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Interviewers: Elmer and Dorothy Schwieder. Buxton Project

- A. _____ to go and we got wind of the fact, course they had quit those reunions, we got wind of something that was going to take place down there and he said if I had driven up here he would drive down there, he was just he had played with the baseball team see.
- Q. He was one of the Buxton Wonders?
- A. One of the Buxton Wonders, he was the catcher in the Buxton Wonders, Herman Brooks, he'll be 94 in December.
- Q. Where does he live?
- A. He's in Chicago and he is the surviving member of that side of his family, it was his mother was my aunt you see his mother and my mother were sisters and I'm the surviving member of my family, it was four of us and I think I can manage, I wanted to show you one of my friends, how the family started. You know you stumble on everything, I do and if I can find it real handy real quick _____
But I got a few pictures from Buxton _____.
- Q. Oh great.
- A. Buxton schools and they let us move that kitchen, I didn't think they'd do that, I don't think they would now but we moved that kitchen out there to the other house. I don't believe they do those things now but _____, Now that was what we called a company house, and this was my grandmother's house, she lived she kept miners, roomers and boarders, she built her own house.
- Q. *Oh she built a boarding house.
- A. She built her own house. _____
- Q. *Oh that's interesting, Now did she buy the land from the company then or did she rent the land or?
- A. When she built the house she bought it from somebody else, 5 acres, My mother said the way to have something is to have something growing while you sleep.
- Q. *Growing while you sleep.
- A. She _____ a lovely orchard, she planted, had peach trees and pear trees and apple trees, the gophers ate everything but one pear tree and then the grapes did thrive, the grapes did thrive. But she was the greatest in my family, my mother. She was born
- Q. *And her name now was Minnie?
- A. Minnie, yeah, Minnie London. She was Minnie Robinson before she married.
- Q. *Robinson.
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. *What was your father's name then?

A. Huh?

Q. *What was your father's name then, your father's first name?

A. London, William London.

Q. William.

A. William Henry London.

Q. *William Henry London.

A. And this happens to be a baby picture I think that was made. But I want, I've got some these are some older pictures of mama here, here and here and right there and my brother, he was a physician, and his son is a, he's dead, his son is a physician
he's in Chicago. But I want to show you her early day picture

Q. *What are you looking for?

Are you working on your

Who's that, your mother?

A. My mother.

Q. That's Minnie B. London.

Oh, such a pretty girl, oh my.

A. And this was her mother under here. She had a little indian you know there was a lot of that and the mixture.

Q. That's beautiful.

A. And here's some older pictures of her here you see, that's mama and this is dad, I don't know what to do with these and I feel like I should preserve them some way.

Q. *Oh yeah, oh my yeah.

They're talking about having room sat aside in Albia as a memory of Buxton.

A. Is that so?

Q. And Minnie B. London as you know memoirs and it would be marvelous to have a picture to go with those memoirs.

A. She used to go over there to institutes and what nots you know.

Q. *In Albia?

A. She'd take us over there _____

Q. *Maybe we could start out and you could maybe tell us where your mother came from and when she came to Buxton or if she lived in Muchiconik first. Do you know when they moved to Muchiconik.

- A. She came there in 1891 as a bride,
- Q. *18
- A. 1819.
- Q. To Muchic
- A. To Muchiconik as a bride.
- Q. *Where had she met your father then?
- A. You know that's what I fell to find out, and they had imported in Muchichonik people from different states to work in the mines. And he came from Virginia, he probably came with his father as a young man and my father played the violin I said he wasn't _____ now I wonder where he ever had violin lessons. You got to learn as you
- Q. *Yeah. Was your father a coal miner?
- A. He was at first.
- Q. *At first?
- A. And then they worked in the company store, he and my uncle. they worked as clerks in the company store and he was head of a hardware department see,
- Q. Was this in Muchic or
- A. In Muchichonic. I've got that picture somewhere of that store.
- Q. *Oh you do have?
- A. If I can find it.
- Q. *Oh that would be marvelous. What was the uncle's name then?
- A. E.A. London, Elijah London.
- Q. Okay.
- A. Elijah London.
- Q. *And they came you say from where again?
- A. From Charlottesville, Virginia.
- Q. *Charlottesville, Virginia.
- A. I've thought of doing a little of what do you call this, a family tracing a family tree. I've been going to _____ I've gone a couple of years and for a hot minute I was _____ up to do a geneology but it's a lot
- Q. It's a lot of work.
- A. It's a lot more to it than talking about it.
- Q. *That's true. Cause putting it down on paper.

- A. Yeah. But I ran into I did but of course you can write to the towns, the counties or whatever where your folks lived in and find a lot of information that are on file you see.
- Q. *Yeah.
- A. And I know it was Charlottesville but I did not know the county and I found an application my dad had made, I've got it in here somewhere, for a job. They moved to Des Moines finally, they moved to Des Moines finally and he had worked at Younkers and he had worked at a hotel, my dad, he was fairly qualified but that's the kind of work that he did and he had stated his, it said state your wages was \$18 and something a week _____ that was way back, way back yonder. And my brother had come home sick and he was _____ at 46 years old he was independent, my brother was a doctor, he became addicted and it was one of those things that happened it could happen to any of us you know and we never expected it would happen to us, now that I see the prevalence of it you know and so but he was taken care of here, he had come home from Chicago where he was married and had a wife and children. He had come home and sat up a practice and so he was sick and they were taking care of him, and mama had quit teaching, she moved to Des Moines and he was applying for a job but he finally got work someplace but he kept his spirit you know. He was always cheerful and joined this rosicrucian movement, have you ever heard of it?
- Q. Oh yeah _____.
- A. And he seemed to get a lot of satisfaction of the rosicrucian _____ and I have a few regrets and he left at one time he put me in charge of his materials, and he said if anything happens to me Valetta you are to mail this back to the rosicrucian, well I never did it you see. I have that guilty feeling and when I moved my mother the 2nd or 3rd time, to finally here after the 2 deaths, why I got so fed up on it, it was a little old fashioned trunk that rolled up trunk and it was some junk I put in there and I put that violin in there and left it and why I didn't carry that violin, why I didn't bring it with me I can't figure that out, I was just worn out I guess, I was shouldering all the responsibility see. And my brother had been in the sanitarium of course, and she wasn't satisfied until she got him out you see.
- Q. *Was this his wife you mean?
- A. His mother, my mother. And we went through all of that, not to say that we didn't live through it but those were some of the _____ we had see and finally my brother, Hubert got killed. He got unruly and the cops didn't know how to cope with that type of thing at that time, he would disobey traffic rules. My mother would always rack and see that he had a car you know. He was in Des Moines, he wasn't having any lucrative practice, he couldn't and he had pawned his equipment and stuff you know and all of that stuff. Anyhow, it's a release to talk about it but still it isn't too _____ but I just like for people to know, of course they make a scandal out of it you know, record file make scandal out of it but I feel that I have lived through a few things that maybe people don't understand and I'm not asking for any sympathy but it's just one of those things. But after my brother and his wife had separated and she managed to raise the children and she had a lot of get-up-and-go and she got Bill to finish medicine you see.
- Q. *Did he go to the University of Iowa?
- A. He got his M.S. degree there and he was registered from Chicago at that time and they weren't, as I understood it, they weren't accepting students from out of the state and so he went _____, where your son finished in Nashville, Tennessee.
- Q. In Nashville, Maharry.

