

Buxton Project: 424-2104
Narrator's Name: Clifford Lewis
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Interviewer's Name: Joe Hraba

Q. WE'RE ROUTE 1, EDDYVILLE AND TODAY IS THE 28TH OF MAY 1981. CLIFF WHAT IS YOUR FULL NAME?

A. Clifford Arnold Lewis.

Q. WHERE WERE YOU BORN CLIFF?

A. Right here on this farm.

Q. THIS FARM, THIS PLACE RIGHT HERE?

A. Yeah.

Q. WHAT WAS THE DATE OF YOUR BIRTH, CLIFF?

A. August 26, 1908.

Q. AUGUST 26, 1908 HUH. OKAY, WHO WERE YOUR PARENTS, CLIFF?

A. Archie C. Lewis and Annie Bass Lewis.

Q. WHERE DID THEY COME FROM CLIFF, DO YOU KNOW?

A. Dad right over here, he was born over here.

Q. WHEN WAS HE BORN?

A. In 1884.

Q. IN 1884, YOUR DAD WAS BORN RIGHT WHAT ...

A. That's the third house on this road.

Q. OKAY, AND THAT WOULD BE WEST OF US HERE, WOULDN'T IT?

A. Yeah.

Q. ABOUT A MILE OR WHAT?

A. Well it's a half mile from Old Buxton. A half a mile east of Old Buxton.

Q. HOW ABOUT YOUR MOTHER, WHERE WAS SHE BORN?

A. She was born south of Old Buxton, about a mile and a quarter.

Q. MY GOD, THEY'RE OLD TIMES AREN'T THEY?

A. Oh yeah, my grandfather came here when he was two years old that was in 1852. He was born in 1850 in Ohio. _____ they got their land from the government, part of it and they bought a lot of it.

Q. SO THE LEWIS FAMILY HAS BEEN HERE SINCE ABOUT 1852.

A. That's right. My great grandfather was an old lawyer and he come back here and bought a lot of this ground out here. His boys wanted to be farmers.

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THAT. HE CAME OUT HERE, HE WAS AN ATTORNEY?

A. Yes.

Q. WHERE AT IN OHIO?

A. I don't know.

Q. OKAY, ALL I'M DOING HERE IS ...

A. He came from England. His father was in a law firm in London, in a big law firm _____ from that he came there and he went to Ohio and then he came back here and he stayed here and at one time he had a just an office _____, you see, and then he came up here in Albia just to _____ out.

Q. HE RELOCATED OUT HERE THEN?

A. Yeah. But he didn't do much law work, just around the community, see.

Q. WHEN DID HE COME OUT TO LOOK AT LAND AND BUY FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THAT WAS THE HOMESTEAD WAS IT?

A. Yeah.

Q. _____ THE HOMESTEAD THOUGH WASN'T IT?

A. Yeah. Well it was homestead then, it was getting soldier boys 40 acres. They came out and it started to rain in th spring and it rained until it froze up and he got one 40 just to pay a man's way back to Ohio, but he got his land for what it says on the abstract for doing service for the government, he done service you know, attorney work for them and they give him a bunch of land some way or another.

Q. WHEN DID HE COME OUT HERE FIRST, 1850 OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

A. I don't know, 1852 was when he come, he come when my grandad was two years old. He's the youngest one in the family.

Q. AND THAT WAS HIS FIRST TRIP OUT HERE, RIGHT?

A. I wouldn't know.

Q. AND SO THAT INITIATED THE SETTLEMENT OF THE LEWIS FAMILY HERE IN MONROE COUNTY, IOWA. IT'S A GOOD STORY. SO BOTH YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS AN ATTORNEY, PART-TIME ATTORNEY HERE, HE ALSO FARMED, I SUPPOSE.

A. His boys farmed, he had 5 boys and he did it, he got married he wasn't too young and he married a woman named Bradley. She was a red-headed woman from Ireland.

Q. HARLAN, IOWA?

A. Ireland, Ireland.

Q. OH, IRELAND.

A. She was born in Ireland and he come over here from England, but his roots originated in Wales way back, going from Wales into London _____ that law firm and then he come to this country. He didn't like the _____

Q. OKAY AND THERE WERE FIVE SONS OF YOUR FATHER'S GENERATION?

A. No, in my father, that would be my grandfather's and then my father's would be five sons and 2 boys in his family.

Q. OKAY, WHAT WERE THE NAMES OF THE BROTHERS OF YOUR FATHER'S?

A. Well Clyde was the first one, and then Archie was the second and Elby Lewis then _____ then Ben and Bertha and then Mae that was the family of them.

Q. AND THEY ALL LIVED IN THIS AREA?

A. Well they used to but they don't any more, they're all dead. All but one, Mae she's living, the rest of them are dead.

Q. WHERE DID THEIR CHILDREN GO, CLIFF?

A. Well, they've scattered.

Q. YOUR COUSINS, THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE?

A. Yeah, they're scattered everyplace.

Q. ANY STILL LEFT IN THIS AREA?

A. Well there're some in Rock Island _____ there and _____ I just don't know where they're at, really.

Q. OKAY, THAT'S OKAY.

A. But we have a little reunion on the 6th of June. It'll be _____ Park and most of them will be there.

Q. 6TH OF JUNE, THAT WILL BE A BIG GET TOGETHER WON'T IT?

A. Well, I don't know, everybody can't get there. They try to be there, they come from miles, some of them come from _____ but whether they make it or not, I don't know.

Q. OKAY CLIFF. NOW HOW ABOUT YOUR OWN FAMILY, WHO ARE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, CLIFF?

- A. Well I'm the oldest, then there's Roy, he's in Colorado and there's Claud and Clad the twins, they're right here in the neighborhood.
- Q. WHAT ARE THEIR NAMES AGAIN?
- A. Claud and Clad, they're twins.
- Q. CLAUD AND WHAT WAS THE OTHER?
- A. Clad
- Q. CLAD, CLAUD AND CLAD LEWIS, OKAY.
- A. And then there comes Jimmy, he's in Waterloo and Dorothy is on a farm here about a mile and a half from me, and then Elsie, she's in Waterloo, Francis is in Albia and Margie her name is _____, she lives _____
- Q. SO YOUR FAMILY SORT OF STUCK HERE IN THIS AREA, DIDN'T THEY?
- A. Yeah they have.
- Q. OKAY CLIFF. WHAT YEAR WERE YOU BORN AGAIN?
- A. 1908.
- Q. 1908 OKAY. AND YOU LIVED HERE AND THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN WHAT, EAST OF BUXTON?
- A. A half mile.
- Q. A HALF MILE EAST OF BUXTON AND WHAT YOU SAW IN BUXTON WAS REALLY FROM THIS PLACE RIGHT?
- A. The place over there east of Buxton.
- Q. EAST OF BUXTON. AND YOUR FATHER WAS A FARMER?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. HE WAS A MINER TOO?
- A. No.
- Q. DIDN'T MINE AT ALL?
- A. Didn't mine at all. Had an uncle named Clyde. He mined all the time.
- Q. OKAY, AND YUR MOTHER SHE HELPED ON THE FARM, I SUPPOSE?
- A. Well she had 10 kids. She didn't have much _____ the garden.
- Q. SHE WAS A BUSY HOUSEWIFE, WASN'T SHE? AND ON THIS MAP, CLIFF, WHERE WERE YOU ON THIS, HERE'S A MAP OF OLD BUXTON, CAN YOU POINT OUT WHERE YOUR PLACE WAS?

- A. Well, let me see, we were right on _____ east Buxton was east
- Q. THIS IS DOWNTOWN BUXTON, HERE'S SHARP'S END, THAT'S SOUTH, OKAY.
- A. Well it's north of here's Sharp's End, we're just right on down here, see, here's the school right next to, this ain't Buxton, is it?
- Q. WELL, THIS IS A PLAT MAP OF BUXTON, 1919.
- A. Well, now here's the school right here. That's Garfield School, that's where I went to school.
- Q. THAT'S KIND OF IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER THERE ISN'T IT?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. WAS THAT CALLED TATE'S CORNER?
- A. Right here, that was Tate's Corner, right here. And here's the school house I went to, and then on down here's a road here, and right here is where the old _____ place is.
- Q. HOW FAR WAS THAT FROM TATE'S CORNER, ABOUT A MILE?
- A. No, this is a half mile.
- Q. A HALF MILE.
- A. And that's just about 40 yards so it would be a half mile and 40 yards for a house that's there.
- Q. OKAY, SO A LITTLE OVER A HALF MILE YOU LIVED FROM TATE'S CORNER?
- A. That's right.
- Q. OKAY CLIFF. AND YOU SPENT MOST OF YOUR BOYHOOD THERE?
- A. Yeah, I was just a year older when we moved back on the Lewis place. But see Grandpa Lewis built another house on the farm and Dad lived there.
- Q. OKAY, THANKS, BUT DID YOU GET INTO BUXTON MUCH WHEN YOU WERE A BOY?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. WHY?
- A. Well, I went after groceries for folks and then I peddled apples every summer there for several years.
- Q. OKAY, WELL YOU PEDDLED APPLES IN BUXTON HUH? WHAT YEARS WOULD THOSE HAVE BEEN THAT YOU DID THAT PEDDLING? HOW OLD WERE YOU CLIFF WHEN YOU STARTED, CAN YOU RECALL?

