CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF YOUR HOME? HOW MANY BEDROOMS WERE THERE?

A.(VF) Oh, dear...

Q. NO? COULD YOU SORT OF DESCRIBE THE FLOOR PLAN OF THE HOUSE AS YOU WALKED INTO THE FRONT DOOR? WAS THERE A LIVING ROOM THERE... SITTING ROOM?

A.Yeah, a living room and then there was a spare bedroom, then we had a dining room and then we had a kitchen, and then we had another bedroom off to one side.

Q. SO THERE WERE TWO BEDROOMS?

A. We had two bedrooms downstairs and four upstairs.

Q. FOUR UPSTAIRS. SIX BEDROOMS.

A. Well, we had some of the bArders stayed at our house, and some stayed down in the company house.

Q. NOW DID YOU HAVE RUNNING WATER IN THE HOUSE?

A. No. We carried every drop of water.

Q. CARRIED IT IN.

A. Yes. We carried our drinking water from Lundgren's. They had a nice well there, we carried all our drinking water. And we had a ssistern at home. We had to draw all the water when we did the laundry...we didn't have...we had outdoor toilets and everything. (laughs) are you taping all that crap? (laughs)

Q. DID YOU HAVE...?

A.(ES) I GREW UP WITH AN OUTDOOR TOILET.

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Q.(JH) YEAH, WELL, DID THYE HAVE A SMOKEHOUSE...DID YOUR FAMILY HAVE A SMOKEHOUSE, OR DID ANY OF THE NEIGHBORS HAVE SMOKEHOUSES? WHERE THEY'D PREPARE THEIR OWN MEATS...?

A.(VF) We didn't. I don't know, maybe Lundgren's did, because they had more cattle...they had cattæ, they might have. But I don't recall them having any smokehouse.

Q. SO YOUR MOTHER REALLY WOULD BUY DIRECTLY OUT OF THE STORE, LIKE AT LARSON'S AND THERE WAS NOT MUCH HOME PREPARATION OF FIXING SAUSAGES, ETC.

A. Well, I think she used to buy pork and maybe a half of one. Cuase I know we used to have to grind...

A.(AF) Well, who was it that had the meat wagon? Didn't they bring...?

A. Armstrongs had a...

A.(AF) Armstrong's. They delivered meat. They were colored.

Q. THEY DELIVERED MEAT TO THE DOOR?

A.(AF) Yeah.

A.(VF) No, they, you...they had it in a wagon, like, covered over, and they'd come up at certain ^{hour} times of the day, and my mother'd go out to the meat wagon and buy meat.

a. They'd cut off what you want, wherever you wanted it.

Q. WELL, I'LL BE DARNED.

Q.(ES) LIKE THE WAGON OF THE ICE MAN WHERE I GREW UP.

A.(AF) Yes. I think they had the ice wagon, they had the ice wagon

A.(VF) Oh, yeah, we had...

A. An ice box under our refrigerator, you know. Ice box.

Q.(JH) SURE.

A. So they delivered ice. And they delivered meat th the house,

A.(VF) There was sawdust all over the ice when you got it,

Q.(ES) _____

A. Well, I know mother used to buy ice and put it in a washtub down in the cave to keep the milk warm. You know the cold, butter and that.

A.(AF) But, yeah, they delivered meat, as they went by, you knew what time they was coming by, and if you wanted meat for supper you hollered stop, so's you could buy...

A.(VF) You'd go out there and buy meat off the darn thing.

A....and they cut off what you wanted.

A.(VF) That was the son of the...what's his name? Hope Armstrong Old man Armstrong? I...

A.(AF) Hope?

A.(VF) Why, he would...Charlie Armstrong ran the meat market.
Q.(ES) HOW DID ARMSTRONG GET SO MUCH MONEY? WE UNDERSTOOD HE OWNED A LOT OF LAND.