- A. Maharry. He went down there. We went to his commencement and his mother and his sister and I. He has a sister, she's a social worker in Chicago, _____ there were just 2 children. So he finished at Maharry and so he started practicing in Chicago and he's been there about 25 years.
- Q. *General practitioner.
- A. Internal medicine. And his son finished about the same time didn't he, and he's up at McGregor but they needed a doctor up there. Of course my nephew shakes his head on a small town. He was raised in Chicago his high school days you know and we had a negro physician here who died and I grabbed on to a notion that my nephew was coming here to take over Dr. Nash's practice, now they could start this, Bill says no indeed, I wouldn't come to a little town, I don't think he would even come here to retire but then he might. But a small town isn't for everybody. He was raised in Chicago and so he went to high school there. It's in his blood see.
- Q. *Where did your mother go to school at?
- A. She went in Lexington, Missouri where she lived, Lexington, Missouri.
- Q. *She was born there then?
- A. Born there, uh huh.
- Q. *And was she hired to come up from Muchiconik _____
- A. You know my aunt, aunt Jeanie was living in Muchiconik, I have tried to figure that mama came up there to visit her and met my dad. I don't cause I didn't find out. You know how important these things are until.
- Q. Until it's too late.
- A. Until it's too late. And anybody I can ask is gone. And she lived with me here 16 years and you think of the things I could have asked her see.
- Q. *Yeah but have to be thinking along those lines to ask questions like that. Do you know how old she was when she got married then?
- A. Well I've got birth records and I can tell you and if she came in 1891 _____ This is mama's own book here and she was born in, they married in March, when was her birthday. Her birthday was in June. And you won't believe it. I've got a newspaper of the account of my mother's wedding in her stuff I brought home. I was yellow with age and as fragile as it can be and the presents she got. If I have to dig in that cedar chest I could show them. She was born in 1868, you got a pencil.
- Q. It'll go down on the recording.
- A. She was born in 1868 and she married in 1891.
- Q. *She was 23.
- A. Yeah, that's about it.

A. So she passed away Christmas Eve here before day, she was paralyzed completely for six months and I had her on a hospital bed in my room you see and took care of her. They finally got somebody to come and stay at night so I could rest at night but she called me all the time. It wasn't rest anyway you know. And one day I was just so worn out I thought I'd lie down a while and I didn't respond to her call right away and she said Valetta I didn't think you'd do that to me _____ get up and go see.

Q. Bright and early.

A. Uh huh.

Q. *Did she continue to teach school after she was married then?

A. Yes, when we were in school, in high school and in college she was teaching.

Q. *She was teaching?

A. Yes.

Q. *Wasn't that quite unusual for a married woman to continue working?

A. I guess it was I don't know. I think it was maybe but she did and I don't know that there're any regulations about it.

Q. *No, just kind of the general social views that the women got married _____

A. Well when I married one day and trained to go over seas the next. I had a job in Virginia, Petersburg, Virginia. Of course I went on my single name that's the way I had signed my contract and that was good policy to keep that single name. And when the army _____ fields was coming back from France and England where he was with the student detachment of expeditioner forces and read a little law in England you see _____ But his sister said you quit teaching, you come on home that married women shouldn't teach you see.

Q. *That was the attitude _____

A. That was the atmosphere then. But that atmosphere didn't seem, that didn't disturb my mother, she had a goal in mind and my dad wasn't going to be sufficient to see us through that stuff see.

Q. *What did she teach, did she teach elementary or did she teach high school?

A. Well I think it was in the grade school. Well whatever we call them, they were elementary and my brother and I were her students at one time and that was a tough situation.

Q. I'll bet,

*I'm sure it was.

A. She didn't want people to think she was favoring us and she didn't. She wasn't so inclined to do that.

Q. *So there were 2 children, were you older than your brother?

A. I was younger, 2 years younger.

Q. *You were born in what year then?

A. I was born in 1898 I think, I'm 86.

Q. *1898, 86.

A. 18 and what is it, 1895.

Q. *1895, Your brother was born in

A. Two years before me. And there was an older child born before him _____

Q. He was born in Muchichonik?

A. Yeah, in Muchichonik. And when I was 6 years old we went over to Buxton. They opened the camp in Buxton, the coal was giving out you see, you know why they moved and so we moved to Buxton.

Q. So 6 would be awfull far ago to remember but from what we can find out there were about 15 or 16 hundred miners in Muchic but there were over 9,000 in Buxton. Do you remember Muchichonik just sort of disappearing and all 16 hundred came to Buxton.

A. They all what?

Q. All of the miners from Muchichonik came to Buxton.

A. Well I don't think so. Some people _____ mama in her article said and I remember some people wanted permanant homes and they went to Des Moines and other places see.

Q. Oh I see.

A. And there are a number of Buxton people here even and girls that went to school to my mother they could probably tell you much about the school as I can if not more. But anyhow no they didn't all go to Muchichonik but you know it's funny, people in Buxton seems to have had such a good time and they seemed to have been of a different caliber than we have run into here. Many of the people that came here were from disadvantaged states in the south. The Buxton people seemed to have been of a different caliber altogether and so that's the way we felt about it. And then there was a YMCA you know and they had plenty of activities there and their boys department of the YMCA but they were manned by negroes professionals. And we had a negro post master, Rev. Mills, the pastor of Corinthian Baptist Church over here, his mother lives up on this street she went to school to my mother, his grandfather was post master there in Buxton at one time. Of course there was the company store you know a lot of them were employed there.

Q. *Did your father continue to work for the company store then after you moved to Buxton.

A. Yes he did.

Q. *And so was he working, was that when Ben Buxton was the superintendent of the mines?

A. Yeah, I'm sure it was when Ben Buxton.

Q. *Was he the general manager of the store then or?

A. Who?

Q. Your father.

A. No he wasn't. He was in the department, he was in the hardware department.

Q. *Hardware department?

A. He the manager store, he was in the hardware department, I have a picture of that store someplace. It was _____ you know. My grandfather they tell me was a shoe maker and they said he had a tiny foot and he always would come in and he was proud of his boots he'd sat that foot upon the chair I don't know, he died before I was born, grandpa London and I never knew my mother's father and her mother used to come from Lexington to spend some summers with us you know, grandma Robinson that picture there and so I even went to, I remember they took me to my mother's great grandmother's funeral her death bed we went to Lexington and I remember grandma Claudy. They said she was 90 something years old I don't know.

Q. The Londons are a long life group aren't they?

A. Yeah it seems like it. _____ here for a while and I don't remember what age Aunt Jeanie was, my mother's sister when she died but I've got it here. Buy anyhow Herman, my first cousin you see he's 93 he'll be 94 in December and he worked for the city of Illinois, he was a custodian at one of the armories of course he's retired naturally, and he's so gracious and every now and then I'd sing a little blues and I'll get a letter with a 10 dollar bill in it you know, I got to get on the telephone and sing a little blues you know and but the best of it was I said I've had a complete physical and now I've got to go to the eye doctor and then go to the dentist, so he says I'll sent you money for the eye doctor, well you know what I got \$10 my eye doctor costs me \$32 but you know what his motto is, every little bit helps, every little bit helps. But Herman is quite a guy and I have to rub him the right way and I was in ceramics up to the center that Christman tree it's not Christmas but I keep it up there and I've done this little tray here you see for your spoons when you're cooking, I want to give that to somebody and I've got a butter dish over there and of course his wife has done some lovely things. And so anyway I had given my nephew something for his desk and I've given _____ some salt and pepper shakers and I said Herman would begin to feel left out, I got busy and he has everything you know, you wouldn't know what to get him and so I made him an ash tray and sent it to him _____. He feels much better toward me now. So he would get childish after a while you know. So anyhow they all live there right there in Chicago. But I even enjoy talking about my family you know they're some interesting characters in many respects and sometimes they kind of irk you but anyway.

