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2nd Day
home

Buxton Project: 424-2104
 Narrator's Name: Carl Goodwin
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 Interviewer's Name: Joseph Hraba

- Q. Old man Buxton went to the states and they bought militia in?
- A. The governor let them get the militia in, they brought them in. That broke the strike.
- Q. What strike is this?
- A. Mutchakinok, miner's strike.
- Q. What year Carl?
- A. I wouldn't be sure about that but it was in the 90's. It could have been that or the latter 80's. That book would tell me if I had it but they left over there right about 1901 and went over into Monroe County.
- Q. Okay, 1900, 1901. The blacks and the Swedes both moved. Now the Swedes stayed, were the Swedes off to themselves? Did they live in Swedetown?
- A. Yes. They made up their own houses. They called one of them East Swedetown and one of them West Swedetown.
- Q. Why was that?
- A. They wanted to be by themselves I guess.
- Q. Now did blacks and whites live close to one another in Buxton?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was there ever any trouble between blacks and whites there in Buxton?
- A. No, practically all of the trouble was between the blacks themselves.
- Q. Really?
- A. There wasn't much fighting or anything, shooting or cutting, it was among the blacks themselves.
- Q. Was there a lot of that among the blacks?
- A. I think there was in the first years there. I'll say 10 or 12 years. I don't think there was so much of it, although it happened when I was there. There was 2 or 3 killings I know and several cuttings up but they was among the blacks.
- Q. Did you paddle around with any of the black miners?
- A. Oh hell I drink with them. I drunk with them. We'd go up in most ~~of~~ them

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- A. tarvens you know and find tarvens where they sold booze. I drove mule with them in the mines.
- Q. You call them plying tigers, these joints?
- A. They had all names for them.
- Q. What were some of the names? I'm interested in that Carl,
- A. Well I know of one that I can call. They called it the Green Onion.
- Q. The Green Onion?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Where was that?
- A. That was quite a busy place. They gambled there and you could get a sandwich or something or
- Q. Where was the Green Onion, in Cooperstown, or Sharpes End?
- A. It was back up on top of the hill. There was a hill right up there, houses all on the side of this hill. Now where the company store was, that was down in the flat where the railroad was, down in the flat, right over a little ways of the creek. That was a flat down there.
- Q. Bluff Creek?
- A. No. That wouldn't Bluff Creek, Bluff Creek sat east. That was over east a couple of miles. But that was the flat down in there. That was just flat down in there. And the railroad come up through there. The company store was on the main road coming up through there. It was just a dirt cindered. That was the main road coming up from Coopertown. Coopertown was kind of down at the bottom of the hill. That was just a kind of a hill and clear across Buxton. But these houses all on the side of that hill and the houses up on top where it got level up there off to the east and south, houses all back in there. I expect you can from Coopertown. I expect that would run a mile long and possibly over a half mile wide. They claim at one time, this book tells you I think, yes I imagine so. It was between 8,500 and 9,000 people lived there at one time.
- Q. What about the other tarvens, what are their names?
- A. Oh I don't know. They just went more by the guy's name that run it. They had names, I can't recall them now.
- Q. Okay, could you get women there in Buxton?
- A. What?
- Q. Could you buy women in Buxton?
- A. Buy women?
- Q. Yeah, they had prostitution there in Buxton?
- A. Oh God, that was mostly among the blacks too. Mostly all that ever I