A. They said he was the richest guy in Monroe county, I don't know. That's what they said.

A.(AF) Well, the story was out, and I'm familiar with one case, if one of his children married white, they got a 250 acre land and ten thousand dollars ~~something~~ as a wedding gift.

A.(VF) Maybe that isn't true.

Q.(ES) AND THEY ALL MARRIED WHITES? EVERY ONE OF THEM MANAGED TO GET THAT JOB DONE.

A.(AF) _____ ARMSTRONG MARRIED A JEWISH WOMAN. HE RUN A BEER PARLOR THERE IN ALBIA FOR AWHILE. CHARLIE ARMSTRONG MARRIED A WOMAN AND HE HAD TWO OF THE PRETTIEST BLONDE HEADED KIDS YOU EVER SEEN. GIRLS. REAL PRETTY. Wasn't they ,Vera?

A.(VF) Yeah. Daisy...

A.(AF)...after ~~XX~~ he moved there he went over to 19 and had a roller skating rink over there. And he had kids. White. Blonde headed.

Q. AND YET OLD ARMSTRONG, HE'S GOT ALL THE MONEY, BUT HE TURNS AROUND ON TOP OF THAT AND HE HAS THE KIDS RUNNING A MEAT WAGON AND HE DOES SOUND LIKE A PRETTY SHARP GUY, BUT GOT HIS FOOT IN THE DOOR IN MOST PLACES. WHEN YOU THINK OF BUXTON AS A COMMUNITY AND YOU TALK ABOUT THESE PRIVATE BUSINESSES, WERE THERE MORE PRIVATE OR MOSTLY COMPANY BUSINESSES? COMPANY STORES ^{How much...} I REALIZE ^{COGNIZE} THAT THEY GO DOWN THERE AND CHARGE AND THEY WOULD BE MAYBE BROKE BY THE TIME THEY GOT THEIR PAYCHECK. WOULD YOU GUESS THAT THE COMPANY STORE DID MIST OF THE BUSINESS WITH THE MINERS?

A.(AF) Well, there's no question about that, if a man wanted to eat or get any clothes, he had to go through the company store. And it used to be...I don't know if it was over in Buxton, cause I never worked over there, but at Rex5 where we worked at...at the end of the shift, the top foreman took the sheet for the day- how many ton of coal you earned, and went up to the company store with it and you stopped on the way home and you had so many...if you loaded out eight or ten ton of coal that's how much credit you got. For that day.

A.(VF) Well, I don't know whether they did that in Old Buxton,

A.(AF) I don't know whether they did that in old Buxton or not, but they did that there.

Q.(ES) WE HEARD COMPANY...IN A DIFFERENT SETTING, WE HEARD SOME OF THE _____ MINERS BELLYACHED AT THE COMPANY STORE CHARGED YOU A -

Q.(ES)...LITTLE MORE FOR YOUR CARBIDE AND A LITTLE MORE FOR THE THINGS YOU HAD TO HAVE, AND IF YOU BOUGHT IT FROM SOMEBODY ELSE YOU LOST YOUR JOB OR YOU DIDN'T GET A GOOD OPENING, OR YOU DIDN'T GET A GOOD _____ OR ANY OF THOSE NICE THINGS THAT COULD HAPPEN.

A.(AF) It could happen and you better play along with them. Because they had the advantage of you.

Q.(JH) HOW WERE THE RELATIONS...YOU WERE AT REX 5.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE MINERS?

A. No trouble.

Q. NO TROUBLE. CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING.

A. Nothing for you to work one room and a colored guy to work the next room. We got along alright. You just didn't associate with them after you got away from...we went to school with them. Course you didn't neighbor back and forth...you didn't have them over for supper and you didn't go there for supper. But you went to school together, you worked together. Spoke to them on the street but that was it.

Q.(JH) DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE THEY CAME FROM? DID THEY...?

A. A lot of them came from old Buxton when they started to, when the mines started to go down there, they'd come over there.