Q. They do that whether they're young or old _____

*Well then you went to school in Buxton then?

A. Had to go to Des Moines for high school.

Q. *For high school?

A. Yeah, we didn't have any high school there.

Q. *Now was there ever a high school in Buxton?

A. I had forgotten there was and they said there was one that burned, I remember a big building that burned and the fire fighting wasn't efficient there you see and my father had given me a tiny new testament and that was in that burning building and one of my young friends, mama called him my hero went in to rescue that bible I don't remember whether he got it or not I don't know what I ever did with it but it was for a little while, a little while and then my brother went to Ooauloosa

- A. for one year and that's when I had to milk the cow and see and bring in the kindling and the coal and stuff that was the way we lived including the _____ house you know.
- Q. *Well now you didn't live in the company house did you?
- A. Yes we did.
- Q. *You did live in the company house?
- But it was big enough that you could have a cow.
- A. No we had that out on the 5 acres.
- Q. I see.
- A. Out on the 5 acres we had the cow and so that was my mother's idea to get out, spread out and do you know, do what you wanted to do.
- Q. So you had to hike out and milk the cow twice a day out on the 5 acres.
- A. The barn was right there on the 5 acres, it was right there with us.
- Q. Next to the company house?
- A. No, this is out where we bought on 5 acres and built the house. That's when we had the cow.
- Q. And that's the house there that you're talking about.
- A. No, that's my grandmother's house.
- Q. That's your grandmother's house.
- A. I have one view of that house but I don't think it's very, it isn't as much but this is the company house. And we just lived across the street from there, _____ McDonalds and so anyhow but that was a company house but our house was out on 5 acres and you remember Miss Hopkins don't you?
- Oh yeah.
- A. Well her father built our house he was a carpenter, old man Jones was a carpenter. Mrs. Hopkins not Joe's father.
- Miss Hopkins yeah. Her father built our house.
- Q. Were they from Buxton.
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. Mrs. Hopkins?
- A. The Joneses were, her family were.
- Q. Oh were they.

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A. Yes.

Q. I didn't know that. It seems like all the women were beautiful,

A. Until I find what I'm looking for I'll show you this one. This is one view of a school room and then my mother was there.

Q. Oh that's your mother with one of her classes?

A. Yeah, that's mama with one of her and this was my cousin Bess was substituting for her once she was away or something. But anyhow and this was when I was in the, no but that's not very clear that's one of them. Now this was when I was in the 2nd grade, Miss Elnora Ubanks was our teacher she was a teacher there and I was in there someplace but anyhow.

Q. 2nd grade?

A. Yeah, and that's one of them but _____ what the building was like. I was amused at your wife saying your mother taught in a one room school I said it was not a one room school there were 4 rooms, 2 rooms downstairs and 2 rooms up, and this is one view of my mother and here she is there and I have noticed over the years at how she changed. That was one of the schools here, see Mr. Oland had these pictures and I don't know what happened to that one but and this is another teacher.

Q. *Now this is sure a big building, this was one of the schools too?

A. Yeah, that is a school building.

Q. *That's the school building. was that what they called 5th Street School?

A. Yeah, that was the 5th Street School.

Q. *Oh okay.

A. The other was 11th Street School and I don't know which one this is.

Q. *Yeah, okay you can see.

A. Yeah, they were built just alike. This was a Methodist Church.

Q. *That I've seen, I've seen a picture.

A. Have you.

Q. Uh huh. Did you go to the Methodist Church then?

A. Yeah, we were methodists, and we didn't miss anything Sunday School and I wonder what I learned you know. Anyway we went to revival meetings and everything else. Here I was and I don't know how old I was there and so this is another picture of mama her group. You saw this one didn't you?

Q. *Oh that's nice too.

A. And I wanted to find our house, I was out in the yard with my mother at our house and the funny thing there was no pretense _____ Where we came from in Muchichonik we swept the yard.

- Q. We've heard this, you swept the yard?
- A. We swept the yard, there wasn't anything growing, we swept the yard. When we got to Buxton we just let the grass grow.
- Q. Let it grow.
- A. The weeds and everything.
- Q. *Now did you live in a company house in Muchichonik too?
- A. Well now I guess, I don't know too much about that history, I was 6 years old when we left. But I guess it probably was a company house, it probably was. Because we didn't build, I'm pretty sure we didn't build.
- Q. *Build one there, uh huh. Well you have some wonderful pictures.
- A. _____ Our graduation class.
- Q. *Now when you went to Des Moines who did you stay with
- A. I lived with my aunt for a while and she moved there and I lived with her for a while and my high school principal for some reason grabbed me up and I lived with her, Mae _____ I lived with her until I graduated, I've been kind of drawing my own conclusions about how she captured me.
- Q. But she did.
- A. And so we were in the old high school building down on 12th and _____ I think it was. When I go to Des Moines and go to the capital for something to do the _____ I think about the many days that I walked through that building getting to my school. And her house is not there anymore, it's a building of some kind, a state building. And this was one view of our house out on 5 acres, my husband and I, we were just courting then see.
- Q. *Oh that's beautiful, my you were a nice looking young couple.
- A. We had a horse and when I see these kids riding their bicycle in droves I think of how we used to give horse riding parties together, and go horseback riding.
- Q. *Oh this was one of the things you'd do for your entertainment there in Buxton?
- A. Yeah that's right. _____ We had a stride saddle, my dad often said he was going to get me a side saddle but I got accustomed to that stride saddle.
- Q. *And all the young women would ride horses along with the young men?
- A. Yeah, several you know several rode alone.
- Q. *Would you just go for a ride in the country?
- A. Just go for a ride round about Hope Armstrong, you ever heard of Hope Armstrong?
- Q. Oh yeah.
- A. Around about in there and like that and back before dark you know and sometimes I enjoy how much fun we had, it was fun.

- Q. *Well where did everybody get their horse, did you borrow them?
- A. We'd borrow a horse, I don't know how they afforded it but they did.
- Q. *Your parents had a horse,
- A. We owned a house,
- Q. *Owned a horse,
- A. We finally sold it to a minister and I missed that horse (the telephone people are doing some adjusting) but anyway yeah we bought the horse the financing didn't ever enter my mind things just seemed to happen you know. And so anyhow I got a big kick out of that and you know how stiff you get when you first ride and sometimes I think we had a lot of fun you know.
- Q. *Would you go back to somebody's house then and have something to eat?
- A. I don't believe they did that but I know they had what they call hay rides and I went home one summer and they came for me to go on one and mama wouldn't let me go, she had her own conclusions about that hay riding and slay rides and things like you know but they were group things. But I wish I could find something where that I had where we had a man who led the band there, Mr. A.R. Jackson and he and his family was moving away and they were giving what they call souvenir party for him and they had a program schedule and one of them was, I had them on the program was, what shall we do to save our children, and that was way back in about 19 hundred and something. I tried to figure how old I was and whether I was giving her any trouble at that age. Children have been the worry of parents all along the way.
- Q. *What was a souvenir party, where did the name
- A. That was remember me, well remember you, this was a send off, thing,
- Q. *Oh and it was called a souvenir party?
- A. Called a souvenir party.
- Q. *Well did he teach in the public schools then?
- A. No, I think he was a band leader.
- Q. *But was he hired by the company, who paid his salary?
- A. No, I think the bands were independent things, the group the organized was just like the baseball team, was an independent thing.
- Q. No that baseball team was not connected with the company store?
- A. Not that I know of but Herman could tell you better. He was _____ when I didn't tell him about the Buxton Film he could turn on for it you know, he talking long distance and he felt like the Buxton baseball team had been left out but I called him after that I said have you got any pictures. You see in filming you got to have some pictures, you can't just do all talking, you gotta have something to show. But he could tell you something that I couldn't tell but he didn't stay there, _____

A. When Aunt Jeanie moved to Des Moines, that's my cousin Herman's mother, my brother and Herman rode in the boxcar with the furniture,

Q. To Des Moines?

A. To Des Moines, and I think that the horse, they had a horse too, I think the horse was in there too. And they said they stopped along the way and it was very tiresome you know. But that's the way they got there and you know if you didn't know some of this stuff you wouldn't believe it.