A. About 12 years old. I was just a boy.

Q. SO ABOUT 1920 THERE ABOUT HUH? OKAY, HOW LONG DID YOU PEDDLE APPLES THEN?

A. Well, off and on for several years.

Q. OKAY, WHAT DO YOU RECALL ABOUT BUXTON IN THOSE DAYS?

A. Well, I'll tell you one thing, they didn't have much time to buy apples 'cause they bought everything through the company store. They had checks offs at the company store and the meats and stuff. The only time when they bought meat was when they, when they had the strike and my Grandpa Lewis, named Lawrence Lewis, they lost on that strike business but he kept them in meat. He sold meat on time _____ so some of the other farmers did. They felt sorry for them and they let them have meat, you could talk to any of the colored folks and they will tell you. They said they would have starved to death if it hadn't been for him.

Q. YOUR GRANDFATHER SOLD THEM MEAT ON CREDIT?

A. Yeah, he had bout 100 head of hogs. Dad would help the butcher 3 or 4 days, he came out there and get them.

Q. WHAT STRIKE WAS THIS?

A. Oh, a coal strike, _____ Old Buxton, between the miners' union.

Q. AND THEY COULDN'T BUY AT THE COMPANY STORE?

A. No, they wouldn't sell it to them because that was the company. They wanted them to go back to work and they had to _____ the farmers letting them have hogs on time.

Q. OKAY, DO YOU KNOW WHAT YEARS THOSE WERE, CLIFF, CAN YOU RECALL?

A. Well, I don't know, about 1916, I guess '17. I don't know, some time in there. I can remember it well. No, it had to be '15, no it wasn't that, it must have been in, well it had to be because my dad moved down in '16 on the home place and that was before then, so it must have been between 1908 and 1915, something like that.

Q. AND THERE WAS A STRIKE AND THE COMPANY REFUSED TO SELL THEM ANYTHING, OR JUST MEAT?

A. I just don't know but meat. They said they would have starved to death if they hadn't, if the farmers hadn't let them have meat on time.

Q. WHAT DID YOUR GRANDFATHER DO, DID HE GO IN AND HAVE A WAGON AND TAKE THE MEAT IN?

A. No, he butchered the meat and a lot of them folks, they had horses and buggies and they would come and get it. I don't remember, maybe he delived some of it. I wouldn't know.

- Q. WAS YOUR GRANDFATHER PRETTY TYPICAL IN THAT REGARD CLIFF? DID OTHER FARMERS SELL TO PEOPLE ON TIME LIKE THAT?
- A. Yeah, a lot of farmers felt sorry for them miners in that strike, they didn't want to see them go hungry. Grandpa had a lot of land. He inherited a lot of land, he had a lot of hogs, he was pretty well off at that time and he could afford to let them have it. They were good customers. I don't think he lost anything on it.
- Q. OKAY. NOW YOU SAID THAT YOUR FATHER WAS A FARMER ALL DURING THE TIME THAT BUXTON EXISTED.
- A. Yeah.
- Q. BUT HE HAD AT LEAST ONE BROTHER WHO MINED, RIGHT?
- A. Mined, yeah.
- Q. DO YOU RECALL MUCH ABOUT THE MINING OPERATIONS HERE IN BUXTON, CLIFF?
- A. Well they went down below _____ and they run up here to number 12 right over here, and there was Maple and 13. I really wasn't old enough to remember too much about it.
- Q. DID YOU EVER WORK IN MINING?
- A. No.
- Q. NEVER?
- A. I've always been a farmer.
- Q. ALWAYS BEEN A FARMER, AND SO YOU'RE KIND OF OUTSIDE THAT INDUSTRY AREN'T YOU?
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. OKAY. NOW LET ME ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, YOUR FOLKS. DID THEY HAVE ANY FRIENDS FROM BUXTON THAT WOULD COME OUT AND VISIT THEM OR ANYTHING?
- A. They were always there. She had about 3 acres of apples, an apple orchard and he'd give them colored folks apples and he sold some meat and stuff on time, they were continuously out there.
- Q. HE WAS ALWAYS IN BUXTON, HUH?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. SELLING WHAT HE GREW OUT HERE?
- A. I don't know what he sold, they just come out to the farm and got it. He put a lot of time down in Buxton but anybody that's my age will remember old Lawrence Lewis.

Q. AND YOU WOULD GO DOWN TO BUXTON?

A. Every week.

Q. EVERY WEEK, IN SELLING APPLES?

A. No, but go with my folks to get groceries. Part of the time they went to the company store, part of the time they went to J. E. Larson store on Swede Town corner.

Q. OKAY, NOW THAT BRINGS US TO A GOOD TOPIC. I'D LIKE YOU TO TELL ME ABOUT THE BUSINESSES YOU REMEMBER THERE IN BUXTON. LET'S START WITH THE COMPANY STORE.

A. Well there was the company store and restaurant named Jeffries and up above the company store, there was a doctor there named Carter I know.

Q. HE WAS ABOVE THE COMPANY STORE IN THE SAME BUILDING?

A. No, there was the company store down there.

Q. HERE USE THIS MAP, MAYBE THAT WILL HELP.

A. Right straight south the company store right across the road, you can mark it there.

Q. RIGHT ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE COMPANY STORE?

A. _____ they kept the doctor. And then on Swede Town corner there was a doctor there named _____ the Watson store, that would be on the north-east corner.

Q. WAS THERE MORE THAN ONE COMPANY STORE, DID ONE BURN DOWN, CLIFF?

A. They tell me that it did but I'm not sure.

Q. OKAY, YOU JUST REMEMBER THE ONE? CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE INSIDE OF IT FOR ME, PLEASE?

A. Oh, it was a big store, it was more like one of the big stores we have now.

Q. LIKE A HY-VEE SUPERMARKET OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

A. Yeah, something like that. They had their clothing and _____. Just about all the stuff you wanted there.

Q. OKAY, YOU WALK IN THE DOOR AND IF YOU WOULD TURN YOUR HEAD TO THE LEFT WHAT WOULD YOU SEE THERE IN THE COMPANY STORE?

A. Well, right to the left there was 2 or 3 girls working there in the office.

Q. OKAY, AND THEN WHAT?

A. And then over to the right there was a bank.

Q. THERE WAS A BANK?

A. _____ in the company store but it was one on the north, let's see, that'd be the southeast corner of the company store.

Q. OKAY, NOW THEY HAD A MEAT COUNTER, THEY SOLD CLOTHING.

A. Sold everything. You've heard about the old company store, they owe everything to the company store. They went and bought whatever they wanted and they checked it off and Hobe Armstrong was running a meat truck, they check theirs off and ...

Q. NOW ARMSTRONG WAS ABLE TO CHECK OFF TOO?

A. Yeah, the company checked off for him.

Q. OKAY. BUT THERE WAS A MEAT COUNTER IN THE COMPANY STORE?

A. Yeah.

Q. NOW DID HOBE ARMSTRONG RUN THAT MEAT COUNTER?

A. No, no he ran a little shop east _____ a little grade up on the hill.

Q. WHO SUPPLIED THE MEAT COUNTER AT THE COMPANY STORE, DID ARMSTRONG OR...?

A. I wouldn't know one thing about that.

Q. OKAY, YOUR FAMILY JUST SHOPPED THERE?

A. Part of the time but a lot of the times, most of the time at Larson's store.

Q. DID YOU EVER SUPPLY THE COMPANY STORE WITH LOCAL PRODUCE, YOUR FAMILY?

A. The only thing that we ever supplied them with, well, we sold them a few apples. Yes, but another thing, Dad put up ice for them one year. He filled all the ice houses in Buxton.