Q. EARLIER THAN THAT. DID THEY EVER TALK ABOUT THEIR FAMILY HISTORIES, OR...?

A. Not too much.

Q. WHERE THEY CAME FROM? OUT OF THE SOUTH? NO. OKAY.

Q.(ES) IF THE BLACKS TALK BOUT TALK ABOUT THIS...YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT THERE'S A GROUP IN DES MOINES THAT STARTED THE BUXTON CLUB IN 1978 NOW THE RUMOR IS THAT THERE IS A CLUB OUT IN COLORADO, IN DENVER. I KNOW THERE IS A GROUP OUT IN CALIFORNIA. THAT HAD A BUXTON CLUB. BUT THEY APPARENTLY SCATTERED IN A PRETTY GOOD Shape. SO THERE IS SOME FEELING FOR WHEN YOU TALK TO THESE PEOPLE, THEY COME UP WITH THIS STORY THAT LIFE WAS NEVER BETTER. THIS IS UTOPIA. WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD THEY THINK IT'S SO GREAT? WHAT WOULD BE...YOU SAID THERE WAS NO CONFLICT, THEY GOT PAID THE SAME WAGES UNDERGROUND.

A.(AF) Yep.

Q.YOU GO YOUR WAY AND I GO MINE. WHY WOULD THEY CONSIDER THAT TO BE SO PERFECT? I CAN'T UNDER STAND WHY IT'S SO PERFECT IF THEY SAY SOME OF THE BLACKS WE'VE TALKED TO THOUGHT IT WAS THE BEST PART OF OUR LIVES. THEY NEVER HAD IT ANY BETTER THAN THEY HAD IT IN BUXTON, AND THAT ALWAYS KIND OF INTRIGUED ME. WHY WOULD IT BE THAT WAY?

A. (AF) Well, miners are about the most independent people there are one earth, I think. We either went on a strike the first day of April, or we shut down cause we didn't need the coal anyway. So you went fishing. Then Labor Day they started back up because they started needing coal, so you started back working. And that's the reason why you could almost tell how many years they been married. Every year they went on a strike and every year, the next year they had a baby. (laughs)

A. (VF) Albert!

A. That's a fact. It wassnothing for them to have ten, twelve kids.

A. (VF) Oh! Why your, you come from a big family. Is that what your dad did?

A. Yeah. But that's right , and then...well, hell...

A. (VF) They did go on strike a lot, that's for sure.

A. When we went on strike we went down there by Rose Hill, we had a cabin _____. We put a garden down there. Heck ,we fished all summer. And then we'd come back up here...this was before we were married, and we'd come back up here and go to work.

Q. (JH) THAT WAS REALLY COMMON AMONG MOST FAMILIES!

A. Sure. Yeah.

Q. (ES) YOU JUST WENT ON STRIKE AUTOMATICALLY.

A. So when the company store...they gave you credit for the summer why then in the wintertime you had to deal with them because they was the ones who give you credit all summer. You didn't have nothing to wat you know, you go up to the company store, they'd allow you so much on credit.

Q. (JH) DO YO REMEMBER THAT HAPPENING, VERA? STRIKING...?

A. (VF) Yes.

Q....THE FIRST OF APRIL AND STAYING OUT ALL SUMMER AND GOING BACK WHEN?

A. (AF) The first of Labor Day.

Q. LABOR DAY, YEAH. SEPTEMBER.

A. (VF) That's what they did. Seemed like every summer.

A. (AF) If we didn't go on strike they shut down anyway. Didn't make no difference. Then you didn't have to picket the place, nobody wanted the job anyway, so you went fishing.

A. (VF) Well, I don't know whether they did that...

Q. (JH) SO THIS WAS YEAR AFTER YEAR THIS WOULD HAPPEN, RIGHT?

A. Yeah.

A.(AF) We hardly ever worked in the summer, Nobody needed coal then. We didn't have any of these power plants and things, all they needed was cooking and stuff, Criminy sakes, a load of coal for cooking would last them all summer.

