

Buxton Project

Interviewee: Carl Kietzman
Tape #: 43A
Date of Interview:
Place of Interview: rural Albia
Interviewers name(s): Joe Hraba

I'm here with Carl Kietzman in rural Albia.

Q: Carl, could you tell us your full name.

A: Carl Frederick Kietzman, Sr.

Q: Carl, when were you born?

A: November 5, 1901.

Q: Where were you born? In Buxton?

A: In Mutchie.

Q: In Mutchie, Okay. Your parents, what were their names?

A: My father's name was Robert William Kietzman and my mother's name was Amelia Bay. My father was an immigrant from Germany.

Q: An immigrant from Germany? Well, how about your mother, where did she come from?

A: She was born over in Illinois - Grand Center.

Q: Carl, when did your father and mother come out here? Did they come together? Were they married back in Illinois?

A: No, my father's family came up to What Cheer --

Q: When was that?

A: I just wouldn't have any idea when that would be. Quite a while before I was born.

Q: Okay, back in the late 1800's, huh?

A: I'd think probably yes. I have a brother and two sisters older than I am.

Q: What were your brother and sister's names?

A: My older brother is Robert. He died in '24 from a perforated ulcer. My older sister, she was killed in a car-train wreck at Coalia, Illinois. _____ before Labor Day in 1921. And my sister just older than me, she was in the same wreck. She was in a hospital in Bloomington, Illinois, for 2 months, pretty badly mangled up but if she was still living now she'd be 82 next month.

- Q: Hmm-mm. Okay. Your father came out to What Cheer? What did he do there? What did the family do there?
- A: Worked in the coal mines and then he went to Montana when Montana was a territory. And that's where he got his citizenship at.
- Q: Your father did?
- A: If you recall, at that time, at the end of three years you had to make a Declaration of Independence or a declaration of Intent
- Q: Right.
- A: And then at five years, you got your naturalization papers.
- Q: Okay.
- A: So, he made his declaration of intent when Montana was still a territory. He got his naturalization papers when Montana became a state.
- Q: And then he came back to Iowa?
- A: Well, he worked out there in the Anaconda_____
- Q: That's right, Okay.
- A: Then he came back to Iowa, he started in the coal mines.
- Q: Do you have any idea of the year he came back to Iowa?
- A: Well, get that thing offen me.
- Q: He was born here in Iowa 1895?
- A: I think he was born around What Cheer.
- Q: When did they go to Mutchie? Do you have any idea?
- A: That was probably around 1901, the early.
- Q: When did they move into Buxton then?
- A: In June, 1912.
- Q: June, 1912. So your family lived in Buxton June, 1912 til when?
- A: Till 1918. And then we moved west of Buxton about a half mile on a acreage.
- Q: Okay, 1912 to 1918. And then an acreage just outside of Buxton. For how long, Carl?
- A: Well, _____ he died in '33.
- Q: What did your dad do in Buxton, mine?
- A: Worked in coal mines.

Q: Did you ever mine, Carl?

A: Seven years.

Q: Seven years. Which mine did you work in?

A: I worked in Buxton 18.

Q: I hear Buxton 18 was a damn good mine. Is that true?

A: That's right. I've heard say there were 900 men worked there.

Q: 900 men at 18. 18 or 19?

A: 18. And my dad and I, we worked quite a few blocks. _____ so many rooms and they'd leave a block 40 feet wide and 60 feet long.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: And we'd go and work them blocks out. My dad had a powerful pair of wrists and he could swing a pick. And a lot of the coal miners don't care about drivin entry or swinging a pick. They'd rather work in rooms. He'd worked there before. He worked with a double shift when they was startin' up 18.

Q: Um-hum.

A: I went there, I finished my sophomore year in high school.

Q: Where was this? Where'd you go to high school?

A: I went to high school in Albia in 1915 through 17 and then I started in the coal mines as soon as school was out. In 1918, my father - I wouldn't say he was the best coal miner in southern Iowa, but if there was any better I never seen one or heard of one. He could always get a job. Fact, the companies used to ask him to come work for them. He could produce. In 1918 we went to foreman Edward Hoover #2, they asked him to come over there. Well, we had to walk about a half a mile from home to catch the miner's train to go to 18 and we could walk just about another mile to go to Hoover and we could put in a day's work and be home and washed and have supper before the miner's train came in. . .brought the miner's back from work.