- A. There wouldn't very many young women you know and women in their young years wasn't much for that then. That's been quite a long while ago. How long would it be from 1916 until now?
- Q. Quite a few years Carl.
- A. Yeah. Now girls back in them days and young women weren't like they are now. Oh you get in these big cities you found them. But around the coal mine towns, little towns you didn't find it. They just wouldn't like that. They'd have boyfriends but they wouldn't these kinds to have a boyfriend today and have another one next week. They _____ their boyfriend. Some of them would break up once and a while but most of them go with them until they married them. All coal mine towns that I lived in was that way. Now listen there white women married, some of them, I know several there, a white and a black mixed. Some of them were married. Some of them just lived with one another.
- Q. Okay, name me the people Carl. Nellie King was married to a black man right? Remember her?
- A. Well ain't she a black woman?
- Q. Nellie?
- A. Is she colored?
- Q. Well she doesn't look colored to me.
- A. Well no, I'll tell you why. It just come to me now. Her maiden name was Green and they were just practiaally white like other white people but they were colored. Her name was Green. Charlie _____ hell if you'd meet him going up town you wouldn't know he was black. His hair was straight but he was colored. He had colored blood in him. Armstrong's the same way. You wouldn't know they were colored people.
- Q. Now Armstrong was married to a white woman right?
- A. The old man, Hope, old Hope they called him. He married a woman over there in Oskaloosa and she was all white. Every one of his children, now two of them I never saw all by hearing, married white people. One of them live in Chicago, a boy and he's a pharmacist down there, a druggist, had a drugstore. And that girl, Ethel, I never saw her. She'd come back once and a while but I never did see her, I don't think _____. She was away and she was married to a white man. Now this is what I learned from people. One of the people is my sister-in-law down there at Lavilla, married my brother. She lived in Buxton for several years and she was the one that told me that they were both, she had saw them, that they were both married to white people, these two. But I had seen all the rest of them, day after day. I'd take Charlie, the oldest run the butcher shop. Well Lottie, her daughter, she was the oldest. She married, she was the big shot in the bank and the company store, she was the big shot in there, Lottie. And she married a white man and he ran a butcher shop up at the other end of Buxton himself. _____ But he married Armstrong's daughter.
- Q. What was his name?
- A. His name was Baxter.
- Q. Baxter, okay.

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- A. Johnny Baxter. He had two boys that I know of. I don't know if they ever had any girls or not, I didn't know of them but they had two boys and I knew them well. Hell I drank with them.
- Q. What about the other Armstrongs Carl?
- A. Now, I'll come down to the next one that I know now. The next one below Charlie was Hope. That's young Hope, named after his father and I never got acquainted with him too much but he, from what I learned I think he was probably next to the oldest one, next to Charlie, run the butcher shop. From what I could learn he was in there with Charlie working and he got to stealing all the money. The old man kicked him out and threaten him, you never get a dollar from him. So he went out around Omaha, and he was out there for several years. He was just as white as a white man, straight hair, good looking fellow. When he did come back I was working at 18 when he come back and got a job below at 18. But he brought a white woman and a good looking woman back with him. He never lived in Buxton. He lived out at 18 camp out there all the time he was here. And of course he left there before I did. I suppose he went back to Omaha somewhere. That was Hope, young Hope, that was two of the boys. Next to the oldest one that I knew was one they called Butch. I forget what his first name was _____ my sister-in-law we were down there at Lavilla just a week ago. She told me what his name was but they all called him Butch. He was a big fellow, big man. Not too dark. _____
- Q. What is your sister-in-law's name there in Lavilla?
- A. Her maiden name?
- Q. No, her name.
- A. Goodwin, that is my brother's wife. He died in 74.
- Q. What's her first name?
- A. Irene.
- Q. Irene Goodwin?
- A. Yes.
- Q. She lives in Lavilla now?
- A. She lives in Lavilla. I did know the name of the street she lived on but clear over in the east part, right along not far from the highway side, block maybe a little over. This road goes in there from the highway.
- Q. Okay, go ahead.
- A. And her name was, her maiden name was Brown. Her father's name was Ben Brown and he was the night watchman over there at Maytag for years. There for years after he left Buxton. Him and his wife were separated too and this girl down at Lavilla, her grandmother raised her, and the two boys. But later on while he was at Maytag _____ Ben Brown, that's her father, later on they went back together again. Of course they both been dead now for several years. He died there.

Q. Your brother is Charles Goodwin?

A. Charles Goodwin.

Q. Okay, 1106 F Avenue.

A. That's his.

Q. 1106 F Avenue.

A. And she's a very nice woman and I expect she could tell you more about Buxton than I could. If you ever happen to be down there or write to her.

Q. She very knowledgeable about the Armstrong family?

A. Oh yes, more about it than I am cause she was in Buxton. She was a grown girl when I come to Buxton. Now she wouldn't born in Buxton. She was born in Mutchakinok. But she had two brothers and they wouldn't born in Mutchakinok. I think one of them was born in Buxton and one of them was born down here at old Avery.