Q.(JH) YEAH, SURE, SO YOUR FAMILY...WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, WHEN YOUR DAD WAS STILL ALIVE, WAS HE OUT IN THE SUMMERTIME?

A.(VF) Sure.

Q. WHAT DID HE DO, VERA?

A. He didn't do nothin'.

A.(AF) There was nothing to do,

A.(VF) Stayed around the house,

A.(AF) Put in a garden if you had enough room to put in a garden.

A.(VF) He wasn't too well of a man, but then, my brother-in-law and them they put in a garden, and stuff with him. Everybody was in the same boat.

Q.(JH)AND YOUR FAMILY WENT TO A CABIN.

A.(AF) Yeah.

A.(VF) Well, the men did, your mother didn't go.

A. My mother didn't, but all of us men, we went fishing.

Q. FISHED EVERY DAY?

A. Yeah.

Q. ALL SUMMER LONG,

A. Well, we just stayed down there. We'd go down and come home once in a while to get some clean slothes. We used to take the fish in to Rose Hill and trade her for sugar and goffee, and this farmer needed some work, then why, we'd go and put in a day's work for him, and he'd give us some lard and stuff.

Q.(ES) AND GO BACK FISHING AGAIN,

A. And go back fishing, We had a cabin down there. Heck, we had it made. You know. The life of Riley.

Q.(JH) DO YOU REMEMBER THE BLACKS DOING THIS?

A. No, they didn't do...they went fishing, but they just went down to the creek where they could walk back and forth. They didn't stay. They'd come back and, man, we used to catch some pretty good sized flat heads...

PAUSE IN TAPE.

Q.(ES) THAT RAISE AN INTERESTING QUESTION, IF HALF OF YOUR FAMILY THE MEN COULD GO FISHING, IN THE CABIN, THAT MEANS THE EXPENSES A THE COMPANY STORE ARE JUST FOR THE FEMALES.

A.(AD) Yeah.

Q.(ES) BUT IF THE BLACKS STAY IN BUXTON, THEIR EXPENSES OVER THE SUMMER, BY THE TIME THEY GET BACK IN SEPTEMBER, THEY OWE...

A.(AF) They owe quite a bit. So they had to work in order to pay back what they owe.

Q. SO THEY STAYED HOME AND IT COST THEM MORE TO STAY HOME. THEY'RE MORE IN DEBT TO THE COMPANY STORE IN SEPTEMBER.

A. It's nothing for them blacks to go out and shoot rabbits all year 'round. They had rabbits...They had, I've seen them eat groundhogs, stuff like that, you know. Something to eat.

A.(VF) What's that other greasy thing that they used to eat?

A. Possum.

Q.(JH) POSSUM.

A. Coon.

Q.(ES) ANYTHING THAT WALKED.

A. Anything that walked. They'd shoot 'em and have 'em.

Q. THAT RAISES ANOTHER QUESTION THAT I NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF UNTIL YOU MENTIONED, THAT APPARENTLY GUNS WERE COMMON?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q.GUNS IN THE CAMP AND THE FACT THAT YOU HAD A RIFLE, THE BLACK MAN HAD A RIFLE AND NOBODY GOT EXCITED ABOUT IT.

A. No. Everybody had a shotgun or a rifle. And you could buy a box of shells for, I think, about 50 cents. 25 cents, 50 cents, about a penny a piece, two cents a piece. Yeah. Farmer wasn't looking, you'd pick a few roasting ears, you know.

Q.(ES) OR THE WATERMELON DOWN THERE.

A .Yeah.

Q. I REMEMBER. A LITTLE MIDNIGHT REQUISITION.

A. Yeah.

Q. WAS THERE ANY CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FARM AND COMMUNITY? THE FARMER, YOU KNOW, THEY JUST SORT OF TOLERATE...

A. Oh, yeah. Yeah. They didn't bother too much. Oh, I imagine they all lost a chicken or two once in a while. They didnt' think nothing of it.