Q: Okay.

A: And that's the only mine I know of in this area that had rock top where you didn't have to cut no timbers. You see, west of here there's a fault in the formation of the coal. No. 10 Buxton, that's the first mine that Consolidated Coal Co. had in this township. They hit the fault comin' north and they couldn't get through. They tried, they spent a lot of money trying to get through. No. 7 _____ City was the Crescent Coal Company, they had a mine down here about a mile and a half west and they hit it going west. And they didn't get through. And then Hoover shut down in '23.

Q: What is this fault, Carl?

A: Well, just - the coal just cut off.

Q: Hm-mm.

A: After Hoover shut down, my dad and I went to Rex #5. But after the Northwestern pulled the railroads out, the Smith brothers, three of them had a mine on the west side of that fault. Of course, I'm working the same mine as _____ and I think it was _____ and I went down when they hit that fault. They wanted me to go down below with them to see it, they had _____ Wanted to see that fault. And that coal just cut off at about a 45° angle just slick as glass. After that there wasn't no coal.

Q: Was that true for virtually all the mines in the area? They hit that fault?

A: Just those three mines.

Q: Just those three.

A: Hoover hit it going south; No. 10 Buxton hit it going north and White? City hit it going west. This whole township Buxton had from No. 10 through 17 with the exception of No. 14. No. 14 was over in Mahaska County.

Q: Okay.

A: What mines they had, oh, you'd say they was in a rough circle. Within 2-3 miles of Buxton. And they take the miner's train out, that was cars with the seat taken out, and just a bench along each side and a bench in the middle. That's the way we rode the miner's train.

Q: How many cars were there on the miner's train?

A: Well, there's, probably 8 or 9 cars.

Q: Again, you say that about 900 men worked out at 18?

A: Yeah, but each mine had some houses.. The Company built houses at each mine.

Q: And there's some at 19, too?

A: Well, they built a town that's called Buxton at 19, and they laid the track to sink No. 20, and had a town up there.

Q: What was the name of that town?

A: Heydock. But they never opened 20. They laid the track up to it. They had labor problems and Consolidated Coal Company took their business down to southern Illinois, around Gillespie and Bunnell. And then the fourth day of July 1935, in the west end of the county, we had 6 inches of rain in 2 hours and it washed all the bridges and the rail bed, washed some of that out. They had an engine and a train load of coal on west up there at 19. They repaired the tracks to get that engine and load of coal out, then they pulled the tracks.

Q: So they were still mining up at 19? Until '35?

A: Well, no, they probably quit before that; they went on a strike. I don't

know how long they was on a strike.

Q: I see.

A: The miners all scattered from there.

Q: Where did you live in Buxton? Here, take the map and have that help you get oriented.

A: Three different locations. We lived at 3 West 10th St.

Q: 3 West 10th St?

A: 3 West 10th St., 9 East 13th St. and 2 West 2nd St.

Q: Were all three company houses, Carl?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Can you describe the company house? the company houses you lived in to me? What did it look like on the outside?

A: Well, they were frame buildings and story and a half.

Q: What color were they?

A: ~~Originally they were red~~ Barn paint, dark red paint. And then later on they painted them white with red.

Q: What do you mean, "originally they were red" When were they red?

A: Well, when they first built them they painted them with a dark red color. And the Company took good care of their property. There were four houses per acre.

Q: Had a quarter acre each?

A: Yeah. A quarter acre each. And they were story and a half, 5 room house rented for \$7 per month.

Q: Two bedrooms upstairs?

A: Two bedrooms upstairs and you had a kitchen and a dining room and some had a bedroom downstairs. And then they had a 6 room house - that was kitchen built on, those rented for 8 dollars a month.

Q: So 7 and 8 dollars a month. Did you rent the land with the house?

A: That's right.

Q: Same price? All one price?

A: That's right.

Q: How much were the miner's making in those days?

A: Well, Company man, that was working days work, when I started was getting \$3.60 per day.

Q: \$3.60 a day.

A: For 8 hours.