Q. OKAY. WELL CLIFF SEARCH YOUR MEMORY A LITTLE BIT, DID ANY OF THE OTHER FARMERS IN THE AREA, DID THE COMPANY STORE HAVE A POLICY OF BUYING, ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS LIKE MEAT AND VEGETABLES OR FRUIT FROM LOCAL FARMERS?

A. Just fruit.

Q. JUST FRUIT?

A. Armstrong supplied the meat.

Q. ARMSTRONG IS THE MAN THAT SUPPLIED THE MEAT, YOU'RE PRETTY CERTAIN ABOUT THAT HUH?

- A. Well, I know it.
- Q. OKAY. NO OTHER FARMER HAD THAT CONCESSION THAT ARMSTRONG SUPPLIED ALL THE MEAT TO THE COMPANY STORE?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. DID ANY OF THE FARMERS SUPPLY, LIKE GARDEN VEGETABLES, TO THE COMPANY STORE?
- A. Yeah, he'd bring up from Eddyville a whole wagon load of them.
- Q. FROM EDDYVILLE?
- A. Yeah _____ on the river and watermelon, tomatoes and about every other day they'd go by our place and pick a load of vegetables and take them to Buxton. I can't remember what their names was though.
- Q. THERE WAS ONE FARM FAMILY DOWN THERE THAT WAS A MAJOR SUPPLIER OF THAT?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. CAN YOU RECALL THEIR NAME AT ALL, CLIFF?
- A. No, I don't really _____
- Q. OKAY. AND THEN IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE REST OF THE STUFF LIKE PARTICULARLY FINISHED GOODS LIKE CLOTHING, ETC. THEY BROUGHT IN FROM THE OUTSIDE?
- A. They shipped in in yeah from _____, tomatoes and oranges, lemons and bananas. Yeah, I've been down there when they been _____ 'Cause bananas and they take you know they had a coat around them you know and they already got a coat to take them, they come in bags.
- Q. WELL CLIFF, WHAT ELSE DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE COMPANY STORE? HOW MANY CLERKS DO YOU REMEMBER WORKING THERE?
- A. Oh there were several there, but I wouldn't know the number.
- Q. AT LEAST SEVERAL. WERE THEY BOTH BLACK AND WHITE?
- A. Yes.
- Q. BLACK CLERKS AND WHITE CLERKS, OKAY. YOUR FAMILY, WHAT DID THEY TEND TO BUY AT THE COMPANY STORE?
- A. They'd run down and buy all the hogs 'cause if you needed they had about everything.
- Q. CLOTHING, NEEDED CLOTHING, OKAY.
- A. They supplied all the stuff for miners.
- Q. NOW, YOU SAY YOU SHOPPED ALSO AT THE LARSON'S PLACE?

- A. Most of our groceries was bought at Larsons.
- Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE LARSON STORE FOR ME CLIFF? HOW BIG WAS IT, TO START WITH?
- A. Pretty good size.
- Q. NOT AS BIG AS THE COMPANY STORE?
- A. Oh no, it didn't start _____
- Q. OKAY. WHAT DID LARSON SELL, SOLD MEAT?
- A. He sold everything.
- Q. MEANING, EVERYTHING IN THE WAY OF GROCERIES?
- A. Yeah, and you bought your own, you can buy over a hog there and you could buy things you needed.
- Q. WELL, COULD THE MINERS SHOP AT LARSON'S TOO OR DID THEY HAVE TO SHOP AT THE COMPANY STORE, HOW'D THAT GO?
- A. Well, the guys that could handle money real good, a lot of them shopped with the company store, I mean at Larson's, at Crookshanks.
- Q. THAT'S UNION SUPPLY COMPANY RIGHT, CROOKSHANK'S STORE?
- A. I wouldn't know about the union supply but they furnished a lot of groceries. _____, he worked for Crookshank.
- Q. THAT'S RIGHT, HE TALKED ABOUT THAT. SO THERE WASN'T A COMPANY POLICY THAT YOU REMEMBER THAT FORBADE MINERS FROM SHOPPING AT THESE OTHER STORES?
- A. No, they could shop any place. Most of them was always in debt to the company store.
- Q. OKAY. SOMETIMES JUST BECAUSE THEY JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE CASH?
- A. That was it.
- Q. IF THEY HAD TO CHECK OFF THEY'D HAVE TO GO TO THE COMPANY STORE OR TO HOBE ARMSTRONG? ANY OTHER STORES IN TOWN THAT THE COMPANY ALLOWED THEM TO CHECK OFF?
- A. No.
- Q. JUST HOBE'S?
- A. Just Hobe Armstrong's is all I know of.
- Q. THAT'S ALL YOU KNOW OF, OKAY. WITH RESPECT TO THE MINERS, CLIFF, DID MOST OF THEM SHOP AT THE COMPANY STORE?

- A. Yes they did, a lot of them, they didn't have much money left after they got everything paid, their rent and water, they hauled up there in Buxton, they had big systems at most every house and when they run out of water they had the company haul water up there and put in them systems and reservoirs.
- Q. AND THEY HAD TO PAY FOR THAT?
- A. But the Swedes down on north end they were, they could handle their money pretty good and I don't think they bought too much from the company store.
- Q. WERE THE PRICES AT THE COMPANY STORE HIGHER THAN PRICES AT OTHER STORES OR ABOUT THE SAME?
- A. No, they about the same.
- Q. ABOUT THE SAME?
- A. My mother used to send me to get things, first at the Larson Store and if they didn't have it, go down to the company store and pick it up. It wasn't very much difference.
- Q. NOT THAT YOU REMEMBER, OKAY. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER BUSINESSES IN OLD BUXTON?
- A. A guy down there made cigars.
- Q. WHAT WAS HIS NAME, CLIFF?
- A. I don't know, I don't remember it.
- Q. HE HAD A CIGAR FACTORY?
- A. Yes. I think he had it between Crookshank's and the Thomas's drugstore.
- Q. HOW MANY PEOPLE DID HE HAVE WORKING FOR HIM?
- A. I wouldn't know. But then he went on up to Coopertown. He moved to Coopertown, up on the east side of Coopertown and he had an old company house there where he made cigars. Just one guy there but I don't remember his name. Maybe never knew it. I don't know.
- Q. WERE YOU IN JEFFREY'S RESTAURANT?
- A. Yeah, several times.
- Q. DESCRIBE THAT FOR ME, WOULD YOU CLIFF?
- A. Well it was just about like these two rooms here.
- Q. WHAT ARE THE DIMENSIONS?
- A. Well, it would be about 20 foot, 17 foot wide and about 20 foot long.

Q. OKAY. AND THERE WERE TABLES IN THERE AND CHAIRS?

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT WERE THE HOURS AT JEFFREY'S, DID THEY SERVE ALL THREE MEALS OR?

A. Well I don't know. I was never there at night, just go daytime. I suppose he did. It was the only restaurant I knew of in town so he kept, a lot of businessmen come there and salesman area is there. He was clean, it was a real nice place.

Q. NOW JEFFREY, HE WAS A BLACK MAN, WASN'T HE?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. YOU REMEMBER ANY OTHER COLORED MEN WHO WERE IN BUSINESS THERE IN BUXTON? I UNDERSTAND THAT HOBE ARMSTRONG WAS NOT KNOWN AS A COLORED MAN IN BUXTON, IS THAT RIGHT?

A. Well, he wasn't _____ black but colored now, I don't know. I had a cousin lived right beside of Hobe Armstrong's in Kansas.

Q. HE CAME UP FROM KANSAS, HUH?

A. Yeah, his grandfather was a big doctor there and Hobe run the _____ out his place is 2 or 3 miles up into this town in Kansas. Pick up the people and bring them out, a lot of old people didn't have no way and he'd bring them out there.

Q. WHERE AT IN KANSAS?

A. I don't know. I forgot. I had a family book around here but I don't know where it's at. But anyway Hobe's, this doctor was Hobe's grandfather my cousin tells me, then his daughter was a black woman and Hobe's father was part colored. He took care of Hobe's horses. This doctor, he was well off and he had a big stable of horses there and Hobe's dad took care of them.

Q. DOWN IN KANSAS, NOW?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND HOBE CAME UP THIS WAY THEN?

A. Yeah, he come up and he started to buying horses for the coal company in Kansas, mules.

Q. MULES, RIGHT. OKAY THAT'S THE CONNECTION, AND THEN HE GOT INTO THE MEAT BUSINESS?

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT ELSE DID HOBE HAVE?