Q. There's no way to know it.

A. No you wouldn't believe it.

Q. *One question I wanted to ask you, you both made the statement that you thought that people that came from Buxton to Waterloo were somehow a little different than some of the other,

A. #Than the Waterloo people?

Q. *Yeah.

A. #They were.

Q. *Can you enlarge on that a little, in what way, did they have more education?

A. #Yeah, they were sophisticated people you might say in comparison to the people were already here because 90% of the people on Waterloo at that time were all from the state of Mississippi. They were people who were running and looking for something better, Buxton people didn't come here looking for something better, they just come here to live because the first black man I ever saw with a brand new automobile was from Buxton.

Q. *Who was that?

A. #He was a postmaster, he had a brand new red car, I never forgot it in my life and we were looking at his automobile. The first black person I ever seen with a brand new automobile, and I have a secret that she doesn't know and she doesn't believe it. We have in Mississippi a large black town.

I don't know what it is, Mound Bayou.

#Mound Bayou but Buxton was the largest black city in America, she doesn't believe that.

I'm not worried about numbers. The people, the type of the people, the people that came into the camps that would come from Baltimore and Virginia they seem to have a different I don't know why but their backgrounds seem to be a little different from some of the Mississippians I better say it that way, cause I don't know who's from Mississippi. But anyhow they seemed to have had more privileges and a little more ready for civilization or something.

#Very different types of people.

Q. Well that's interesting because apparently Ben Buxton went to the south and recruited blacks to work in the mines.

A. Well they came from Baltimore and they came from Virginia, they came from other places besides the south, I don't think as many more southerners came here to work in the _____ as I knew it, that ever went to Buxton. There might have been a few but we had now at the YMCA they had, of course with our teachers it made a lot of difference. We had good programs, we had the days of Booker T. Washington we had him there and all the famous people at that time I can't even remember. And some of these people the younger people say they don't know who they are, I said I've always known who I was. My parents saw to that, they saw to that, that I knew who I was.

Q *That you had a sense of pride about who you were?

A. Yeah, that never worried me, it wasn't my concern, I was just belonged and I feel that I can walk into any group you know and feel comfortable. I don't have any timidity see and I'm proud of that fact you see and I find people that they won't even use the telephone to find out what they want to know. And of course I worked at the YWCA for 20 years in the office I learned a lot there too don't forget that. And I feel that I've been in learning situations and I appreciate it and I've worked as a legal women voters and I've worked at Church Women United and I've worked at Associations of University Women you know of all those things and I have a dear friend who's nothing now but a vegetable _____ - that we had such a delightful time together going to Wichita to the Church Women United you know and I went out on I _____ and stayed with her so we could get away early, I could see then that her living alone, as I _____ back, was getting the best of her and she's a woman of means and Helen _____ says Mrs. Brawn is in Americana and I don't know of anybody she'd rather see than you. I went to see Mrs. Brawn, and Mrs. Brawn didn't know that I was there. She just sat there and fumbled with her shoes and stuff and I kept calling her Irene until I gave up see and I looked at the one in the bed she looked like she was in the same situation. And I said do they get that way when they come, somebody said that's why they come here and I'm on _____ the housing project here our church is affiliated with as members called park towers we bought a old hotel and we furnished it borrowed from the government under FHA and subsidized housing, but there are four churches involved and her son is an attorney and I hesitated to ask Bob about his mother, I felt like it would be humiliating and somebody said it'll be alright for you to ask him about his mother. I finally did last Wednesday at the meeting. He said she's in bad shape Mrs. Fields and I said well we had some wonderful times together, he appreciated that and I said I'd love to see her but I don't believe it would do any good see and it wouldn't you know. They had transferred her to Friendship Village Infirmery and I have a visit there say driver for the counselor on aging you know we can get free, well it isn't so free anymore they want you to pay a dollar when you go roundtrip whatever but that's alright too. And so Richard knows her Richard Olson knows her and he said it's just the same she's just a human vegetable you know she's such a brilliant woman and so it's pathetic what happens to people you know,

Q. *It is, it's sad. You know I wonder, should he be sitting in there, can he break _____

A. Are you getting all this junk I'm saying?

Q. *Oh that's right, I'm just worried about my husband, he won't break your rocking chair will he?

A. But anyway I got my nephew has 2 girls, the 14 year old one graduated from grade school this summer and he's bringing them up if nothing happens this summer he and the 12 year old and my neice has a son that she managed to get through Southern Illinois University in communications and he's worked in Atlanta for a while as

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A. newscaster and now he's in Peoria as a anchorman and she doesn't let you forget it.

Q. I'll bet.

A. She has flert blood because she had one of those kind of husbands you know but she to get him graduated and she says and I'm still paying his car insurance, his car is insured in Chicago and he's in Peoria but anyway she and her brother, my nephew, they coming for Thanksgiving _____ two Thanksgivings they brought the turkey and cooked it you know. That's one picture of my neice there. I have a different better picture but that's just a snapshot, and you read on the back of it and she never lets you forget that he's a anchorman.

Q. *TV news view _____ anchorman.

A. It's one of those snapshots and so I wanted to show you how Jock look, his name is Jock. See her husband's nickname was Jack and I think she contracted it to Jock, Jock Thomas. People talk about their family as if nobody else has a family but this is Jock when he was a little fellow, now he's an anchorman if you please and I said he looks like he might have been something a little you know.

#Oh for goodness sake, I don't know him do I _____.

No you haven't met Jock I don't think _____ . So you see she's a social worker and she ran something off for me so I could have it that she took off the news and that boy is her son there, _____ But that's Jock there, that's the same one you saw his picture.

Q. *Well now did you graduate yourself then from the University of Iowa?

A. 1917.

Q. *1917.

A. And we couldn't have afforded a currier hall which wasn't even built but we couldn't afford that. The order of the day was you lived with a family for room and board and did a little chores you know. And I lived with a family named Swichers and they had some relatives here a lawyer here but anyway before I got there those kids that had gone before said I've got a job for you so when I went I had a job. And that's where I lived for until I had to have an 8:00 class something I had to take and Mr. Swichers they weren't that kind of people I couldn't have got that 8:00 _____ with that time and everything so I moved with my reference librarian at the university library for my last year. That's the way we got through school and the boys tended furnaces none of that now you know and cleaned up, of course they waited tables with fraternities and sororities and things like that.