Q: Eight hours -- 5 days a week?

A: Six days one week, and pay day twice a month - 5 hour days.
When necessary we had four pay days during the year they was 3 weeks
between pay days. You can figure that out -- got paid twice a month.
Payday was the first Saturday after the 5th and the first Saturday
after the 20th.

Q: Now when you were making, what was it, \$3.60 a day, Carl?

A: No, we worked with _____, that's piece work.

Q: How much were you making then?

A: Ninety-seven cents per ton on the solid. But if they had mining machines
they 77¢ per ton for machine pulled.

Q: How many tons would you pull out of there a day?

A: Well, much of 18 at that time was producing 3,000 tons of coal a day.

Q: 3,000 a day.

A: 3,000 tons of coal a day and they would take 60 fifty ton cars; that's
what they held when they started. They had fifty ton cars. Not like
they use today -- 100-ton cars.

Q: What do you remember your pay being at the end of the week, Carl?

A: Oh, that would vary. In the summer time why maybe you'd have one or two
days off a week. That's when you worked for the Buxton Company because the
' north, that was Consolidated Coal Company and it was a subsidiary of the
Northwestern Railroad. And the Northwestern Railroad used all their coal
for their steam locomotives. They'd pull it from here to Belle Plaines for
the main line. And they would take the miners out in the morning, gather
up the previous day's product and take it to Belle Plaines and bring the
empty cars back. By that time it was quittin' time and they hooked on the
miner's train.

Q: Um-humm.

A: The miners had what they called
-- had a brass disc with numbers on it; that was their number. You took your
disc off this off this _____ board in the morning and if you forgot,
the Company fined you.

Q: What, 50¢ or something like that?

A: A dollar.

Q: A dollar.

- A: And you take your _____ with you when you went in the mine and when you come back out at night you hung it back on the _____ board. If you forgot to hang it on the _____ board, then the Pick Committee would come to the miner's pool and check all the member's out, checking on you. Now if you forgot it, then your local Union fined you a dollar.
- Q: Okay, again, what do you remember making on the average?
- A: Well, when I started in as a boy two men and a boy got what they called a turn and a half. Two men would get double turn, one man working by himself in a room, he got a single turn. So a boy only got a half a turn. Now if you was called out to do company work, and you refuse to go, you didn't get no turn, they just cut you off.
- Q: Okay.
- A: But if you was called out , say like _____ and the other _____ they had control of ventilation, and _____ then the trappers got \$1.14 for an 8 hour day. Most of them was boys. But they called you out, when a trapper missed a day, they'd call you out of your room, you got \$3.60. Oh, I suppose we'd produce about, my father and I, at that time, would produce about 15-18 tons of coal a day.
- Q: 15 to 18 a day, huh?
- A: 97¢ a ton.
- Q: Okay, well you're making somewhere in the neighborhood of \$15.00 a day, right?
- A: Yeah.
- Q: \$15, \$16 a day. That'd be about \$60 a month or so and your rent was running what, about \$7 or \$8 a month?
- A: 7 or 8 dollars a month. You bought your house coal at cost.
- Q: Were people able to - well, you may not be able to speak for a lot of families but your own family, Carl. Were they able to save money there in Buxton?
- A: Well, some of them did and some of them traded it out in the Company store. Did you hear that old song, "Fifteen tons and what do you get?" Well, that was the Company Store at Buxton. You trade down at the Company Store. You went down to the office, they had the _____ at the Company stores. And you got just like a book of stamps, coupon stamps. Different denominations. 5¢ - 10¢ - 25¢ - 50¢. You could buy them books five for \$10 books and that's what they traded out. Well, now you take some of the older fellows, not too active, they didn't put through too much coal and they just _____ at the Company Store and there was a lot of them never drewed any money cash. They just barely existed.
- Q: Okay. What stores do you remember in town there in addition to the Company store, Carl? Downtown?
- A: Well,

Q: Let's start downtown, go out to Cooperstown. Okay?

A: There was John Crukshank run the Union Supply Store.

Q: Okay.

A: See the first store at Buxton, the first Company Store was built out of frame lumber and it burned down in 1919.

Q: And then a second one was erected at that time?