A. He had a lot of farms. He owned farms all around there. I don't know how many _____.

Q. ANY OF THE FARMS STILL IN THE FAMILY?

A. Yes, in the Kietzman family.

Q. KIETZMAN FAMILY, RIGHT. DID HE HAVE SOME HOUSES HE RENTED TOO?

A. I don't know.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, OKAY.

A. There's one other store named Polster(?) store right in front of Hobe Armstrong and he ran a grocery store there and he was Justice of the Peace I remember _____

Q. WAS HE A BLACK MAN?

A. Yes.

Q. POLSTER'S WAS A GROCERY STORE?

A. He was a light colored man.

Q. THAT'S ALL DOWNTOWN. WHAT ABOUT OUT IN SHARP'S END, OR TATE'S CORNER? DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE BUSINESSES?

A. Well, Tate, he generally sold liquor, I think, and then he farmed a little bit and hoe _____

Q. WHAT ELSE DID TATE DO?

A. When he had _____ horse there he _____

Q. WHAT ABOUT OVER AT SHARPE'S END, DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE BUSINESSES THERE?

A. Yeah, Baxter run the meat shop there.

Q. BAXTER, NOW HE WAS RELATED TO HOBE, WASN'T HE?

A. He married Hobe's daughter.

Q. OKAY. IT WAS JOHN BAXTER, RIGHT?

A. Yeah, that's right.

Q. OKAY, WHO ELSE RAN BUSINESSES THERE?

A. Well Barnes ran a little place there.

Q. WHO?

A. Barnes, Miss Barnes, and she had a son named Archie, but they run a business there.

Q. WHAT KIND OF A BUSINESS WAS THAT, CLIFFORD?

A. Kind of a restaurant, and they sold liquor.

Q. RESTAURANT AND SOLD LIQUOR?

A. See, they was out of the Buxton corporation.

Q. OKAY, WERE THEY BLACK OR WHITE?

A. Black.

Q. OKAY. WHO ELSE DO YOU REMEMBER THERE IN BUSINESS?

A. Well, there was another big store there that sold groceries right beside Baxter's store, but I don't remember the names.

Q. OKAY. NOW ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT YOU REMEMBER? WERE BUSINESSES SCATTERED ALL THROUGH BUXTON, CLIFF, OR WERE THERE BUSINESSES CONCENTRATED LIKE?

A. Well, now they got on the edge of the corporation on the east side and on the south side.

Q. EAST AND SOUTH SIDE WERE THE

A. Yeah, see they couldn't allow them to sell liquor in the town there and they run a gambling joint there in Coopertown and then I don't know who run it and then they run and they sold liquor. They had to go across the line, of course, there was a lot of bootleggers in Buxton.

Q. YEAH, DO YOU REMEMBER THE BOOTLEGGERS IN BUXTON?

A. Well, all I know is what the guy told me. John Jenkins, he lived out there.

Q. WHO'S JOHN JENKINS?

A. Well, he's, let's see, yeah, he run a little store there too, a grocery store.

Q. WHERE, SHARP'S END?

A. On the other side, the west of Sharp's End there. He was in Buxton corporation there.

Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BUXTON CORPORATION?

A. Well they had about a mile square, didn't they?

Q. UH HUH.

A. Well, he was on the southwest corner of that, and he had a store thre. He sold groceries and he sold liquor. No he didn't sell liquor.

- Q. THE BUXTON CORPORATION OWNED THE LAND AND THE HOUSES FOR ABOUT A MILE SQUARE?
- A. Well, I don't know. Jenkins owned 10 acres of his own, and he used to haul a lot of coal to the coal house.
- Q. OKAY, WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO TELL ME ABOUT JENKINS AND BOOTLEGGING?
- A. I can't tell you very much. I only know what he told me. He's dead now. He wasn't exactly boot, they wasn't called bootleggers then, you had a right to sell the liquor.
- Q. OKAY. WHAT DID THEY SELL, BEER?
- A. Well, I don't even know that.
- Q. DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT, OKEY. WERE YOU EVER IN THE HOUSES THERE IN BUXTON? DID YOU DELIVER TO THE HOUSES OR _____ THROUGH THE COMPANY HOUSES.
- A. Well no, I've been to a few, a very few.
- Q. VERY FEW, HUH?
- A. They're all alike about. Not all in Swede Town. Their houses were different.
- Q. HOW WERE THE HOUSES IN SWEDE TOWN DIFFERENT FROM THE ONES IN BUXTON?
- A. Well, the company houses, they just go and up upstairs, 2 rooms upstairs and 2 or 3 rooms downstairs.
- Q. WELL, WHAT WERE THE SWEDE TOWN HOUSES LIKE?
- A. Well, it was just a normal house like everybody else.
- Q. OKAY, HOW SO CLIFF? COULD YOU DESCRIBE THEM TO ME?
- A. Well, you can go see them over there, some of them still there. They just 4 room houses, some of them had stairs in them, 6 rooms, they built _____ our own selves.
- Q. NOW REMEMBER THE COMPANY HOUSES, WHAT WAS THE FOUNDATION, REMEMBER?
- A. Rocks, just rocks on the corner and off to the center.
- Q. ROCKS, ON THE CORNER AND THROUGH THE CENTER?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. WAS THE FOUNDATION LAID ALL THE WAY AROUND?
- A. No.

Q. SO JUST IN THE CORNER?

A. And in the middle. And maybe they had 4 on one side, the big rocks that went under there, and as far as I know, and into the middle.

Q. THROUGH THE MIDDLE YOU MEAN, CLIFF. IS THAT ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE WIDTH OF THE HOUSE, THEY WOULD HAVE A ROCK FOOTING?

A. Yeah, just not footing. They just put big rocks and built the house on rocks. That's why the old farmers used to haul, but my dad's wasn't that way 'cause first they lived in a log house and they built a house later where he was living which sits on the farm now. They had footing around it. But them company houses, they intend to move them, you know, this coal would only last so long and they didn't go to all of that trouble.

Q. OF COURSE. AND THEY WOULD SIT ROCKS IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE HOUSE AND THEN ON THE TWO SIDES?

A. They'd put rocks in there, too. It was just a big rock that was the foundation, and they'd put 4 x 6's or something like that on top of the rock, and they got the house on top of that.

Q. OKAY. I UNDERSTAND CLIFF. NOW WHO'S THE RENT, YOU REMEMBER HOW THEY PAID?

A. I don't know, they take that off the company store, I don't know anything about it.

Q. WE'VE HEARD THAT EACH OF THE HOUSES WAS ON A QUARTER OF AN ACRE, IS THAT....

A. No, no, no.

Q. NO, THEY WERE CLOSER THAN THAT?

A. I'd say an eighth of an acre.

Q. ABOUT AN EIGHTH OF AN ACRE?

A. Well, they varied a lot.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER PEOPLE HAVING THEIR OWN GARDENS THERE IN BUXTON?

A. Yeah, they had their own gardens and a lot of them kept a cow and a horse.

Q. A COW AND A HORSE. HOW ABOUT PIGS, ANY KEEP HOGS ON THE LAND.

A. I wouldn't know about hogs. I don't think they could. I imagine they did, I don't remember that.

Q. OKAY. BUT YOU DO REMEMBER GARDENS?

A. Yeah.

Q. YOU REMEMBER SOME LIVESTOCK ON THE PLACE?

A. They had cows, a lot of them had cows.

Q. WHAT, A MILK COW?

A. Yeah, they bought hay off the farms. My folks sold them a lot ... grandfolks sold them a lot of hay. My Grandpa Findly, John Findly, he sold them a lot of hay. He had his whole farm mostly in hay and he would sell it to the miners.

Q. CLIFF, WOULD IT BE FAIR TO SAY THAT THE LOCAL FARMERS HERE SUPPLIED ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS, PEOPLE IN BUXTON WITH THINGS LIKE HAY OR FOOD OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

A. I don't know of food much, but they sure supplied them with hay and corn and oats.

Q. OKAY. NOW YOU WENT BACK TO YOUR SCHOOL, YOU WENT TO GARFIELD SCHOOL?

A. Yeah, that was about 40 rods east of Buxton. A lot of miners get to come there, the ones that didn't live in that mile square on the other side of the road, they come to our school.

Q. YOU REMEMBER YOUR TEACHERS THERE?

A. Well, the first teacher I went to was, her name was Tara, and the next one was Carl and then the school was so dead gone... they had about 2 or 3 teachers a year there. The kids would go to school that was 18 years old and they didn't like to behave. They wasn't mean, but they just wouldn't behave their selves.