Q. *In other words, your parents could help you some with your tuition but you had to work too?

A. That's right. We couldn't have gone if we hadn't helped ourselves.

Q. *What did you major in then?

A. I majored in English, don't expect it but I said that was the easiest thing to major in I guess and Botany for the miner.

Q. *Were you going to teach then or did you teach?

- A. I taught in Petersburg, Virginia.
- Q. *Oh you went back there?
- A. That's where I had never been there, I went there.
- Q. *Why did you go all the way back there?
- A. That's where you could teach. They weren't taking negro teacher around here.

SIDE TWO

- A. About how her kids say that every time they go there her kids have their head in the book well they kept themselves informed you know and then she went to school she hadn't gotten her degree, she went up to TC, And Mr. Logan who was superintendent of schools was keeping up with her then and before we knew it she was appointed to teach and she taught up there which is now called Bridgeway but it was just _____ Grand Elementary, she taught up there until she died.
- Q. *So you went to St. Petersburg, Virginia?
- A. Just Petersburg.
- Q. *Petersburg, did you know anybody there?
- A. No, you shopped for a job and my first job was in Mississippi. I had known a boy who went to Ames and finished Agriculture in Ames and he was teaching Ag down at Mississippi, Jackson College, in Jackson College Mississippi and James said we need a domestic science teacher down here Valletta. I think if you apply you'll get it. Well I hadn't had anything but high school domestic science and high school domestic science and matron room dining hall. I stayed a week if that matron hadn't known how to feed those kids they wouldn't have gotten anything.
- Q. *Oh you just stayed a week?
- A. Just a week and I got upset about different things and about the mice I was just dissatisfied, the mice running out of my mattress and they had a riot on the east St. Louis as I went to the rooms as I went down you know, just _____ period I was afraid of but I was game enough to go try it and so I wrote to my mother I said I'm not gonna stay here and Mr. J.T. Hilbert who was president of the schools said there's an opening for you in Petersburg, it's Virginia Noel Industrial, it's _____ it's called Virginia State now at Petersburg right out of Richmond. _____ the principle said why don't you gon on now and accept that Mrs. Fields I said no I'm going home. And my mother would always rack up the money for every emergency, how she did it I don't know. And I wrote to her brother, my uncle in Missouri and asked him for some money to help me on my transportation cause I didn't think mama was going to send it. She sent it and you know what she did, she made me send his back, She didn't want to be obligated that was her theory. She said somebody do a little favor for you you're obligated to them for the rest of your life see. And I think about that many times how she was and there was an old lawyer that wanted to send me to business college. They saw my attendance you know and my mother thought that a teacher was the only thing that a negro girl could ever do but now
- Q. *Was that because she thought that would be the only thing available to you,

A. Yeah, that's right, yeah that's available, that's the word. And Mr. Woodson wanted to send me to business college in Des Moines and she wouldn't think of it. She probably had other empathy other reasons but anyhow she wouldn't think of it.

Q. Now was this lawyer Woodson?

A. Yeah, lawyer Woodson.

Q. *George Woodson.

A. George Woodson cause he had an office in Buxton for a while you know.

#Did Woodson come from Buxton too?

No, he didn't come from Buxton but I don't know where he came from originally, but he was originally in Muchichonik but he came over to Buxton. He ran an office there in Buxton _____. And I don't know where he was native was ~~from~~.

Q. Didn't he have an office in Des Moines too?

A. Yeah.

Q. *Well how long did you stay back in Virginia then?

A. Huh.

Q. *How long did you stay back in Virginia then?

A. I stayed the whole year and as Miss London.

Q. *Miss London.

A. Fields was in France in England.

Q. *Did you know him then?

A. We had married, we had married one day and he had _____. I met him at the University. That's where we met and so we had been going together quite a while and so anyway we decided to get married, I had to make up my mind to do that but I finally did. Anyhow it was hard for me to decide to get married and his mother had died in St. Louis. I don't know whether some of it was sympathy or whether I just wanted to do. Well anyway we married one day in Des Moines at the Episcopal _____ House out there, way out and my cousin, Mary was a witness see and I got the license. They were registering men, he was in camp at camp Dodge and they were registering men from 18 to 45 and the offices were closed at the court house, I went to get, he couldn't get away, he did to get married but he didn't get away, I got the licens, Mary went with me and the offices were closed and we went to the elevator boy and he said I'll call Mr. Horner he'll come down and open up and give us the license see so that's the way that happened. And Fields came in he left AWOL to get married and we married out there somebody had made the appointment with, he was Episcopalian my husband and I had become confirmed too at Iowa City I knew we were going to get married sooner or later. I had been a Methodist but I was confirmed to Episcopal Church and the Episcopalians in St. Louis has the nicest church as the negro Episcopalians _____ church here you know, When we got here nobody ever knew that there were any black Episcopalian,

- Q. *I was gonna say that.
- A. And you were trying to be something different when you went downtown to church you know but my husband was _____ and he wasn't ready to conform and he never did you see he was _____
- Q. *Did you go to the Episcopal church here?
- A. Here yes, this house if you want to believe it was a rectory to the Episcopal Church.
- Q. Is that right?
- A. And it was moved here in 27 and I have a picture of it as original state. Now the church is deteriorating and they're gonna put a housing project there. It's down on 4th and Walnut.
- Q. *Well now, why did you come to Waterloo? Your husband came back from the army then did you go home to Buxton to wait for him then?
- A. I'm trying to think but anyhow we had a friend in Cedar Rapids who was a dentist and they would commute a lot from Iowa City to Cedar Rapids you know and he was practicing dentistry and he encouraged him to come to Cedar Rapids and we went there first to Cedar Rapids and I said it's a beautiful place to starve to death so then this child's uncle was practicing dentistry here, he had finished at Iowa and at that time the shop men and Fields was selling insurance on the side, my husband was Fields, insurance to keep _____ and Rick the men are getting a lot back pay up here now and this would be a good place to come for your insurance business. So here we came you know.
- Q. *The _____ meaning the soliders getting out of the army were getting a lot of back pay?
- A. Yeah, I don't remember any big remuneration but I know that little _____ widow's pension that I get \$50.40 a month with it. But anyway that's the way it is but I don't remember any back pay but we lived in Cedar Rapids for a while and I tried to get most any kind of a job which I never was successful in doing you know and I had a little savings from Virginia and I had his allotment I would get you see we had an allotment we would get and I hadn't spent it you see and we of course that came in handy and he practiced there for a while and we weren't doing anything I branded it as a place to starve to death you know. But anyway we came on up here.
- Q. *So that was in 1920 then?
- A. Yeah just a bare beginning of the year. We've been here 61 years now.
- Q. *I take it you didn't have any children?
- A. No, we didn't have, we weren't so fortunate and we used to discuss adopting 1 or 2 we were afraid to take the chance you know, it's one of those things. It would have been taken care of but we wonder how we could support a child, People think that because my husband was a professional man that we were rolling in _____ but he didn't have that kind of practice, it wasn't that kind of practice here, it wasn't that kind of business.
- Q. *Would you repeat again so we get it down on the tape some of the things you did, you were mentioning for a time you operated an elevator.