A: Just as soon as possible afterwards. It was a brick building. You could buy anything in that Company Store from a diaper pin to a coffin. The Company had its own morticians and own mortuary, shoe department, shoe repair department, furniture, hardware, groceries, cooking ware, clothing, yard goods. The Company Store had a bank in it, the Company office, a soda fountain where they served lunches. You could just get anything there but no records or appliances. And then they had what they called order days -- there'd be two or three streets and the people on those streets would order today; the next two or three streets would order tomorrow. And they had a team and wagon that delivered groceries.

Q: So blocks went in sort of sequence in ordering from the Company?

A: What was that?

Q: Different sections of town would go in sequence when ordering from the Company?

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: What would they do, deliver next day then, the stuff that you ordered, Carl?

A: Yeah, because it wasn't like hamburgers and potato chips. People bought potatoes in a bushel sack, or a half a bushel or a peck. You bought flour in 98 or 49 pound sacks.

Q: Okay.

A: And the Company, they shipped potatoes in in box car loads, in bulk. Put them in the basement. There wasn't as much canned goods as there is now, you didn't open a can and throw it out, in other words there wasn't no garbage problem because very people had canned goods and what cans they had they put in the outside toilet. When it was filled up, they'd just dig another toilet hole. So garbage wasn't no problem. They delivered your groceries in a wooden box which they kept them, they didn't have no cardboard boxes then. _____

Q: Um-hmm.

A: When you get your groceries in a wooden box, you use that for kindling for fires. Everybody used coal in the house to heat, cook, and you'll notice on your map there's - well, the Companies had a high salary, they had a cable car to pull the coal up from down across the railroad track, up to _____ they called it _____ Hill.
 And they had hoppers up there and they had mules on those wagons, coal wagons, _____ the major portion of the town was

south of the _____ . Now that track was enclosed by a fence. _____ pulled up there to the hopper and they dumped it and they had three grades of coal, lump coal, range coal, nut coal. Nut coal you used more in the summer time because it would burn up quick and you'd keep from heatin' your houses. The range coal, why you'd probably use in the fall of the year and the spring of the year and in the winter time you'd use lump coal in the heating stove to keep through the night. Oh, it was quite a time, one thing I can say for Buxton, all that time they had there, it was Company controlled. When saloons or taverns were permitted everywhere else in the state, Buxton Company did not permit a saloon in Buxton.

Q: Yeah, all the bars were outside of Buxton, weren't they?

A: Across the county line in Coopertown, _____ here on the south end, across the road _____ . Now the Company had the reservoir and the ice house below, put up natural ice; and had an ice house down by the railroad tracks where they had natural ice shipped in. And they had their own bakery. And Buxton was the only town I ever heard of, a coal mining town, that had a YMCA. That was a three-story building. They had a junior YMCA with an enclosed walkway between the two buildings. The Junior YMCA had a swimming pool in it. And that was unheard of in a coal mining town. I never heard of another coal mining town that had a swimming pool.

Q: Did the Company own the YMCA building?

A: The Company built the YMCA, they had a tennis court.

Q: Where were the tennis courts?

A: Were you ever down at Buxton?

Q: Um-hmm-m.

A: You know where the rock building is?

Q: Yeah.

A: There was one tennis court just north of the rock building and there was one tennis court over at the west side. At that time we used to have the stock yards there.

Q: Um-hmm.

A: The Company took care of their property. Course they had warehouses down there and they had corn cribs, hay barn, grain bin. Some of the people in Buxton had a horse and buggy. They had a tie _____ , you went down there with a horse and buggy there was a place to drive in and tie in. Had a warehouse for the furniture and hardware. Another warehouse for lumber, fencing materials,, glass. Some of the farmers, some of the merchants would build a barn, they had a horse. It was a good market for surrounding farmers. Best market there was.

Q: Now did some of the surrounding farmers supply some of the things that were sold in the Company Store?

A: Oh, yeah. Feed, grain. Now this place right here was a _____ farm . When I come here there were 76 cherry trees, 2 acres of strawberry beds,

grapes, and peaches, apples.

Q: Did some of the farmers sell directly to residents in Buxton?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah. They had a spring wagon and they'd take vegetables and haul down in there.