Q. AND THEY WOULD FRIGHTEN SOME OF THOSE TEACHERS? HOW OLD WERE THE TEACHERS?

A. Generally about 18 or 20.

Q. 18 OR 20, AND THIS WAS A COUNTRY SCHOOL, WASN'T IT?

A. Yes.

Q. HOW FAR DID YOU GO IN THIS SCHOOL?

A. To the 8th grade.

Q. TO THE 8TH GRADE. OKAY, YOU SAID THAT SOME OF THE KIDS, THE FOLKS WHO'S DAD WAS A MINER, WENT OUT TO THAT SCHOOL, RIGHT?

A. Yeah, the miners wasn't in Buxton, a lot of them went there.

Q. SO THE SCHOOL WAS BOTH BLACK AND WHITE?

A. Yeah, but mostly white, but there was black kids.

Q. OKAY, SOME BLACK KIDS. WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT BUXTON, WERE THERE MORE BLACKS THERE THAN WHITES?

A. Oh my Lord, yes. I'd say 5 or 6 to 1.

- Q. THAT MUCH HUH? OKAY, CLIFF, 5 OR 6 TO 1. DO YOU REMEMBER SOME OF THE FAMILY NAMES, ESPECIALLY OF THE BLACK MINERS THAT YOUR FOLKS AND YOUR GRANDFATHER HAD BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH, LIKE SELLING....
- A. Well, Dave _____, he was _____ the township and then there was Tates there, well, I just don't remember their names, but they was Wright, Herman Wright, and I don't remember, you know, it just come and go and I wasn't too much interested in names then.
- Q. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, CLIFF, THAT'S FINE. YOU RECALL A MAN WHO WAS ENGINEER FOR A TIME BY THE NAME OF BIG BILL LEE, DOES THAT RING A BELL?
- A. No, it don't. I don't remember him.
- Q. OKAY. HOW ABOUT OTHER THINGS ABOUT BUXTON, WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCHES THERE. DO YOU REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT THE CHURCHES? DID YOUR FOLKS GO TO CHURCH?
- A. Yeah, _____ they went to Bethel Church where most of the white people _____ in Old Buxton.
- Q. WHERE WAS BETHEL CHURCH?
- A. Right over here.
- Q. HOW ABOUT ON THIS MAP HERE, CLIFF, WHERE WAS IT, UP THE ROAD?
- A. You take the southeast, I mean northeast, corner of Buxton and it's around the corner over there. That was a Christian church. But Buxton had several churches, Lutheran, but it burned down and they moved over there on my place, but it burnt down about a month ago, 6 weeks ago. And then there was a Baptist Church and a Methodist Church, and I don't know whether there were any more or not, colored Methodists.
- Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY CHURCHES DOWN IN SHARP'S END?
- A. No there wasn't any.
- Q. YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANY DOWN THERE, HUH?
- A. No, or in Coopertown either one. Some of the whites went out to Bethel, most of them went to Lutheran Church in Swede Town, the whites.
- Q. YOU REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT THE LODGES THERE IN BUXTON?
- A. No, I don't know anything about the lodges.
- Q. YOUR FATHER WASN'T CONNECTED TO ANY OF THOSE LODGES OR ANYTHING?
- A. No, they had the big YMCA there.
- Q. DID YOU EVER GO IN THE YMCA?

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT WAS IT LIKE, CLIFF?

A. Well they _____. Everything the kids needed there to exercise, and boxing.

Q. WHO RAN THE YMCA?

A. Well, the coal company did, that was their _____. I don't know they had somebody white run it, I don't know who it was. And then they had the shows over in there, they had several _____.

Q. DID YOU EVER GO TO MOVIES THERE?

A. Yes.

Q. PEOPLE THAT USED THE YMCA, WERE THEY MOSTLY COLORED OR?

A. Yes, some white kids go there. I've sat down a lot of times and my folks came in doing their trading at the company store and watch the YMCA _____. A bunch of kids 'cause they bring one in _____ not all the time.

Q. IT WAS A BUSY PLACE.

A. Oh, it was a real busy place. But it was younger people.

Q. IT WAS MOSTLY COLORED USING THE PLACE?

A. I think it was. When I was watching them go in there once in while, white kids _____ they just free for everybody you know. They had their pool tables in there, played pool free. It was just a place where the kids had to go, had to have something to do.

Q. WHAT DID THEY ALL HAVE IN THERE?

A. Well, I don't remember what all there was. I know they had pool tables in there, and had a gymnasium there, but I couldn't....

Q. REMEMBER A SWIMMING POOL?

A. I don't know, maybe in _____. I wouldn't doubt it was in there. But I ain't sure.

Q. IT SEEMS LIKE YOU DIDN'T USE IT ALL THAT MUCH.

A. I didn't use it hardly any. The only time I went in there, I'd go with somebody to movies down there.

Q. NOW YOU MENTIONED ABOUT, YOU THOUGHT THAT BLACKS OUTNUMBERED WHITES MAYBE 5, MAYBE EVEN 6 TO 1. WAS THERE MUCH TENSION BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES IN BUXTON THERE?

A. No, I don't think they had very little trouble, they got along fine.

- Q. THEY GOT ALONG FINE. OF COURSE THEY WORKED TOGETHER AND BLACKS COULD USE ANY PUBLIC SPACE THERE IN BUXTON JUST LIKE WHITES, RIGHT?
- A. That's right.
- Q. SO THERE WASN'T THAT KIND OF SEGREGATION?
- A. No.
- Q. IT WAS TRUE IN OTHER PLACES IN THIS COUNTRY AT THE TIME. WHAT ABOUT BLACKS AND WHITES MIXING TOGETHER IN THEIR HOMES OR SOCIAL OCCASIONS?
- A. I don't know one thing about that.
- Q. YOU DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THAT, SINCE YOU LIVED OUTSIDE OF BUXTON, RIGHT CLIFF? WELL, LET ME ALLOW YOU TO PHRASE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS, I MEAN IF SOMEBODY WOULD ASK YOU, WHICH I'M DOING RIGHT NOW CLIFF, SORT OF DESCRIBE RACE RELATIONS THERE IN BUXTON WHEN YOU WERE A BOY, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THEM?
- A. Oh, I'd describe them pretty good, but they didn't generally marry there much. They didn't marry a white and a black there.
- Q. THEY DIDN'T GO THAT FAR?
- A. No.
- Q. WHAT ABOUT THE RECEPTION OF BLACK PEOPLE IN TOWNS SURROUNDING BUXTON? WERE THEY FREE TO GO ANY PLACE THEY WANTED?
- A. Every place but a restaurant.
- Q. EVERY PLACE BUT A RESTAURANT. THEY COULDN'T GO, FOR EXAMPLE, INTO ALBIA AND EAT?
- A. Not in a white restaurant, no.
- Q. NOT IN A WHITE RESTAURANT.
- A. That was about every way in most of the towns at that time.
- Q. YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THESE COMMUNITIES AROUND BUXTON HAVING WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED SUNSET LAWS THAT BLACKS COULDN'T BE IN TOWN AFTER DARK?
- A. Just one.
- Q. WHICH ONE?
- A. Eddyville.
- Q. EDDYVILLE.
- A. That's the only one.

Q. EDDYVILLE, WHY WAS THAT, CLIFF?

A. I wouldn't know why.

Q. BUT YOU REMEMBER THAT? DO YOU REMEMBER A SIGN SOMEPLACE WARNING BLACK PEOPLE THAT THEY HAD BETTER NOT BE IN TOWN AFTER DARK?

A. No, I never seen the sign.

Q. YOU NEVER SEEN THE SIGH. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY KU KLUX KLAN ORGANIZATIONS?

A. Oh yeah, I remember them well. But I never belonged to any of them.

Q. WHERE WERE THEY, CLIFF?

A. They were thick around here.

Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

A. Well, they had meetings and burning cross, burnt a cross right up the road here 3/4 of a mile, a half mile on my place, but I didn't own it then.

Q. WHERE AT NOW, CLIFF, FROM HERE?

A. Just right up the road from this corner, right up on the next

Q. SOUTH TOWARDS ALBIA?

A. South, yeah. And they they formed all around, they just had their meetings every so often on several of the farms, not everybody belonged to them, just oh maybe, one-third of the people belonged.

Q. AND THE PEOPLE LIVING RIGHT HERE JUST ADJACENT TO BUXTON, ABOUT A THIRD OF THEM BELONGED TO THE, WHEN WAS THIS FORMED, CLIFF, DO YOU REMEMBER?