Q.(JH) DO YOU REMEMBER ANY KIND OF FRICTION BETWEEN BLACK MINERS IN OLD BUXTON AND PEOPLE IN OTHER TOWNS LIKE BUSSEY AND SEYMOUR?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. NOT TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

A. I think when they got home, they stayed pretty well down in Coopertown.

Q.(E)S AFTER A GOOD DAY'S WORK MINING YOU DIDN'T FEEL LIKE DOING A LOT OF ROUGHING AROUND BUXTON.

A. (AF) That was their place and they stayed home, and if you wanted to go down there, you better behave yourself, otherwise you was in trouble.

Q. (JH) DO YOU REMEMBER, LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE, YOUNG BLACK MALES ESPECIALLY IN THE SUMMERTIME. WAS THERE EVER ANY PROBLEM-- HOOLIGANISM, OR WHAT WE CALL JUVENILE DELINQUENCY TODAY? DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THAT TO BE A PROBLEM?

A. No.

Q. NO? OKAY.

Q. (ES) SOME TOLD US THAT BLACK...FOURTH OF JULY AND THEN...

Q. (JH) EMANCIPATION DAY.

Q. EMANCIPATION DAY WAS A BIG WING DING, THEY WOULDN'T WORK ON THAT DAY. I REMEMBER IT WAS NOVEMBER SOMETHNNG.

Q. (JH) NO, THAT'S IN AUGUST. AUGUST 4th or 5th. DO YOU REMEMBER THAT DAY?

Q. WHEN LINCOLN FREED THE SLAVES? THEY HAD A WHOOPDEDO. THEY WOULDN'T GO DOWN IN THE MINES.

A. (AF) Well, one thing's for sure...they didn't have to have much of an excuse to take a day off, I mean, you know, if somebody thought of one good excuse, why that was good enough. Everybody'd go home. See?

Q. (JH) BUT ACCORDING TO YOU THEY WOULDN'T BE WORKING IN AUGUST.

A. Most of the time. Very rarely.

Q. VERY RARELY. WELL, WAS IT TYPICAL FOR THE MINES TO SHUT DOWN ALTOGETHER IN THE SUMMERTIME, OR DID THEY HAVE A SKELETON CREW?

A. Very little. Just the foremen is all that worked. They might have a few timbermen.

Q. WERE THERE ANY BLACK FOREMEN?

A. Never heard of a black foreman.

Q. OKAY

A. My dad was foreman at Rex 5.

Q. NEVER HEARD OF A BLACK FOREMAN.

A. Never heard of a black foreman.

Q. OKAY.

A. (VF) Maybe they had 'em and...

aA. If they did, I don't know of any.

Q. (E\$) WHAT WAS A TYPICAL DAY'S PAY?

A. What was a typical day's pay? Well, when I started trappigg I got 90¢ a day. Then during World War I, I made \$7.98, a dollar an hour.

Q. (ES) HOW IN THE WORLD WAS...?

A. (AF) Then if you was a coal miner and you was in a room, you could inflate that by loading more cars.

Q. (ES) WOULD YOU MAKE TEN DOLLARS A DAY?

A. Oh, yeah. If you wanted to work. Most people didn't want to work that hard. They'd load so many cars, and that was it.

Q. OH! NOW YOU'VE HIT ANOTHER THING THAT DOROTHY AND I PICKED UP. YOU MENTIONED MUCH EARLIER ABOUT THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COAL MINERS. THESE WERE NOT BLACK MINERS, THESE WERE ITALIAN-AMERICANS THAT WERE DOWN IN SEYMOUR. AND I REMEMBER THIS ONE MAN SAYING IT'S THE BEST LIFE IN THE WORLD. THE MINUTE I GET UNDERGROUND I'M IN MY OWN BOSS. IF I HAD A HANGOVER AND DIDN'T FEEL LIKE LOADING COAL THAT DAY, NOBODY BAWLED ME OUT.