Q. Irene was born in Buxton?

A. She was born in Mutchakinok. She was the oldest one, the Brown children.

Q. She grew up in Buxton?

A. She grew up in Buxton. And she probably could tell you a lot more about the Armstrongs and a lot about different things than I could. She went to school there. The churches had their blacks, the schools I think they was mixed, some of them was anyway, black and white kids.

Q. What would you drink at these places?

A. Beer for one thing but of course during prohibition, you know you heard of home brew. ~~N~~

Q. Uh huh.

A. Now they made that and sold it. They'd make it in kegs.

Q. Where did the beer come before prohibition though?

A. Oh they could get license then, they had regular salones. They'd sell beer right over the bar just like they did in Oskaloosa or Des Moines, some would, bigger salones.

Q. We find no evidence that there was a brewery there in Buxton. There wasn't, was there?

A. No. Never did.

Q. Was there a bottling works there that they made pop in Buxton?

A. Yes. Now that was at the south end of Buxton. We were talking about that, Irene. And I thought, and I believe he did but I aint sure, he was at the, I knew him well up here, he come here. He had a bottling works here. His name was Adolf Larson.

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Q. Adolf Larson owned the bottling works there?

A. Owned the bottling works. And he come here and run one for years here,

Q. S-o-n or s-e-n?

A. Son, it's Swede. Knew him well. I got more acquainted with him here in Knoxville though. I never got acquainted with him in Buxton. I didn't even know him. I knew his brother-in-law, his wife's brother. _____ drink a little.

Q. Does Larson have any family left?

A. Yes, he's got one boy. He just had two.

Q. What's the boy's name?

A. Adolf, named after his father.

Q. And where is this son?

A. He's a salesman and he work for some big outfit. He don't live here but ownes a house here. I met him a couple of years ago. I hadn't saw him for oh several years. Adolf lived right here in town right up there.

Q. Where does he live?

A. By God he told me and I can't tell you. Back in the east somewhere. But he works for some big out and goes all over. And then when he gets his vacation, he'll come back here, him and his wife. His wife is with him. I suppose they have an apartment or something, where ever he's at. _____ and he goes all over and I can't tell you now just what he did, what he sold. But I met him up there in the drugstore and talked to him and he told me he come back here when he get much of a vacation. I suppose _____ Right there by Adolf Bottling Works where Adolf lived. That was about oh 6 blocks up the street here.

Q. The way you remember it Carl blacks and whites got along pretty well there in Buxton?

A. Fairly good, yes. Never heard much trouble between the blacks and whites. If you ever heard of a fight it was a couple of drunks. Otherwise, they got along. Now here's one thing. Some did and the most of them didn't associate with the blacks. Oh they'd talk to them across the fence you know.

Q. But not in the _____

A. No they never visit their houses and one thing. But there was some that did and I suppose them that was raised with them from a kid up. Now I told you that old Armstrong, I lived in his house just across the street. He lived like that catercornered, just like that acorss from him. He lived on a farm. His house was a farmhouse. I don't know how many, thousands of acres _____. He told me one time, I asked him. I was buying a car and went over to ask him. He never was in my house, just across the road but the wife went over and asked him. It was an old Mutchakinok house. Four room house and an outside utility room built on to it. And my wife went over one day and asked him, the house was kind of colored at the top. It was just one story. _____ She went over and

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A. asked him if he would do something about it. We rented it. We was renting. He come over and he looked at it. Stood on the outside and looked at it and he told her say he'd get some men and put it back together again, which he did, fixed it back together. That's the only time he was ever in my yard. I was over in his yard, I expect 4 or 5 times. I went over one time _____ to borrow a little money. I was wanting to buy me a car. That's the first car I ever had and the fellow owned it lived just right below me. He was a Slav or something and he was going out west for his self and some of the family. He had 3 or 4 kids and he wanted to sell me that car and he hadn't had it but about a year. _____ That was in 23, the spring of 23 and I was short of a little money, and I went over to get a little money off him, I think about 35 or \$40 off him. His daughter lived with him and kept house for him. That was his second oldest daughter. She'd been married two or three times. I think she and the last man separated and the other ones died.