- A. Yeah, that store isn't there anymore in a 3 story building and I ran the elevator, somebody was leaving and they got me the job _____ you know
- Q. A gardner.
- A. A gardner and I ran that for a while and then they changed hands and the Sterling Company took it over and I got \$12.00 a week.
- Q. *Instead of \$10.00.
- A. Yeah. And then I don't know when I quit that and then I, Ed Sanders got me a job I think my husband was trying to borrow money and Ed wanted to get him straight so he got me a job at the telephone office where _____ it was a restroom, a lounging room for the operators, I don't know whether they have it now and the cafeteria, that's where I mopped floors see _____ long as this place, they weren't doing many waxing much then and take care of the toilets and things. And go down on Sunday and keep the toilet tissue and the paper towels and things.
- Q. Very lovely job.
- A. Huh.
- Q. It was a lovely job in those days.
- A. Yeah.
- Q. The best.
- *It really was, you're saying that seriously, that you really thought it was a good job then?
- A. Yeah, and I needed some dental work done, with all due respect to my husband, I was beginning to draw in what little bit I was helping him and I said I've got to get my teeth fixed and I'd like to have something to wear, which I did, I kind of pulled in see, I begin to get independent see, I needed some things done for myself. And finally he said I'd buy a little car if you'd help me, I said I will not and so when I got on that elevator job, anyhow I was working down stores didn't close until 9:00 at night and I was working down on 4th Street by the river on 4th Street and the office at that time was across from the shops I had to walk about 8 or 9 blocks home after 9:00 at night, it was safer then. You might be maledsted slightly but they didn't really bother you, you know you could tell them off and keep going. And you know he got that car but he couldn't pick me up. I hold that against him sometimes you know, with what I had helped him do see.
- Q. *Yeah, with what you were contributing to.
- A. Yeah, and even up to 10 years before he died, did I tell you this. I hope I haven't told you this, I worked on the national census you know.
- Q. *Yeah you mentioned you did here and you went to _____
- A. And he acted like he couldn't wait until I got that check cashed you know and I said I'd like to have a dress which I got you know, I got a dress out of it but it seems so medial for me, I was eating dust see and it kinda got, but otherwise he was good, he wanted to go with everything like rodeo, the _____ and to Harmony, Minnesota to the caves and the _____ he always wanted

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Q. You travelled?

A. Get out and to do something, And in later years we became active in NAACP you know what that is, and he was president for a while which I was later and we went to conventions and we got to travel that way, And so one year we went to Richmond, Virginia which is just like from one trip to Petersburg where I taught was just like going from here to Cedar Falls, So I called the president of the school, I wanted him and Dr. and Miss Ferguson to see where I had come, I said we don't want to appear before any assembly you know, and we just want to come up and meet you and see the campus. so I got to take him, we went over to Petersburg to see where I had taught see. It was good to get back and when I stepped out of the car one of the teachers that was there when I was there said Valletta London, that was my maiden name you know and I remembered her name too, And President Gamby and an aside says to me Hugo liked you, Hugo was _____ History then and he did fall in love with me I prayed and of course he had married since but anyway when we came out of that convention hall who was standing up against the wall but Hugo to say hello to us and meet my folks you know, I would hardly believe it, They had told him I was in town you see. That was the most unbelievable thing I've experienced you know, And when President Gamby said Hugo liked you, and he was in love, I'm afraid he was in love with me but I couldn't tell him you know it was an awful thing, and I remember _____ was signed while I was teaching see and we paraded across the whole campus paraded across the city in Petersburg that day and listened to some guy talking you know, and then I wondered how soon Fields would be coming back, So well this acquaintance that had recommended me for Petersburg had lived in Buxton, her husband was secretary of the Y at one time and she knew my family and she had recommended me for the job because he wanted to visit everybody that he hired before he employed them but she vouched for me and I got the job.

Q. *What was his name then?

A. That was McGrew.

Q. *Mcgres.

A. McGrew and McGrew had died but I spent many weekends with Mrs. McGrew over in Richmond just like from here to Cedar Falls as I told you, And I told her my predicament, I said I can't come back I've got to tell them I'm married they want to know about next year's plans and you know what she did, cause she had contacts with the Y people and she knew a YWCA woman that was in charged of the _____ she introduced me to Miss Ruffin, Miss Ruffin says I can place you, said I can place you as a war worker with girls right here in Petersburg but that's too close, She sent me to Charleston, South Carolina, I spent a glorious 3 months in Charleston, South Carolina, They met me with _____ with a frienge on top, you talk about all of that but I had it and that's the way it was, And so the director of the Y had a place for me to live and everything and of course there was a negro college _____ it was a town of kind up and coming you know, And my husband wanted to come there and look it over and I discouraged him, I didn't think he had the temperament for that atmosphere see, But it might have been the best thing he could have ever done see but I didn't have him come, I met him, I came on, I quit _____ my contract and met him in Des Moines and then we started to try to get started to Cedar Rapids and then ended here, But it's _____ it would make a real interesting story.

Q. *Oh yeah it is a very interesting story.

A. But I don't regret anything, The woman that helped me get this job introduced me to the right person you know to get me a Y job, cause her husband had been a YMCA man and of course she had contacts, Why I wondered where she was and this friend in Selman told me, gave me her address, she was at a nursing home in Hampton where she

A. had gone to school in Hampton, Virginia where the school. And I wrote to Mrs. McGrew and told her all what had happened ~~since~~ we had known each other and some things she didn't know and she was so pleased to get and she had some foster children that did her correspondence for her and kept track of her mail. And we corresponded for a little while and so here two years ago when I came from _____ I found a letter in my mailbox Valletta London Fields I said whoever knows me by Valletta London Fields, that's the way I used to use it and I did it for benefit so she would know who I was. And it was from her from them, from her you know and she had died, no she had been installed as some sort of permanent person at Hampton and they sent me pictures of it and everything. She was 107 and she since died. Ruth told me over from Salmen that she had since died and I kind of lost track but I may find that picture and show.

#We're both getting old.

Q. You know times goes by doesn't it?

A. #Oh my what you talking about. You know my children just wont old at all, they think I'm going to live forever. I have 3 daughter down at Marshalltown and they say I talked to them last night, they called me oh dad, oh Lord they just think I'm tough. A few years ago I got ran over with a 18 wheel truch and the doctor said he's dead. My children prayed me out of the grave, they just think I'm _____.

(Can't make out) _____ And Mr. McGrew had died a number of years before, I can't find it I got too much junk, I've got to get rid of that junk. I call myself clearing out my files of receipts but it doesn't look like it. And you're kind of afraid to throw some of them away I guess.

Q. Yes, I think that's true.

A. But I appreciated that experience in Petersburg and Camp Lee was going there _____ and they would take us out to entertain he company for the soilders.

I had my first New Year's, what they call it, some people seem to think they have to have on New Year's pig feet or pig ears or whatever.

Q. #Pig feet and blackeyed peas.

Huh?

#Pig feet and blackeyed peas.