A. I don't remember the year. I was about 14 years old when it happened.

Q. ABOUT 14, HUH?

A. About '22.

Q. IN THE 20s, YOU REMEMBER THE KLAN ACTIVITIES. YOU SAY THEY HAD CROSS BURNINGS, ANYTHING ELSE?

A. Well, they had their hoods and with white sheets on them, eyes cut in places so they could see _____ they called them.

Q. YOU REMEMBER THAT?

A. Oh yeah, I remember them well. Somebody invited me, I went to look at it and I was there at one meeting. I didn't belong to them things. I wouldn't associate with them Klans.

Q. DID THEY EVER RIDE AROUND?

A. They never done no harm.

Q. THERE WAS NEVER ANY VIOLENCE CONNECTED WITH THE KLANS?

A. There was never any violence whatsoever.

Q. NOW WAS THE KLAN ORGANIZED IN OTHER AREAS LIKE IN ALBIA OR IN EDDYVILLE?

A. Yeah, every place. There was a big organization and then all at once somebody _____ . All the money ... and they collapsed.

Q. SO ONE OF THE TREASURERS _____ WITH SOME MONEY?

A. Yeah, they broke the fund. It wasn't a very good organization anyway.

Q. SO NONE OF YOUR FAMILY WAS EVER INVOLVED IN THE KLAN?

A. Dad wasn't and I had an uncle who was and a great uncle and one of them belonged, I remember. But that's the only one out of the whole family.

Q. NOW YOU MENTIONED EARLIER, CLIFF, THAT BLACKS OUTNUMBERED WHITES IN BUXTON. WAS THAT TRUE ALL THE TIME THAT YOU CAN REMEMBER AT BUXTON, THAT THERE WERE ALWAYS MORE BLACKS THAN WHITES?

A. Yeah, see they was down at Swede Town, that was whites. And then down in the north west corner where the Lutheran Church is mostly German people down in there.

Q. NORTHWEST CORNER WAS GERMAN.

A. That was the whites. But up in most of the places was blacks, _____ mostly blacks. What was it, 5,000 blacks here and there was 10,000.

SIDE TWO

Q. AND ABOUT ANOTHER 5,000 SURROUNDING CAMPS RIGHT?

A. Yeah, they were mostly all white people.

Q. THAT WAS MOSTLY WHITE. WHAT WERE THE NAMES OF THOSE CAMPS, MIAMI WOULD THAT BE ONE?

A. They had, I forget, six. Well they started in White City, not White City, 13, 12 was here, no number 10. They started at 10 and went on up to 17 and then there was a mine from Hoover and _____ and White City, I don't know what they call it, White City Coal Company, they had mines, number 7 over there, so they had several mines and Greenridge they had mines around there and Cricket and there _____ little coal camp over there, they just thick around here. There's 5,000 people lived in 2 or 3 miles of Old Buxton, some real close, some a pretty good way.

Q. BUT BUXTON WAS THE LARGEST OF THE CAMPS, WASN'T IT?

A. Yeah, uh huh.

Q. SO YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANY KIND OF CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF BLACKS TO WHITES IN BUXTON IN YOUR LIFETIME, CLIFF?

A. Not until they closed the mines.

Q. UNTIL IT WAS ALL SHUT DOWN. WELL, WHAT CHANGES DID YOU NOTICE ABOUT BUXTON OVER THE YEARS THAT YOU KNEW BUXTON, GOT SMALLER DIDN'T IT?

A. It got smaller continuously 'cause they was tearing houses down in Buxton, moving them out to 18 and 20.

Q. OKEY. AT THE LAST THERE WERE HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVING IN BUXTON WOULD YOU GUESS, CLIFF?

A. Oh, I don't know, around about 5,000 I guess, and gradually there wasn't hardly nobody there.

Q. FROM ABOUT 5,000 TO 500?

A. It just kept getting smaller and smaller and smaller.

Q. NOW, DID MANY OF THE BLACK MINERS MOVE?

A. Yeah, they went out to 18 and 20. Some of them went to Des Moines, they just scattered every, Chicago and every place.

Q. NOW YOU REMEMBER THE BLACKS THERE. YOU ALSO MENTIONED THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF BUXTON WAS SOME GERMANS.

A. That's right.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE FAMILY NAMES OF THE GERMANS?

A. Well, I remember _____ but there was other Slavish people there too, and I don't know whether _____ live there but _____ and a whole bunch of them. I don't remember their names.

Q. WELL, WHERE DID THE SLAVISH PEOPLE LIVE?

A. In the northwest corner of Buxton.

Q. AROUND WITH THE GERMANS, HUH?

A. Yeah, that's right. They went to the Lutheran Church there. Lutheran Church out here on this place of mine.

Q. GOOD, GOOD. YOU REMEMBER ANY OTHER GROUPS THERE IN BUXTON THAT STAND OUT IN YOUR MIND?

- A. No, I don't. There was a whole lot of Slavish there, they come from Europe all over Europe to work in the mines there, Italians.
- Q. REMEMBER SOME ITALIANS?
- A. Yeah, but I don't remember their names, but they were here. Germans over there a lot of _____ here a lot of Swedes, _____ all come from Germany and Slovak _____.
- Q. WAS IT COMMON WHEN YOU WERE IN BUXTON TO HEAR FOREIGN LANGUAGES SPOKEN?
- A. Oh yes a lot. A lot of times just to hear somebody talking you couldn't understand a word of it. I couldn't.
- Q. AND THAT WAS COMMON?
- A. That was very common. That was among the older people, not the kids. The kids always spoke English.
- Q. WHAT DID YOU DO FOR ENTERTAINMENT WHEN YOU WERE A BOY, AT THAT TIME OF YOUR BOYHOOD IN BUXTON?
- A. Played ball.
- Q. PLAYED BALL.
- A. Played ball and played shinney on the ice.
- Q. BY PLAYING BALL YOU MEAN JUST THE NEIGHBOR KIDS GET TOGETHER?
- A. And have their own teams.
- Q. DID YOU EVER, THEN, WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE OLDER, PLAY ANY KIND OF ORGANIZED BASEBALL?
- A. No, it was just for fun, 'cause I wasn't good enough for that.
- Q. OKAY. BUT YOU PLAYED BALL. SHINNEY ON THE ICE, WHAT'S THAT, CLIFF?
- A. Well you'd choose up sides and have wooden blocks and ha _____ they have 10 or 15 players on one side and 10 or 15 on the other and they _____ and knock it off, you know, and took the sticks, 1, 2, 3 and they hit them....
- Q. JUST LIKE HOCKEY, HUH?
- A. I guess it was something like hockey. and the kids boxed and wrestled but not professionally, no.
- Q. WHAT TIME WOULD YOU GET UP IN THE MORNING CLIFF, WHEN YOU WERE A BOY?
- A. About 6:00.

Q. ABOUT 6:00. DID YOU HAVE CHORES TO DO THEN?

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO?

A. Milk cows and take care of the hogs.

Q. THEN HAD BREAKFAST?

A. And had breakfast and went to the fields.

Q. WHAT DID YOU USUALLY EAT FOR BREAKFAST?

A. Oatmeal, that was the main cereal.

Q. OATMEAL. DID YOU EVER HAVE BACON AND EGGS?

A. Yes, we had plenty of eggs but you get tired of eggs when you eat them so long. And bacon we had that, we had plenty meat 'cause we butchered our own meat.

Q. AND THEN YOU'D WORK AND THEN HAVE DINNER AT NOON?

A. That's right.

Q. WHAT DID YOU USUALLY HAVE FOR DINNER?

A. Potatoes and a bunch of vegetables and fruit and meat, we had meat for dinner.

Q. WHAT KIND OF MEAT DID YOU SERVE IN THE HOME?

A. We had mostly pork and chicken and beef, we canned the beef, cold packed it.

Q. HOW WOULD YOU EAT THE PORK, IN HAMS AND BACON?

A. Yeah, and then we'd smoke them.

Q. SMOKE THEM. AND THEN SUPPER, WHEN WAS SUPPER SERVED?

A. About 7:00.

Q. ABOUT 7:00. WHAT KIND OF MEAL WAS THAT? WAS THAT SORT OF LIKE DINNER?

A. Yeah, a lot like dinner.

Q. A LOT LIKE DINNER, VEGETABLES?

A. We never generally had no meat for supper, though.

Q. NO MEAT FOR SUPPER, THAT TENDED TO BE A MEATLESS MEAL, HUH?

A. Every once in a while but not too much.

Q. OKEY, ONCE IN A WHILE YOU'D HAVE MEAT, BUT NOT THAT OFTEN.

A. Just for dinner was the meat.

Q. OKAY, THAT WAS THE BIGGEST MEAL OF THE DAY, THE NOON MEAL. DO YOU STILL EAT THAT WAY, CLIFF?

A. Just about.

Q. JUST ABOUT.

A. Very little for breakfast, and I'd eat dinner and very little for supper. You eat ... I can't sleep.

Q. THAT'S TRUE. OKAY, NOW YOUR DAD, HE DID MOST OF THE WORK ON THE FARM, HUH?

A. Every since I worked it, since I was 12 years old, I've been in the fields.

Q. AND YOUR MOM TOOK CARE OF THE KIDS AND THE HOUSE AND PREPARED THE FOOD. YOU MENTIONED ABOUT CANNING BEEF AND SMOKING PORK, WHAT WERE THE FOOD STUFFS, CLIFF, THAT YOUR FOLKS NORMALLY BOUGHT EITHER FROM THE COMPANY STORE OR FROM LARSON'S THAT YOU DIDN'T RAISE?