Q: Carl, would it be fair to say that a lot of the farming that surrounded Buxton, were really truck farms supplying people in Buxton either through the Company Store or ---

A: No, not exactly truck farms, but some of the farmers had big gardens, more than they'd need for themselves and they sold it _____

Q: Okay, what did the farmers mainly grow at that time?

A: What was that?

Q: What were farmers growing at that time? What was their main crop?

A: Well, they had corn, oats, wheat, hay.

Q: Grain crops, huh?

A: Grain crops, and they fed hogs and cattle.

Q: So this truck farming was really kind of a side line?

A: A side line, yeah.

Q: Okay, Okay.

A: Now the Company Store did not sell fresh meat.

Q: Who sold the fresh meat then?

A: Mr. Armstrong. He had that concession through the Company. He had the check-off through the Company.

Q: Now was Armstrong the only man, only business in town, that had a check-off system with the Company?

A: It was outside the Company store.

Q: I'd like to talk about _____ Armstrong, if you don't mind. Where'd he come from?

A: Well, I wrote his obituary. He was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, 1850. He became an orphan when he was 12.

Q: In Tennessee?

A: Well, I suppose in Tennessee.

Q: Okay.

A: He was self-educated and there was a Dr. Purdue that raised him. I don't

know if he was a medical doctor or a divinity doctor.

Q: Where at? Where was this Dr. Purdue?

A: Well, eventually he ended up down in Kansas. I don't know, Mr. Armstrong just always spoke of Dr. Purdue that raised him.

Q: Was this Purdue a white man or black man?

A: He was a white man.

Q: White man, okay.

A: Mr. Armstrong, he set right there, he's my father-in-law. _____ I'll tell ye. He set right there and told me, he says, "A lot of people think they know something and I let 'em think it for business reasons."

Q: What did he mean by that, Carl?

A: A lot of people thought he was a colored man.

Q: But he wasn't.

A: He wasn't. He was dark complected. I had an uncle that came from Germany that was a damn site more dark complected. But he was a gentleman in all ways. You could depend on him same as a doctor.

Q: He was down in Kansas. How did he get up here?

A: Well, he bought a farm down there in Kansas - SE Kansas - down at Freonia for a home for Mr. Purdue.

Q: Okay.

A: After Mr. Purdue died, well Mr. Purdue _____ down there. Mr. Purdue went down there somewhere. Mr. Armstrong bought this _____ and Dr. Purdue wanted to have the home - But Dr. Purdue never built a home on it. But when Dr. Purdue died, it reverted back to Mr. Armstrong. So he had that when he died. _____ Now, he was self-educated.

Q: How did he get up here, Carl?

A: I don't know. I really don't know how. He told me that a man should save enough money to buy him a team and wagon and schuck corn. And then he got them other mules and he contracted movin' the coal in the coal mines. He hired mule drivers to pull the coal in the coal mines. Well, then when he got the concession from the Coal Company to operate the meat market, then he got to be mule buyer for the company. Now, I was never in a mule barn at 18 but they said there was 90 mules _____ in that one mine.

Q: _____ himself, said that he was not a colored...

A: Absolutely not. Nobody can verify it. Bureau of/^{Bio}Statistics in Tennessee can't find any record of him.

Q: Oh, really, you tried, huh?

A: Tried it years ago.

Q: I'll be darned. Okay, now let's go on. What did Ho___ do there? He had a meat market; what else? Did he sell mules to the Company?

A: He bought for the Company, on commission.

Q: He bought for the Company. He bought what?

A: Mules.

Q: Okay, where did he go to get mules?

A: He generally bought down at Manchester, Missouri. He bought local mules. There's quite a story about his mule buying.

Q: The heck.

A: He really knew mules. He knew what they needed in the coal mines. And he'd get mature mules, buy mature mules. He knew about how big a mules they wanted, how tall a mules.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And after Ben Buxton left here and went back East, Mr. Basil became superintendent and he thought they was paying too much money to Mr. Armstrong for buying mules so he was gonna buy mules. And he bought young mules. Now they feed the mules in the coal mines the best. One thing about a mule, you can put a wagon load of grain in front of him and he'll just eat so much. Now a horse will founder himself. A mule won't. And Mr. Basird bought the mules and probably 3-4 years old, they hadn't got their full growth yet. And some of them mules grew too big and they would roof. So I think the last mules that Mr. Armstrong bought for Consolidated Coal Company, No. 12 Buxton over there had an explosion and killed all the mules. And they got word to him to go to Missouri and got with Billy Balls to get some mules, and that's the last that they went. Mr. Basird said that he could buy the mules and they let Mr. Basird buy them.