Q. Was that Lottie?

A. No that was Stella. So I asked her if Mr. Armstrong's home. She said yes, he's sitting in the room in there and I went in there and sat down and talked to him and I approached him about this and told him I wanted to buy this car off this fellow down here and I needed about \$40. I only needed about \$75 all together but I was just short. He said yes, he said Carl I'll let you have \$40 and he went back and got his checkbook and he wrote me out a check. And I said there's only one request that I make about this, just don't say anything to anybody else, I'll let you have it. Cause he said these people will be asking me keep a path clear to my door. He put all of his money that he made at that butcher shop and anywhere else into land and he told me sitting there. They all figure I got a lot of money down there in the bank. They had a bank there, one end of the store. He said they think I got all my money in Albia or down here in this bank. I don't keep no money in the bank amount to anything. I put all my money into land. But he says they think that I've got it, _____ of it. He says just don't say anything to anybody about it. And I never did, never mentioned a word to anybody about it. I asked him now how do you want me to pay this back. You want me to pay it all at once. He said Carl you pay it just as you can pay it. Just as you think you're ready to pay. You can pay it in payments, that's okay with me. So I did, I had about 3 payments and paid him \$40. He was a good old fellow. I've sat and talked to him. Sat in his yard and talked to him. Then there was Emory. That was the youngest boy, he was single yet. But I think along about that time he'd come down here to Tracy, about 10 or 12 miles down here. And he'd put in a butcher shop and he was going with a white girl. _____ lived at Pershing. And he married that girl. These folks were from _____. She was a good looking girl too. He wasn't a bad looking fellow. Emory wasn't a bad looking fellow at all. She married him. Well anyway, as I say when we come up here and I started to work at Pershing, we just packed our stuff in the house and locked the doors up and come up here and I started to work out at Pershing _____ and we didn't move to our next, that's in May that I went down there and got ready and load up my furniture and just as I was getting ready to load Fay pulled out of the yard, she done the driving the car and I went up on this side and I asked him, I said Mr. Armstrong I think I owe you some bread for this last winter and up until now and I said I want to pay it. He just looked at me for a second and he said Carl you don't owe me a cent, not a cent. I couldn't have rented that house. They're moving everything out here all the time and I couldn't have rented it. He said so you just forget about it. You don't owe me a penny. That's the last time I, he died not too long after that. But she lived there in the house for several years after. We'd go down there, My mother's buried down that way. She's buried right east of Bussey about 2 miles, out in the

A. country cemetery, buried by the side of her mother. So we go down there and decorate every year. And we'll go over to Old Buxton. Go through there and then on to Lavilla to my sister-in-law. And always stop, we stopped a couple of times and talked with Stella. She was living there and then later on, I'll say for the last 4 years anyway, I always stop when we would go over and decorate we would go over and go through Old Buxton and I'll stop at this Blomgren and his boy and his daughter never married either one of them. They live there with him and I think he told me last time I talked to him, I think that was oh a year ago anyway, that he was past 89 then. But he's able to get up and walk around. He's a stout built man. But when I went to Buxton he was the stable boss. Took care of the mules in 1916. That's all he had done for several years and he took care of the mules and shoed them, fed them, took care of them, the harness, worked on the harness, mule harness and all of that. Just took care of the mule stable down below and when I went there and when I started to driving mules you know how many drivers they had, 75 in 18 and about _____ You know they worked a lot of men. I'll tell you what they did and they tried to make, they owned them 2 or 3 big mines down Glisby Illinois. They were bigger mines and heisting more coal than 18 did. They had drove 4,000 ton on up, 4, 5 or 600 them mines down at Glisby. That was the Northwestern, the same company in Old Buxton. And John P. _____ was manager over there too. As I say vice president of the coal company, a part of the Northwestern Railroad Company. His brother was the mine manager there at 18, younger brother, quite a bit younger than John P. I never saw him but once, John P. Of course I saw Bill cause I drove mule for him, dug coal too. But I never saw John P. but once and he come out there to the mines. But he'd come there I think about once a year _____. The passenger train he'd come down to Belle Plaine. Catch that passenger train from Belle Plaine come right on up into Buxton on out to 18 on Consaw was just about a mile from 18 then come on up to 18. I saw him there once and he was coming at coal out there and just saw him. He's a powerful built man too. Sort of like old John L. Lewis, heavy built man. So is his brother. Bill was a big man, only taller than John P. but big.