A. No, sir.

Q. IF I FELT REALLY LIKE I...IF I FELT REALLY GOOD, I'D GO LIKE MAD AND I'D MAKE 15 DOLLARS. OR IF...AND NOBODY BOTHERED ME, I WAS MY OWN BOSS. IT WAS WHEN I GOT BACK UP ON TOP THAT I GOT...

A. And if you didn't feel like working, course maybe you couldn't ride the cage out, but you could walk up the air shaft and go on home. Nobody said anything. You didn't have to press no card or nothing.

Q. (ES) YOU WERE PAID BY YOUR CHIT HANGING ON THE ISIDE OF THE CAR. YOU DIDN'T MINE ANY, YOU DIDN'T GET ANY.

A. When that little chip of yours went in there, that little voucher with your number on it, that's all that counted. And the way they done that, I don't know whether you're familiar with the mines, you go down there and you've got rooms on this side, and you got rooms on this side. Okay, they start by how many rooms. There might be ten rooms over here and ten rooms here. Okay that driver, he'll stop, this guy gets the first one, second one, everybody gets his turn. And when he's made the whole round he starts over again. And if you don't feel like working, you turn your turn down, and he jumps you and goes on to the next one. So here's the guy who don't want to do very much, and here's the guy who wants to put out a little bit extra, so he'll get his turn.

Q. SO THAT'S WHAT THEY MEANT BY TURN. YOU'RE TURN TO HAUL THAT CAR...

A. Yeah.

Q. (JH) IT'S BEEN DESCRIBED THAT BUXTON WAS A FAMILY TOWN. DO YOU REMEMBER IT BEING A FAMILY TOWN? WERE THERE MANY DIVORCES THERE, WERE THERE...?

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A.(VF) I don't remember of it. Could have been,

Q.(JH) BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER THAT?

A. Seems like they all seemed to get along. I don't know.

Q.(ES) WERE THERE ANY OTHER REALLY RICH MEN IN BUXTON OTHER THAN MR. ARMSTRONG?

A. I don't recall of anyone. Unless some of the ones that farmed.

A.(AF) The only one that comes near to being would be Mr. Larson.

A. Well, the Larson that run the Larson store.

A.(AF) And he would be the...

A. His brother had a farm, I wouldn't say they were rich. It just seemed like we were all in the same boat.

Q.(JH) YOU MENTIONED ABOUT BEING OFF IN THE SUMMERTIME. THAT UNDOUBTEDLY HAPPENED IN BUXTON.

A.(AF) Yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. CAN WE GO THROUGH SOME OF THE YEARS...SI YOUR RECALL GOOD ENOUGH, LIKE FOR EXAMPLE, THE YEAR 1915, THAT SUMMER, WERE THE MINES CLOSED?

A.(AF) When?

Q. 1915.

A. 1915.

Q. HOW ABOUT 1916, 1917, 1918,

A. Well, during the war, they worked a little bit more during the war.

Q. YEAH, THEY WORKED PROBABLY ALL DURING THE SUMMER DURING THE WAR

A. Yeah, Maybe not the full week, but worked two or three days.

Q. TWO OR THREE DAYS.

A. And then after the war ended they started cutting down,

Q. UH-HUH. OKAY. SO OUT OF THE TIME THAT BUXTON EXISTED, WELL, THE WHOLE AREA, THE COAL MINING AREA, IT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY THAN NOT THAT THE SUMMER WAS OFF,

A. Yeah.

Q. OKAY.

Q.(ES) THEN THAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE BUXTON WONDERS. I WONDERED HOW THEY MINED ALL DAY AND PLAYED BASEBALL ALL NIGHT.

A. Yeah, and they did, they had a wonderful ball team, Yeah. Ever coal camp had a ball team. Or two you know. But this one was...

Q.(ES) THEY MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY GOOD...