Q: Billy Balls?

A: Billy Balls. He was a horse and mule buyer and used to come up to Albia. You could take a horse in there in the morning - or a mule - and he would offer you a price for it. If you wasn't satisfied, took it away, maybe you'd take your friend back up there, have the friend take that same horse or mule back up there. He'd offer the same price and say, "Hell, I've seen that mule this morning."

Q: He was good at it.

A: And he even bought his small turkeys.

Q: Where was he from in Missouri?

A: Lancaster.

Q: Lancaster.

- A: Mr. Armstrong used to go down on the train and Billy had the mules ready for him. And then Mr. Armstrong bought the local mules around here.
- Q: What else did Ho_____ do? He eventually had some farms, didn't he?
- A: Oh, this is one of them.
- Q: Okay.
- A: _____ like that.
- A: I think he had 16, 17, 18 farms, something/. He invested in money. He was a teetotaler.
- Q: Didn't touch a drop, huh?
- A: Absolutely. When the _____ layin' there dead for the last time the doctor brought him out a bottle of wine. He wouldn't drink that. He said, "I don't want it." He said, "Well, Hobe, it's good for you." He said, "You think it's good? Then, by God, you drink it." He wouldn't even take a drink of wine on his death bed. And all his boys, they was just the opposite.
- Q: They were?
- A: Yeah.
- Q: Well, before we get to the boys, what else about Hobe? He had some farms; did he have any other business interests there in Buxton?
- A: Just the butcher shop. He bought the _____ and hogs around this neighborhood. A neighbor used to live up _____ He was a little bit of a fellow. He was in Albia one day and somebody made a slighting remark about Mr. Armstrong. And old _____ he was gonna _____ him. He said, "If we had more citizens like him in the county, we'd all be better off." Mr. Armstrong, he donated to all the churches. He didn't attend any church. I wouldn't say he was -- he wasn't a religious man but he helped everybody. You could depend on him.
- Q: Um-humm.
- A: I really admired him.
- Q: Now, before we move on I want to ask a question about: were the prices at the Company Store about the same as other stores? Or were they higher or lower? Or just what?
- A: Well, there was only one other store in Buxton, that was J. E. Larson. He had a store up here just across from us -- a mile, a mile and a half north of us. But he wasn't in Buxton.
- Q: Okay, well, in Buxton, the general vicinity there, Carl? Was the Company Store higher or cheaper or what?
- A: Well, I would say it compared with the rest of the stores.
- Q: Were the miners able to buy wherever they wanted to?
- A: Well, they didn't really put the pressure on, but if you didn't buy at the

Company Store, and you gotta work out a room, then maybe you'd have to wait a long while for the room.

Q: Oh, so there was that? A little bit of pressure there, huh?

A: Oh, yes, they wanted you to trade at the Company Store but you made your money and you could spend it wherever you wanted to.

Q: What would determine who got the best rooms, and who didn't?

A: Well, that was up to the mine foreman, the mine superintendent. Mr. Armstrong, he had the butcher shop down there, he had a meat wagon. You see, they'd make these circles of these towns- where the mines were located, run a meat wagon around there and when the boy is tough, he run the meat wagon. And they had Indian ponys and spotted ponys - maybe 750 to 800 pounds. _____ two teams a day. One team in the forenoon and one in the afternoon, making the circle.

Q: What towns were those that he'd go into?

A: Well, he'd make the circle, he'd probably start out and go down here to #13 Buxton and #12 and go round to #15 and back through 10 and come down through 16 and 17 and back into Buxton.

Q: Did he do that every day?

A: Every day, 6 days a week.

Q: How many _____ on these towns, were there people or stores there?

A: I didn't quite get that.

Q: To whom did he sell in these towns, the people or the stores in those towns?