Q. Do you have any photographs or diaries or anything like that that you?

A. Oh no, not of Buxton. I didn't write up nothing myself on it. I used to write up some stuff on a pad when I was here myself after my wife died. She died in 1970 and I was about between 7 and 8 years by myself, just living myself but my son lived over here, him and his wife all the time. They come over there. Well they were there before she died, 4 or 5 years I guess they moved in over here and bought this place. And she come here as a teacher from Des Moines, she was born and raised in Des Moines and they started. And she come here as a girl athletic teacher, basketball and all that and she has a drill team. And she was here, I think a year maybe a little over and she went to _____ She got to be athletic over there and then of course she had to go back to Drake a couple of times. Went there one whole summer I think and spent so many hours you know there at Drake. She got her master's degree. The one over here. She's went back since then taking more. But I don't think she's just got as high as her master's, _____. I guess that's what she is. She get pretty good pay. He is the receiving clerk here for the school, and has been.

Q. Your son?

A. Yeah. He started in as a custodian. I worked over there 10 years. Of course I was just a custodian for the high school all the time that I worked there. I had worked some before I went over _____ the high school. But most of my work

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- A. was in the high school. And then he come and I got him his job. He got out of school and he knew he was gonna be drafted. This was after the second World War, still draft was on then and he was pretty _____ He was up pass 20 I think when he got out.
- Q. Carl but the wages were really good in Buxton.
- A. Wages was real good.
- Q. Compared to the surrounding areas.
- A. That's right.
- Q. We have heard very mixed reports about the treatment of some of the colored people outside of Buxton. Some people have told us that sometimes their treatment was very bad. Colored people had a lot of trouble outside of Buxton. Some people say they don't remember any of that. What do you remember?
- A. Well I'll tell you that is a fact and I'll give you why.
- Q. Okay, what is the fact?
- A. We had coal mining, now whether it's the company, I'll rather think it was more the men. These all union mines remember that I'm talking about. I never worked in any but a union mine. Some of them I imagine it was the men, the union men they didn't like negroes and the company didn't hire them. I can pick you out one mine, one coal mining town that I lived, 2 coal mining towns that I lived in, 3 coal mining towns that I lived in, 4 coal mining towns that I lived in and none of them ever worked negroes until they went and sunk another mine. White City was one 5, that was just 5 miles from Buxton, never worked a negro. The owner of that mine _____ his name was White but they were over just south of Buxton. They was out there in the _____, not over a half mile, could be 3 quarters, not over that. They sunk a shaft then they hired negroes. That was the same company. They hired negroes and then negroes and whites worked there. Now that was the White Coal Company. Now I'll tell you another coal company, Old Evers down here, don't know if you know where that's _____ It about, what is it about 9 miles from Knoxville I imagine around 8 or 9. There's a _____ goes off here and goes straight east of Bussey, straight east of Bussey about 5 miles. There was a big _____ for years. Well the first man run it was Jim Powers. He sunk the shaft and he had three mines there. Had a pretty good size camp. It was oh over a quarter mile long, and a quarter mile wide and he had three mines, one west of the town, one north of the town, #5. He had had mines out further, 7 and 6 but then and I don't know whether any camps in them or not. People from Tracy worked there. People from Bussey worked at them mines 6 and 7. They didn't call that Evers. And when they built up this big camp over there right west of Bussey 5 miles, they called that Evers. I don't know where they got the name from. But Jim Powers was the superintendent. My dad and oldest brother worked there. We was only there one fall and winter and left in the spring. We went clear out across country to a camp name Blights east of Oskaloosa. But anyway we just lived there that one winter there. Never was, now listen that was in 1906 we left in the spring in 1907. It had been going probably 4 or 5 years anyway before we went there _____ negro worked there or lived there.
- Q. So around Buxton was about the only place that colored miners could work?