A. Well, they could have been what you'd call professionals today. Very easily.

Q. (JH) DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS, ELMER?

Q. (ES) NO, I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING. I JUST...WHAT WE'RE PICKING UP THE PICTURE IS TO KIND OF SUMMARIZE...YOU WONDER IF THEY REALLY HAD AS MANY BLACKS AS THEY REMEMBER, AND OF COURSE WE'RE HITTING THE SAME KIND OF MEMORIES WITH THE BLACKS WITH THEIR REMEMBERING A VERY GOOD TIME. I WAS IN THE SERVICE. THERE WERE SOME EXPERIENCES IN THE SERVICE THAT I WOULD JUST LOVE TO REMEMBER, BUT THERE WERE TIMES THAT I DON'T WANT TO THINK ANYTHING ABOUT, BUT IF YOU ASK ME ABOUT THE SERVICE IN GENERAL I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT THE GOOD TIMES AND ALL THE FUN I HAD AND THAT SORT OF THING, AND THEY SORT OF DESCRIBE THIS AS THE PERFECT EXISTENCE. AND YET FROM WHAT I CAN HEAR FROM SORT OF GATHERING, THEY COULD HAVE LIVED TWO MILES AWAY AND COME INTO BUXTON AND DID THEIR TRADING, CLAIMED BUXTON AS HOME, SO THAT WHEN WE START TO TRY TO ACTUALLY LOCATE BUXTON AS A PLACE, BUXTON COULD BE STRETCHED OUT FOUR, FIVE MILES...

A. (AF) I'm sure a lot of them lived in Miami and White City.

Q. AND THEN THEY WOULD GO TO BUXTON TO EITHER WORK OR CATCH THE TRAIN TO TAKE THEM TO 19 OR 18, THE EASIEST THING...WHITE CITY WASN'T INCORPORATED, AND THEY DON'T HAVE A MAIL BOX, SO THEY CAN... BUXTON WAS REALLY KIND OF A FLOATING SORT OF A PLACE. THEY DID INDEED HAVE SOME SCHOOLS AND THEY HAD THE MERCHANTILE STORE, AND THAD A COUPLE DOCTORS OFFICES AND THESE THINGS, BUT THEY WERE ALL OWNED BY THE COMPANY, THE BUILDINGS WERE OWNED BY THE COMPANY EVEN THE BLACK FAMILY THAT LIVED ACROSS FROM YOU IN SWEDE TOWN LIVED IN A COMPANY HOUSE, SO MOST OF THE BLACKS LIVED IN COMPANY HOUSES, MOST OF THE WHITES OWNED THEIR OWN, OR THE MAJORITY, THERE WERE SOME...BUT IT WAS MORE TYPICAL, FAR MORE TYPICAL FOR THE WHITES TO OWN THEIR OWN HOME THAN FOR BLACKS.

A. (VF) There was white people that lived in the company houses, too of course. And they were in where the...they were all whites, mostly. There on A street and...and they had down by the company store, why there was more colored people.

Q. (JH) ONE LAST QUESTION THAT I JUST THOUGHT OF, NOW THE WHITE PEOPLE WERE, OF COURSE, SCANDINAVIAN PEOPLE, YOUR DAD WAS NORWEGIAN YOUR MOTHER SWEDISH, ANY DANES THERE?

A. Oh, I imagine there were some, I don't know...

Q. WHAT ABOUT, DO YOU ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THE OTHER WHITES? WERE THEY AMERICAN BORN OR...OTHER, LIKE WERE THERE POLISH THERE? WERE THERE...ANY SERBS OR CROATIANS?

A. (AF) Some of the, not old Buxton but some other towns...Polish, Slavish people there were some Slavish Italians Well Box 5 -21

A.(AF)...had quite a few Italians and Slavish.

A.(VF) Oh, I think they had that in old Buxton too, but they didn't live right in...they made them farm, you know, out in the country. Farmed you know.