Yeah pig feet that was my intorduction to that out of Camp Lee and then the soilders would come in and we'd have dances and they'd never danced at that school before and they had several of us young teachers, we revolutionized the place. Irene and Elizabeth the other girl, I forgot they were from Massachusetts and I was from Iowa and believe it or not I was really a curiosity, I don't know why they expected me to be wild and wooly and have buck and brow here and maybe I was a little vivacious and Harriet, one of the teachers said I don't see why Hugo took to you, we've been around here all the time, I got a picture of hime too but we'll let that by. But it was a wonderful year and he and I corresponded for quite a while after I went to Charleston, I don't know so I finally decided to settle that cntract and come on back home and I never had any trouble buying a ticket and riding where I wanted to ride and you know there are rules and I don't know why I happened to miss it but they didn't push me in the Jim Crow car anything and I didn't have any trouble getting my ticket out of Charleston but I had some trouble on the bus. They had a one

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- A. man bus streetcar and I went to town one day and you go in the front door in the one-man bus, one man you know and you pay your fare you go sit where you suppose to sit and when you leave you're suppose to go out the back door. Well I rushed to the front to go out and he said you go back and go out that back door I said I'm gonna leave this don gone place as soon as I can get away from here. That was the only unpleasant thing I had happen to me see because I forgot where I was and I knew Fields wouldn't like it either, I knew he wouldn't but he'd have to take it see and so.
- Q. Did you notice _____ said there was a difference in the depot, did you really encounter your first serious prejudices in Cedar Rapids or here? We take it there was none in Buxton, people got along very very well, there was no
- A. Yeah, if there was any in Buxton I didn't realize it but of course the people sort of lived a little different areas and the Swedish people had their own settlement, East Sweetown and West Sweetown and they had their school of course and of course we had the officials and all they lived right down on the _____ first streets and all and I can't remember that in our immediate neighborhood that there're any mixture people at all.
- Q. *You lived in a black area then, in other words is that what you're saying, that you don't remember any mixture?
- A. No it wasn't sat off in blacks but we can think of it in those terms and we lived in a little area they called Gobblers Knob it was kind of on the hill see.
- Q. Okay, we've heard of that.
- A. Have you heard of Gobblers Knob, yeah. And so I couldn't find that picture of mama and me out in the yard but anyway I just don't, I'm trying to recall you know how mixed up we were there.
- Q. We've heard for example that you could go to the movies both black and white and you didn't have to sit in _____
- A. Oh yeah that hadn't got there.
- Q. How about roller skating, did they have roller skating did they mix.
- A. Yeah, in the YMCA we had this auditorium where they did roller skating.
- Q. Now did they have white, roller skate one night and blacks the next?
- A. No, I think it was as far as I can remember
- Q. It was mixed.
- A. Yeah, uh huh it was all the same night and if they had a different night I didn't know it. And our school closings were really prepared for, there were flag drills and things we rehearsed for you know. We were on display so to speak.
- Q. *In other words the program you put on at the end of the school year was really a very big event?
- A. Yeah, that's right, you got ready for it.

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Q. *You really had to do well?

A. Yeah, the teachers thought it up and read up and that's what we kids did.

Q. *And then all your parents came?

A. Yeah they came. And it was usually at the YMCA auditorium, The schools weren't equipped to have them. They were, the school seats were benches you know and anything big was down at the YMCA.

Q. *How many schools do you remember now. I take it that the Swees had their own school we've picked that up.

A. That what?

Q. *That the Swees had their own school.

A. Oh yeah they had their own school and there was a 5th Street School and right in the heart of Buxton and then 11th Street School a little farther out, the two schools,

Q. *And they were both grade schools then?

A. Yeah, they're both grade schools,

Q. *And your mother taught at which one then?

A. She taught at both of them and they finally said, I heard that she was principal of the school she was out at when I came down from school or some place she was out there at 11th Street,

Q. *11th Street,

A. And I guess they sort of transferred them, And so

Q. *What street did you live on then do you remember what street you lived?

A. They were kind of numbered but not too much, I guess it was I don't know I think it was up there on Globblers Knob I think it was 5th Street I guess, I know my aunt lived on what they called 7th Street on across the gulley, there was a gulley here and we, why my folks ever picked that site for it I don't know but they called it Globblers Knob,

Q. *You made the statement that company officials lived on the 1st Street,

A. On what?

Q. On 1st Street, was that so they could be closer to the company store and everything?

A. Yeah, I'm sure that was it. That's where many of them lived and they had electricity and stuff, the houses didn't have that. We had kerosene lamps see,

Q. *Were the houses on 1st Street the same layout as the other houses or were they bigger houses?

A. I think they were about the same except Ben Buxton he had his own big house up here someplace. We were privileged to get up there one time, my aunt worked up

- A. there I think for a while so we got up there _____ hook or crook see,
- Q. *Do you remember where the Buxton family came from or where they went when they left Buxton, do you know anything about the family?
- A. No, I don't I don't know whether mama says anything about that or not, I'll look and see. I don't know about that and so I don't know whether _____ either.
- # _____ I don't know why my folks never came from Buxton as coal miners, I came from a mine _____ too.
- Q. *Did you?
- A. #I came from Kentucky.
- Q. *Kentucky.
- A. Oh dear, Charlie had this paper called the Observer, that's what
- Q. *I've heard of that.
- A. Mama wrote a series for him, hhat's how she happened to do this and he wanted something on Buxton and she did a series and she was in her late 70's when she did this and so she wanted to call it my memoir but Fields said change the title to As I Remember and that was a better title. And some of the club girls have had this and they have got it all out of filter here,
- Q. *What year did your mother leave Buxton then?
- A. I'm trying to think when that was, about _____ I know it ain't here, I'll have to kind of ~~think~~ about it. It was after I graduated, I graduated in 17 she was teaching through up to get us through school I know and it must have been about 1920, I don't know that's just approximately.
- Q. *1920 uh huh. Was your father still alive then.
- A. Yes, he was. He did go to Seattle for a while it seem like a _____ or something but he went to Seattle for a while and she went out there and got him. That's something that we just had to accept and so anyway I never did find out exactly what it was all about, and he was disallusioned about something.
- Q. That as I remember has been published
- A. Huh?
- Q. That has been published that manuscript somewhere.
- *Copies of that are _____ Historical _____ in Iowa _____
- A. Is that so? Uh huh, I wouldn't be surprised.
- Q. *Could I just glance at that.
- A. Yeah, I don't know whether I've got the first of it or not, _____ the first of it and it's all out of shelter and someday I'll take time and put it like it should be. Ada had it for her club for some display and they made copies and that's the way they handed it back to me. And so something I was gonna look for when you asked me about.

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- Q. Where the Buxtons went or if there _____
- A. Oh yeah, well that I don't know for sure and I don't know whether she even says there or not she might. I know _____ has an article. You know what _____ is, I had a little article that mentioned her name. One of the Swishers seemed to have done that, John was one of the young families I lived in, Steven Swisher was who I lived with there, Steven Swisher and there was a son, Steven Jr. and he married Dorotheetta, her father had a store I think she was Jewish. But anyway they had children and then
- Q. Is that what's at Iowa City?
- *I think so, although I don't know that it's, I presume they've got all of this, I just don't know I can't remember.
- A. _____ see that historical place about to Iowa City.
- Q. Iowa City or in Des Moines?
- A. In Des Moines, where is that located?
- Q. Right across the street from the state capital. Right across Grand Avenue. Great big old building State Historical.
- A. Rose mentioned 2 or 3 years and ~~had~~ its quite a lot of _____ down there that I would like to see ^{you} got his _____ Masters degree on it anyway.
- Q. It's an interesting place.
- A. (Can't understand) Association of Colored Women Club
- Q. *Well I've just briefly heard about it.
- A. I see. Well this is just one of the programs they had in Cedar Rapids in 62 and Miss Riee was a negro lawyer in Des Moines, she was a _____ in club work and Miss Esso Brown have you ever heard of her?
- Q. *Yeah, uh huh.
- A. She was everybody organizer. I can't find that _____ and one of my friends have _____ in school a program at her club and I let her have some stuff I didn't always get it all back. I let a girl have, she wanted something on Paul Lawrence Dunbar and I gave her something for his background and something and a book of my mother's I the kids had given her, a book of poems. She kept it so long I kept worrying her, I was afraid she'd forget and I'd forget it, and she got peeved about it you know, I wasn't gonna steal these from you, I wasn't afraid she'd steal, I just wouldn't want them to get loose. My father had lost some Encyclopedia Britannia that way. Cause you see we didn't have libraries and he had his own library, reference librarian and they believed in building a library you know a lot of books. My husband started that stuff here too, _____ but this is the fellow in England here where they was a student distachment see. This was Muchichonik. This was a one room school in Muchichonik. See those big kids and the younger kids there and this was me and that was my girl friend, we were inseparable.
- Q. *Pretty small there.