A: Well, he and Mr. Armstrong had the check-off in town and then he had the check-off on his meat wagon, too. It was check-off, just like a credit card. Had different rules and different amounts around the edge of them and they had just like a railroad conductor's punch.

Q: Was his check-off done by the Company?

A: Done by the Company.

Q: Was he the only merchant in town that had the Company check-off?

A: That's right.

Q: Why was that, Carl?

A: Well, they liked him and he favored them.

Q: Okay, he had a close business relationship with the Company?

A: That's right.

A: With the Company, that's right.

Q: How did that emerge, do you have any idea how he become kind of a Company favorite there?

A: Well, over at Mutchakanak they went, the miners went on a strike over there.

Q: Okay.

A: And he had the butcher shop over in Mutchakanak. And they asked him to go South and bring the blacks up.

Q: What year was that?

A: That was probably before they ever come to Buxton, probably in the late 1800s.

Q: 1870, 1880.

A: No, I just don't know, but I guess probably in 1890.

Q: Okay. Where did he go to get the blacks?

A: Well, he went, I suppose Alabama, Mississippi, and southern states. Some come from Virginia.

Q: Why was he sent?

A: Well, he had a way; he was a good conversationalist. He was good natured. And they shipped them up here in box cars. Very few of them had ____
And you then, that wasn't too far after the Civil War.

Q: I know it. Where would he go down? He would go down, and did he ever talk about this with you?

A: Well, he never talked to me about going down there.

Q: But he would go down there and do exactly what, Carl? How did he get these-?

A: Oh, he just hired them people down there and they were poor people and they'd pay the moving expense down there and they'd pay them so much per week and they'd learn to mine coal.

Q: Did they bring whole families up?

A: Oh, yes, that's why the town was built. 'Course the town was built over at Mutchacona at first. And then they moved from over there, that coal wasn't worked out over there, and then they moved over into Monroe County. That's when they built the town over here, and of course, Mr. Armstrong built a home over here at the south end of Buxton. He had his slaughter house then.

Q: And buy his home?

A: He bought his own home there, yes.

Q: But the slaughter house was where?

A: Well, it was just north of his house, down next to the gate and that water drained into the road water. And, I suppose a lot of people in Buxton, each house had a cistern, that's where you got your water then. And if you wanted fresh water, you'd dig a well, put in some bricks, and people _____ dig a well. There was a lot of wells dug down there.

Start of Tape B

A:

Well, I'd just go in and see what's going on _____
What are you doin' here? Well I just wanted to see what you gotta _____

Well, I knew practically every one that was in the dance hall. I'd eat in their homes, and I'd drank with them and worked with them.

Q: Who were some of the black people that you remember knowing?

A: Well, George Woodson, he was an attorney, Dr. Carter was a black doctor, his father was a coal miner. Dr. Willits was a dentist, he was black. The school teacher, the post master, he was a black.

Q: Who was that?

A: Mr. Mills. His son Eddie was the secretary at the YMCA. Cub Carter, Dr. Carter's brother, he was the maintenance man for the mine committee.

Q: But you would go as a spectator, huh?

A: I would go as a spectator and I was the only one to go. Hell, if them guys had prohibition days, most of them had a bottle, they didn't get rowdy, there wasn't no fights or anything like that. I'd go in there, they had a little ante room, and you'd come on in and have a drink. I've been down there with a white man and I'd be settin' in that anteroom myself and they'd have a bottle of moonshine. Eric Brown was the paymaster for the Coal Company.

Q: Eric Brown?

A: Eric Brown. And that man could handle money. In fact, he paid out \$90,000 in cash on payday. Counted it out. In about three hours.

Q: Hmm-mm.

A: He was the manager, well Eric he thought he was hot stuff, and he told one of his friends how he was going to tangle with me. Hell, when I was 18 years old I was 6'1", 185 pounds and I was hard. I didn't back up to anybody, I didn't give a damn who they were. I didn't go looking for trouble, but I didn't run from it. And this fella _____ his son got busted up with a tractor and he was in the hospital and his son got acquainted with me _____

and he went to the door and said, "If you want him throwed out, you go and throw him out." "I want no part of him." _____

I never had no trouble.