Q.(JH) BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANY CHURCHES, CLUBS, OR WHATEVER THAT WERE ORGANIZED FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF NATIONALITY, LIKE POLISH CLUBS. THERE WAS JUST...

A.(AF) No, you're talking about just a lodge or group.

Q. UH-HUH. OR A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT WAS...IN PEOPLES MINDS WAS A POLISH NEIGHBORHOOD OR AN ITALIAN NEIGHBORHOOD, WAS THERE ANY SUCH THING IN ODD BUXTON?

A.(VF) I don't know.

Q. OR JUST THE SWEDISH NEIGHBORHOODS? RIGHT?

A.(AF) Yeah, I...

A.(VF) East Swede town and West Swede town. That's all we went by.

A.(AF) Any other denomination or nationality I don't think was there. There might have been a few scattered but ~~none~~/not enough to form an area or neighborhood or something like that.

Q. NOT AS A GROUP. OKAY.

A. There wasn't too many of them families that came over at one time. There'd be a family or two and they'd get mixed up with the others

Q. WHAT'S YOUR BACKGROUND?

A. I worked as a coal miner.

Q. YOUR FAMILY?

A. Oh, my dad was German and my mother was Irish.

Q. OKAY. FROM IRELAND AND FROM GERMANY?

A. Yeah.

Q. HOW DID THEY GET OUT HERE?

A. What?

Q. HOW DID THEY GET TO IOWA, YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER?

A. Oh, gosh, I don't know.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW.

A. They got into New York and then they just came this way. That's the only thing I know. I don't know howcome they settled in...see, I was born in Oskaloosa.

Q. HOW BIG A FAMILY WAS IT AGAIN?

A. Oskaloosa?

Q. YOUR, YOUR FAMILY.

A. Ten.

Q. TEN. HOW BIG WAS YOUR FAMILY?

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A. (VF) Seven.

Q. (JH) SEVEN.

A. I was the last one,

Q. (ES) YOU WERE THE ONE.

Q. (JH) YOU'RE THE YOUNGEST. HOW MANY BOYS AND HOW MANY GIRLS?

A. Three boys and four girls.

Q. OKAY.

A. (AF) There were six boys and four girls in our family. There's only two of us left.

Q. (ES) IS THAT RIGHT?

A. (VF) There's only two fo us left.

Q. (JH) DID...WAS IT ALSO IN YOUR CASE THAT YOU DID A LOT OF WORK AS A BOY? AT HOME, CHORES?

A. Oh, yeah.

A. (VF) Tell them how much you got for cleaning weeds out of Mrs. _____'s garden.

A. Twenty five sents a day, I carried water to the thrashers, you was talking about the farmers. We got along with the farmers alright. I was a water boy for the farmers and got 25 cents a day and the noon meal. That was pretty good, you know. Course I had to walk about two miles with that pail of water, By the time I'd get back, it'd be warm, you know, then they'd throw it out and I'd satrt back again. When they was thrashing, that's what we done, carried water. For the farmers to drink. Had the...

A. (VF) We tell our grandchildren stuff like that, they don't believe it. They think we've always lived the way we do now.

A. (AF)...put a wet sack around 'em and carry 'em.

A. My mother come to live with us, she lived with us for 14 and a half years. Why ~~sah~~ said this is the best home I ever had. She said just think you can go to the sink and turn on the water. Don have to go outdoors to go to the bathroom. Go down in the basement and put a little coal in the furnace. That's when we burned coal.

Q. (JH) WHAT HAVE YOU DONE SINCE LEAVING MINING? WHAT WAS YOUR WOR

A. (AF) Forty years at Maytag.

Q. MAYTAG, OF COURSE.

A. Been retired atmost 15 years.

Q. OKAY. _____

A. (VF) Huh?

Q. DID YOU WORK?

A. I havent worked since I got married, no.

Q. (ES) I HAVE TO TELL YOU MY BOSSES, MY BOSS... END OF TAPE