A. We, you had to buy sometimes you raised wheat _____ so far, most of the time.

Q. BOUGHT THE FLOUR?

A. Yeah. And then you run out of lard before the year is over.

Q. I TAKE IT YOUR MOM WOULD MAKE HER OWN BREAD?

A. Yes she did.

Q. NOW YOU SAY COFFEE THAT YOU HAD TO BUY, WHAT ELSE, SUGAR?

A. Sugar and coffee and whatever they needed. I don't remember _____ takes a lot of time always got a lot of groceries. They'd get rice and you know.

Q. VEGETABLES THAT ARE NOT GROWN IN THIS CLIMATE IN THIS AREA.

A. Yeah.

Q. DID YOUR MOM MAKE DESSERTS?

A. Yes, she was a very good cook.

Q. WHAT DID SHE TYPICALLY MAKE, CLIFF?

A. She made jelly, she made cakes, pies, she makes about what any normal woman would make.

Q. OKAY, CAKES AND PIES. I SUPPOSE YOU HAD A LOT OF APPLE PIE, HUH?

- A. Yeah, custard pie a lot of times, _____ just overdo it and all that apples _____ apples all winter long and just _____ pies she made all kinds of pies.
- Q. WHAT ABOUT IN CAKES, CHOCOLATE CAKES?
- A. Yeah, we had plenty of chocolate cakes.
- Q. DID SHE HAVE DESSERTS WITH MOST OF THE MEALS?
- A. No, just dinner.
- Q. JUST THE NOON MEAL. AFTER THE NOON MEAL, GIVEN THAT IT WAS A PRETTY HEAVY MEAL, DID YOU EVER REST BEFORE GOING BACK TO WORK, OR DID YOU GO IMMEDIATELY BACK TO WORK?
- A. Generally about 15 minutes after the meal and then you went back to work.
- Q. ABOUT 15 MINUTES.
- A. That would be about an hour noon. Time you got the horses in and watered them and fed them and then got down and ate your dinner, rested about 15 minutes and come back to the fields.
- Q. AS YOU LOOK AT IT, CLIFF, WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU WORKED REALLY HARD IN YOUR LIFE?
- A. Real hard. One reason my dad was a farmer he was also a township supervisor of road work so we took care of half the roads in the township besides farming.
- Q. WHAT DID HE DO IN TAKING CARE OF?
- A. Well, we raised the roads, we dug the roads and we filled in all the mud holes and cleaned out the _____ and shoveled snow in the winter, they didn't have no _____ we shoveled snow maybe for a month. Just lay on that shovel day after day, it got tiresome.
- Q. YOU WOULD HAND SHOVEL THE ROADS?
- A. That's right. _____ Dad would hire some men, that's the way he cleaned out the roads, there was no other way, the mail had to get around.
- Q. THAT'S ROUGH WORK.
- A. That's the roughest there was.
- Q. YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT SHOVELING SNOW IN WINTER TIME ON THESE COUNTRY ROADS, HOW LONG A DAY WOULD YOU PUT IN?
- A. 8 hours.
- Q. 8 HOURS. BREAK OFF AN HOUR FOR DINNER AND THEN BACK TO IT?
- A. Yeah.

- Q. SOMETIMES THIS WOULD GO ON CONTINUOUSLY FOR A MONTH, HUH?
- A. Oh, several days, a week or 10 days. About 10 days _____ and then pretty soon you'll have another snow. See whenever it got over 1 foot deep on the roads, you had to shovel off 'cause cars couldn't get over, mail carriers.
- Q. WHEN DID YOU DO THIS, CLIFF, WHAT YEARS WERE THESE?
- A. I don't remember _____ practically on the roads from the time he was 14 so I wasn't able 15, 12, and 14 years, that would be '22 on to I was 18, that would be '18, '24. No, 18 and 8.
- Q. BE '26, 1926.
- A. I don't know, about 4 years of road work, 5.
- Q. AND IF IT GOT OVER A FOOT DEEP OR BETTER, YOU HAD TO GET OUT THERE AND SHOVEL. HOW MANY MEN WOULD BE ON A CREW?
- A. Oh, about 3 or 4.
- Q. AND IT'D BE JUST ONE CREW OUT THERE?
- A. That's right.
- Q. WHAT LENGTH WOULD YOU MAKE IN A DAY?
- A. Oh, sometimes quite a ways, but snow just come on, it wouldn't be drifting altogether, it would just be in spots.
- Q. YOU'D SHOVEL THE DRIFTS?
- A. Yeah. The other roads wouldn't have 6 inches of snow on it but the drifts get to 4 feet.
- Q. REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT MEDICAL FACILITIES THERE IN BUXTON, CLIFF? YOU MENTIONED THE DOCTORS.
- A. We went to the drugstore to get a lot of medicine, Thomas's drugstore there and just off Sharp's End there just a little bit off Sharp's End in Buxton, Coopertown _____ Sharp's End. There was another doctor down there named Jenkins.
- Q. DOWN WHERE CLIFF?
- A. He was in Sharp's End.
- Q. WHITE OR BLACK MAN?
- A. Black man.
- Q. OKAY, TELL ME WHAT WOULD YOUR MOM GIVE YOU KIDS FOR, SAY A COLD?

- A. Well for many things she'd grease us with turpentine lard.
- Q. TURPENTINE LARD, RIGHT ON THE CHEST?
- A. Yeah, in chest and right back it'd take the soreness out right quick. Half turpentine and half water.
- Q. WHAT WERE THE OTHER HOME REMEDIES THAT SHE HAD?
- A. Never had the only thing _____ we took epsom salt.
- Q. DID ANY OF THE FAMILY GO IN TO SEE THE DOCTOR?
- A. Oh yeah, a lot of times. We had ailments just like any other family.
- Q. WHAT WOULD BE SOME OF THE THINGS THEY'D GO TO SEE THE DOCTOR ABOUT?
- A. One of my brothers fell off a horse and broke his arm and I had my wrist broke and nothing he could do about it.
- Q. HOW DID YOU HEAL YOUR WRIST?
- A. I just let it heal itself.
- Q. DID YOU WORK WHILE THEY WERE BROKEN?
- A. My Lord, no.
- Q. THAT'S PAINFUL, ISN'T IT?
- A. That's terrible pain.
- Q. WHAT ABOUT WHEN YOUR MOTHER WOULD HAVE CHILDREN, DID SHE HAVE A MIDWIFE COME OUT OR A DOCTOR OR WHAT?
- A. The neighbor women came in and the doctor was there. Most of the children, well, my grandfather John _____ got married and he married a nurse, she was generally down there with her.
- Q. A NURSE, OKAY. YOU MOTHER HAD 10. THAT'S A GOOD SIZE FAMILY ISN'T IT CLIFF? ONE DOESN'T SEE 10 CHILDREN FAMILIES.
- A. No, and we're still alive, none of us are dead.
- Q. MY GOODNESS. WERE THERE ANY ROUGH PARTS TO BUXTON, PLACES THAT WERE ROWDY?
- A. Sharp's End and Cooperstown.
- Q. WHY?
- A. Well, like every other town they had their card games, their dice games and they caught somebody cheating they wouldn't put up with that whatsoever. There'd be somebody hurt bad. A lot of times poeple killed or cut up with knives. But that was just one class of people that did that.