- A. Yeah, uh huh and so these big kids, see this was the teacher, Miss Jones, But that was Muchichonik see and my brother started to school ahead of me and here he was down here in this group, same type of building. But he was up here too but he'd gotten a little bigger, there he is right there with that cap on my brother. But isn't that something to have this?
- Q. *That really is, You said you might have a picture of the store in Muchichonik.
- A. Yeah I do have.
- Q. *Oh, that's find though if you dont know where it's at, no problem, I just thought maybe it was in that little book.
- A. I'd forgotten I'd mentioned it now, see if I can find it, I learned that my father's father was a hunchback, I never knew that you know until later years and he was a shoe maker also a shoe maker, and they said he was proud of his feet and he always come and stuck his foot up on the chair and he died just before I was born see I never knew him and my grandmother's name they always spoke of her as Ella, Ella London. Well in this manuscript of my husband's I found her name was Gabriella, that was the shortening of Gabriella see I never knew that until I saw that. So I don't know whether I'll write a geneology or not bu
- Q. *I think you ought to, I think it would be
- A. It's so much and I still have to do a lot of investigating but they told us, we learned how to do it and call these places.

Who's your friend down there.

Yeah, that's Professor Lawrence Jones and he had this school in Piney Woods and this is Miss Ferguson the first teachers here at Waterloo. You know it's a great emphasis on the first black until it gets to be a byword but it was something that just hadn't happened before and let me see I got it here.

Q. *She started teaching in 1952.

A. When was it?

Q. *52.

A. 52, uh huh.

#Lawrence Jones had a crush on my wife, I never _____
He never come to Waterloo he didn't come to my house, and I thought he was coming to see me.

Q. Uh huh and know you know. Dorothy we have spent a long time, I don't think we need to wear out the welcome.

A. Well some cold water I don't have any 7-Up.

Q. *Well that'd sure taste good but I don't want to, could I do it?

A. Then which would you rather have the coffee or the water or the tang, I got a little tang.

Q. I'll take a glass of water, would be fine with me.

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Q. Can I help you, can I do it?

A. You can come out here if you want to maybe _____

He might have flattered me but that was supposed to be me.

Q. *That's lovely,

A. #You know I just can't imagine that's, to me you look today like you looked when you come to Waterloo. You were a beautiful girl I'm not saying that

I don't need that _____ claim in Virginia. So anyway they made a queen out of me in Virginia and so

Q. *You probably didn't want to come back did you?

A. I wondered why I married so soon, really. And Hugo had it made you know, he was a professor of history, he had done work on Indians and whatever and do you know I got him to be confirmed in the Episcopal church you know. I think he thought we were gonna get married you know. That was a dirty trick, maybe it wasn't I don't know but anyhow that's it's and open confession today, confessing see. This fellow is my neice's mother's brother. He was the dentist that encouraged us to come here, that's the way he looked, and so let me see. You know I've got so much stuff, I don't know what to do with it.

Q. *Don't throw any away,

A. Here's some in different states -

She sewed. Here's our Buxton where we lived in the company house, that's what I wanted at one time.

Q. *That's you and your mother sitting out front?

A. Uh huh. And I wanted to find the store in Muchichonik.

Q. *Do you think we ought to try any pictures, do you think _____

None of these, these are too

A. _____ my dad looked one time. There was a stove piped _____ ^{as} that they call and I've got some pictures of him when he was meeting the choir, he was in the choir, he died in the choir. Yeah, he was singing a song, ~~whether~~ whether shall I go and he just keeled over, so that was the way that was and

Q.* Mrs. Fields could I ask you just a couple more questions about Buxton?

A. Yeah,

Q. *One of the things that has intriged so many people about Buxton is that it really seemed to be a community where people lived together, even though there might have been well a predominately black area or predominately white area that overall still race relations were very good,

A. Yeah, course I don't remember of anything adverse stages, it could have been there but I didn't see it. But when they had those reunions the whites would go as well as the blacks you know. The ones that I've been to _____ and so they even tried to have it in Des Moines but after a while it begin to fizzle out you know and so many of the old timers had died it didn't mean

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A. anything to the younger people like it did to us see.

Q. *One other question too I want to be sure and ask, we've encountered a lot of lodges, apparently there were a lot of lodges like

Masonic lodge _____

*Do you remember those as being pretty important in terms of your social life?

A. Well the court what they called the _____ court Order of Eastern Star, as I remember the Order of Eastern Star had wasn't started then but it later became the Order of Eastern Star they called the court then.

Q. *The Court.

A. Uh huh. And there was the Masons and the Odd Fellows and they turned out, they had annual days when they had the band, the Buxton band and they'd parade and go to the church and have a service. Maybe the Elks do that here sometimes, _____ have a parade but they did, I remember that.

Q. *What else did they do, was it sort of like the carnival or did they just go?

A. Oh you mean the lodges?

Q. *Yeah.

A. I don't think they had, I don't remember if they had any carnivals but we had a Buxton park there, what they call a city park and they had barbeques there on 4th of July and people would get together for that.

Q. *Was that sponsored by the company then?

A. I would have to speculate about that and I think it practically was. Of course there was a man had got some sons or grandsons or whatever here, that peddled the lunch wagons out in front of the YMCA too where they sold hamburgers and _____ see.

Q. *What was his name do you remember?

A. Reasby.

Q. *Reasby.

A. R-e-a-s-b-y. His son Harold and Anthony both live here, _____ sons or grandsons but _____ but if you want to see something this is my husband's father. I wish you could see, he was a big large man, I wish you _____

Q. He was really decked out. He looked like he won the war,

A. He sure does. Old man Fields was a _____

Q. If it was there, he'd belong to it.

A. Fields wanted to take me down there to meet his folks see on Christmas and my mother managed to sacrifice for me to go to St. Louis cause Fields his father

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- A. had worked for the railroad and he thought he could get a pass for me but the old man wasn't in that mood. One of the daughters had slipped off and got married and he'd even said that she couldn't come home anymore but she was there at Christmas she was there and so but we went, I went and so I had never ridden in a pullman you see and I racked up my little money and got a pullman _____
- Q. Oh boy, first class all the way.
- A. I think about how game we were Mr. _____ well he was a _____
- Q. His name is Herman Brooks.
- A. Herman Brooks.
- Q. Where does he live, do you know his address and telephone number? There're some things about the Buxton Wonders that I want to
- A. Would like to know
- Q. And I've never hit anybody who was actually
- A. He'd be thrilled because he was _____ that they overlooked that
- Q. Well we won't let that happen, we may get to Chicago and we'll phone him or go see him.
- Herman Brooks, 702
- A. 702 East 50th Place
- Q. 702 East 50th Place
- A. Chicago, and his 60615 is the
- Q. 60615, okay.
- A. _____ and his telephone is KE, well it was KE then I've got the letters
- Q. Get your pencil Dorothy.