A. Right close to Buxton yes. That's right. _____ over here they worked a few, just a few.

Q. Why is that?

A. Just the kind of, I don't know. I can't tell you Blights never had no negroes. That was way over across country, only about a half mile from the river. They didn't work no niggers. It wouldn't a negro up there or live there. Boulding this side of Oskaloosa, right there just on the south side of 92, they had 3 mines. Sunk one and didn't work any of the last one. Their first two was _____ #1 and 2 and #1 was right west of the camp, just about a half mile from 92 south of 92, the camp _____ the #1 mile which wouldn't much over a quarter I mean north, south of 92, the camp, so was the mine south of 92 about the same distance and they was about a quarter of a mile apart east and west, the camp and the #1 mine and #2 _____ went back under 92. That's the first mine I worked in down in the mine, right there. It's the first mine my brother two years older worked in, that was just two years older than me. He started digging coal and I started trapping, right back under, just a little east from the highway _____ There's a lot of strip ditches in there since. A lot of coal taken out and a lot of you know _____ pile around there _____. That was, we went to Boulding in 1907. The other brother just a year and a half older than this one, this other one, he started in Blight. That was his first coal digging. Then we come there and then this other one started, two years older than me to digging with dad and the other brother, both of them worked with dad and the older brother drove mules in the mine, and I went to trapping. And I told you what trapping was, just opening the door and shutting it for the mule drivers. I went to trapping there in 1908 in the summer. That was my first down below in the mine. From there to White City 5. From White City 5 to Boulding, no I'm wrong. We went from Boulding over here this side of Oskaloosa. Come from Colen there a little way south of Oskaloosa. Come from Colen to there, Boulding. From Boulding to Durfy's just east of Buxton about a mile and half. From Durfy back to Boulding, no to Boulding. Let's see if I'm right here now. Yes. That was our first time in Boulding. We went from Boulding back to Colen just on south a little ways _____ Oskaloosa. We went from Colen to Evers. That's this place that I was telling you down here 7 or 8 miles and we went from there to Blight over corss country. And from Blight back to Boulding. And that's when I started to work. Now all that moving I can remember from Carbanado all them different coal camps and then we left Boulding that time we went well we went to 5 White City. From 5 White City back to Durfy's just east of Bussey and then we broke up and we all went to Buxton. My dad didn't go to Buxton. He got married right after that. Side track and then we sat all night there and that's where all the miners would get on. Of course they had a stopping place up about a coupld of hundred yards of the depot south, a lot of them from the west end would get on there and all the rest of them would get on down there by the store in the morning and get off there at night but the miner's train coming in would stop at the depot, make a stop a coupld of hundred yards from the store out and a lot of them west Buxton people they'd get off there. Stop for a few minutes, long enough to let them off and then the rest of them they'd go further west, north, east, they let off _____ back at the store back in there and they'd get off there.

Q. There was a fight?

A. This was a fight . We hadn't been there I don't think two weeks there was a fight and that was a knifing. It was 2 or 3 on one and they was knifing him,

Q. Two or three who?

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- A. Negroes, they was all niggers, on one man, a nigger. All four of them negroes. But three of them was on one and they was knifing him. One of them was anyway, and they cut him up pretty bad. And later on I was in the army and my oldest brother was telling me about it when I come back, I started working with him when I come back from the army again and he was telling me about it. And he said I don't know _____ come up about it, after I left and went in the army he went to 7 White City, this one that got cut up and he run kind of, and I think he bootlegged probably too, kind a little gambling joint. The guys would go there and do their gambling you know, shot dice and one thing and ather and there was a bunch of them in there gambling and drinking I suppose _____ and one of these fellows that cut him was in there. He was gambling and he got into it with one or two of the other fellows and they was arguing over money I suppose or something about the game and he told him he was going home and get his gun, shotgun. He did and while he was gone some of the fellows told the man that owned the place that the guy was cut down there over, and he run over to the house and told him what happened and said that he was going home after his gun but he said just sat still he said just where you're at. Don't make no move. He said I've been waiting on this for 3 years. He met him at the door and put about 4 shots right in him. That was the guy that cut him. They didn't do a damn thing with him either. Took him over, of course they didn't do nothing _____ over there to Albia. Give them a little short term and turn them alose. _____ white fellow _____ county attorney over there one day, it was a long _____ said to the county attorney _____ how do you _____. Said a white man get up and kill someone down here he said my god you give 40 years or life. When these niggers come over by God you give him maybe a year, maybe 6 months and if they go to the pen they ain't down there but a couple of years and back in _____. He said well, the county attorney said to him she said hell we want them out so some other nigger can get _____. That's what the county attorney told him and it kind of looked that way. One of them _____ be killed better off, the law.