Q. SO THERE WAS KIND OF A CLASS OF GAMBLERS. WERE THERE ANY PROSTITUTES IN BUXTON?

A. This I don't know.

Q. YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THAT, HUH?

A. No, I don't know one thing about it.

Q. WELL, WE GET SOME REPORTING, CLIFF, THAT ON PAY DAYS, PAY DAYS WERE WHAT TWICE A MONTH?

A. Yes.

Q. WOMEN WOULD SHOW UP FROM OUTSIDE OF BUXTON.

A. Well now, I wasn't there and I really don't know.

Q. THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD REFLECT ON THAT?

A. That'd just be off of hearsay.

Q. OKAY, LET'S SKIP OVER THAT. DO YOU REMEMBER SEEING ANY OF THE GAMBLERS IN TOWN?

A. I never seen a gambler _____ in my life. The only thing I know, you picked up the paper and it was always in it, 'cause they killed pretty often.

Q. WHAT PAPER WAS THIS?

A. Albia paper.

Q. ALBIA PAPER. AND IT WOULD REPORT A LOT ABOUT BUXTON, RIGHT?

A. Yes.

Q. OKAY. WERE PEOPLE DRESSED PRETTY WELL THERE IN BUXTON?

A. Yeah, they dressed pretty good. Never seen anybody even hardly ragged clothes there.

Q. ASIDE FROM THE MINERS _____ GOING TO WORK, CLIFF, COULD YOU DESCRIBE HOW MOST OF THE MINERS WENT ABOUT ON EVENING HOURS OR ON WEEKENDS, WHAT WOULD THEY WEAR?

A. Like they generally wear a pair of overalls.

Q. LIKE YOU GOT ON NOW?

A. Yeah.

Q. BIB OVERALLS?

A. Some with the bib down to here, but mostly overalls, course I suppose some of them on a Sunday they'd dress up and go to church _____.

Q. WOULD ANY OF THEM EVER STARCH THEIR OVERALLS?

A. I wouldn't know anything about that.

Q. BUT MOST OF THEM, YOU SAY, DURING THE DAY OR AT NIGHT WERE IN OVERALLS AND THEN SUNDAY THEY'D HAVE SUITS ON. WHAT ABOUT WOMEN, WHAT WOULD THEY GO AROUND IN?

A. Well, just dresses.

Q. JUST DRESSES.

A. They were always clean all the ones I seen the Negro _____. They'd go out and buy from it and run up and down the road getting greens. They'd come clear up from _____ from Old Buxton picking greens.

Q. WHAT WOULD THEY PICK?

A. Dandelion and mustard greens, a lot of wild mustard.

Q. DANDELION AND MUSTARD GREENS. WHAT DID THEY DO WITH IT?

A. They _____ tell me real good. Cooked them.

Q. DID YOU EVER EAT ANY OF THOSE GREENS?

A. Just the mustard greens. I never did eat dandelion.

Q. WHAT DID MUSTARD GREENS TASTE LIKE, CLIFF?

A. More like lettuce or have a little bit bitter taste.

Q. IS IT FIXED JUST LIKE LETTUCE?

A. You put vinegar over it. You cook it first. You cook it and then you put vinegar over it.

Q. WHAT'S MUSTARD GREENS LOOK LIKE, IS THERE ANY OUT HERE NOW?

A. I don't know whether there is or not. There was a lot of them up there _____ I doubt if you can find them.

Q. BECAUSE THEY SPRAY THE DITCHES, HUH? SO A LOT OF THE BLACK WOMEN CAME OUT DURING THE DAY AND GATHERED GREENS?

A. 25 and 30 at a time.

Q. THEY'D STAY TOGETHER LIKE THAT AND WORK IN THE DITCHES?

A. Worked the side of the road, _____ a fence, _____ the ditches. There were plenty of mustard there, plenty, a whole lot of dandelions the big yellow ones and they'd take them _____....

Q. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE A SIGHT, HUH?

A. And then they'd go gooseberry picking too and they always _____ bunch.

Q. WHERE WOULD THEY GO GOOSEBERRY PICKING?

A. Well, down on my grandfather's place, they had a lot of wild gooseberries _____

Q. YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT ONE OF THE STRIKES, YOUR GRANDFATHER SELLING MEAT TO PEOPLE AT THE TIME, WAS THERE A LOT OF LABOR UNREST IN BUXTON?

A. Just only strikes. There wasn't no unrest there. They picket the mines, they didn't picket Buxton.

Q. WERE THERE EVER ANY KILLINGS HAVING TO DO WITH STRIKES?

A. I don't think so.

Q. YOU DON'T THINK SO. NO MUCH VIOLENCE THEN, HUH?

A. _____ violence was over the card games and the shooting the dice and over the women, they had some over the women.

Q. SOME TROUBLE OVER THE WOMEN, HUH? YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THOSE STORES?

A. Oh, I remember a lot but I can't tell you just about _____ how they went. But they didn't allow anybody to fool with their women. They had a woman, it was theirs.

Q. SO DID IT HAPPEN OCCASIONALLY THAT A MAN ...

A. Pretty often, 'cause often someone tried to cut in and their girl friends, I don't know.

Q. MAN WOULD FIND HIS WOMAN WITH ANOTHER MAN?

A. He was just jealous of him at the dance, I think what most of them.

Q. AT THE DANCE. DID YOU EVER GO TO ANY OF THOSE DANCES, CLIFF?

A. No, that was before my time. My father and mother, mother wanted to go to the dance said she went once and they got in a fight and one guy took out an axe _____ his insides out on the floor.

Q. THEY SAY THIS AT A DANCE?

A. Yeah, and that was the last dance they went to. That happened a lot.

Q. QUITE A FEW KNIFINGS THERE THEN?

A. Yeah.

Q. CLIFF, DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOGRAPHS OR A KIND OF MEMORABILIA ABOUT BUXTON AROUND?

A. No, our house burnt down in '56 and everything burnt up. We had a lot...

Q. OH THAT'S REALLY TOO BAD ISN'T IT? WELL, ONE LAST QUESTION I THINK, WELL TWO LAST QUESTIONS. DID YOU KNOW THE BUXTON FAMILY AT ALL?

A. No I wasn't acquainted with them at all. My grandfather knowed them but I didn't know them.

Q. YOUR GRANDFATHER DID KNOW THEM?

A. Because he'd fill their ice house and they had business with them.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE WERE PRETTY HAPPY IN BUXTON, WAS THAT?

A. Yeah, I believe they were really happy 'cause he talked about it and people in Des Moines and different places, they called Buxton their heaven.

Q. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

A. Because everybody treat each other right. There was no disrespectful persons.

Q. THERE WASN'T ANY OF THAT KIND OF PREJUDICE?

A. No. I think the Negroes come from the South and they was free for once. Of course down there, you know, they feed them down there, but they had to make a living old masters was still controlling them, he hired them. Down here they were free to do whatever they wanted to do.

Q. THEY COULD GO ANY PLACE THEY WANTED TO GO OR AT LEAST THERE IN BUXTON?

A. And then there was the first World War, wages got so high, most of them, a lot of them bought these foreign cars. Oh, just got lousy with them foreign cars.

Q. A LOT OF CARS IN BUXTON?

A. Yeah, it was a lot of them _____ after the first World War. _____ when the World War ended they took a dommy and made an old car and they went to the company store and they come up here and went down through Sharp's End and drug it all around.

Q. YOU REMEBER THE WHISTLES GOING AFTER _____ DAY?

A. Oh yeah. There must have been hundreds of them following the guy dragging an old _____. That was kind of funny though interesting.

Q. SO YOU THINK THAT BOTH BLACKS AND WHITES LIVING IN BUXTON, THAT WAS A PRETTY GOOD TIME IN THEIR LIVES.

- A. Yeah, it was. I never know of anybody or hear anything ever hearing anyone said anything bad about living down there. Good people were good and the bad ones were bad, that's the way it is in every town.
- Q. OKAY CLIFF, IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO NOW MENTION ABOUT BUXTON THAT I JUST HAVEN'T COVERED, I HAVEN'T ASKED YOU? ANYTHING THAT LODGE IN YOUR MEMORY AND YOU THINK IMPORTANT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT NOW?
- A. I don't know, they had a lumber yard down there, my dad used to go down and buy lumber there.
- Q. WHO OWNED THE LUMBER YARD?
- A. Well, I don't know. Buxton did, Buxton coal company, they owned them stores.
- Q. THE COAL COMPANY OWNED THE LUMBER YARD TOO?
- A. Yeah. They owned the company store. They owned the lumber yard too.
- Q. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE LUMBER YARD, WAS IT BUXTON....
- A. Buxton Lumber Yard. Same as the Buxton Bank.
- Q. WHERE WAS IT, DOWNTOWN?
- A. Well, I think it was. I forget, but I think it was west of the company store.