

Narrator's Name: Ada Morgan  
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Interviewers' names: Elmer and Dorothy Schwieder (Dorothy "\*\*")  
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\*Q. Then there's no doubt as to what the tape deals with.

A. My name is Ada Baysoar Morgan, my address is 2709 Forrest Street, Peru, Illinois. I've lived here since 1926 and before that I lived in Spring Valley, a mining town west of here where there was a negro community.

\*Q. There was?

A. It was what they called a location and I remember no association with them except one boy came to school about the 4th grade and he was the neatest, cleanest boy in the class and the only other colored person that I remember is Diamond L\_\_\_\_\_, you can imagine who she was. They must have had their own stores out there. I just don't recall but I think maybe that conditioned me for Buxton because I just ... negroes or blacks were in their area and it was an accepted fact and we thought nothing about it. Integration was a word that I knew nothing about, never heard, there was no discussion of whether they should be with us or not be with us.

Q. Was this before Spring Valley or after Spring Valley?

A. Spring Valley was before Buxton.

Q. Before Buxton, so you got acquainted with the idea. \*No you lived at Buxton before you lived ....

A. Spring Valley. I went to grade school in Spring Valley and the colored people had their own area out around the mine in which they worked and I think as I said I think that conditioned me for expecting the same conditions when we went to Buxton and we did have them as far as I was concerned. I don't ever recall seeing a colored person in the store but they must have been there because it was the big store where it was a department store. I remember there were white clerks. We did go to the same movies and I don't recall that there were any marked line or anything of the sort.

Q. You went the same night?

A. We went the same time and they, it seems to me we always went way down in front to see all these western pictures and I told you about those French women, they really intrigued me, I wish I had been curious at the time and tried to find out how two French-born women arrived in a mining camp in the middle of Iowa.

\*Q. Yes, that is intriguing isn't it, I must say? Well where were you born then?

A. In Mahaska County, in a mining town that no longer exists, it was Muchakinock.

\*Q. Oh you were born in Muchy? And your father was associated with the ....

A. He was always associated with a railroad, usually the Chicago Northwestern or mines. He was in charge of the five mines in Spring Valley just before we went to Buxton. And after we left Buxton in just four years, he and some friends bought a mine in a coal washer.

\*Q. What nationality is the name Baysoar?

A. Baysoar. Well the original came from \_\_\_\_\_ but they settled in the Dutch area of Pennsylvania and it's my, we don't have any records there were no girls in the family to inquire and it's my guess that the name may have been spelled something like B-e-i-s-e-r and my grandfather spelled it B-a-y-s-o-r-e, my father changed it to B-a-y-s-o-a-r.

Q. So it \_\_\_\_\_ and switched around a time or two?

A. Yes.

\*Q. So how did your father get into coal mining then?

A. He started \_\_\_\_\_ and I guess it was just natural.

Q. Oh for the railroad. No they controlled the mines didn't they, the railroad owned the mine?

A. In Buxton but not in Spring Valley. In Buxton it was the Chicago Northwestern Railroad but it was called the Consolidation Coal Company.

\*Q. Now how old would you have been then when you moved to Buxton?

A. Well, I'm very sensitive about age.

\*Q. Okay that's fine.

A. I was 19.

\*Q. You were 19 when you moved there? So you were through grade school. \*You were through with your education then?

A. Yes, uh-huh.

Q. Do you remember anything about the schools in Buxton? Now we've sort of located Number 5 up 3rd Street wherever that might have been and West Swede Town and East Swede Town and Coopertown and some other sort of locations, were you in Coopertown or East Swede Town or West Swede Town, or do you remember?

A. Oh the house was off by itself.

Q. Off by itself, the superintendent's house was separated from ...

A. It was north of the office and the store, which was not a company store but it was managed by a relatives of Mrs. Buxton.

Q. Do you remember her name?

A. No. She came from Oskaloosa, and had been married before.

\*Q. What do you know of the Buxton family? Do you know where they came from?

A. From the east, I can't tell you which state, but they did come from the east and Mr. Buxton's father must have been interested in coal mining too, I really can't tell you.

\*Q. Well, now what was Ben Buxton's position then?

A. Well, he was general manager.

\*Q. General manager?

A. As far as I know.

\*Q. So would it be the general manager who was sort of over the whole operation and then your father was over the mines?

A. No, Mr. Buxton was not there at all. My father succeeded Mr. Buxton.

\*Q. We were wondering about that, how you always hears the name Buxton and we've never been able to fit him into an exact slot, but he was the general manager, okey.

A. Up until 1909 and I don't know just when he left but my father went over there in the summer of 1909.

\*Q. 1909. Do you know where Buxton went when he left there?

A. It was my impression that they returned to the east.

\*Q. So about how long would he have been out there then?

A. Well, either he or his father must have been there from the time it started.

\*Q. In 1900.

A. That I don't know.

\*Q. Was the father the general superintendent first and then the son?

A. I don't know.

\*Q. Did you know a person by the name of Hobe Armstrong?

A. Well I knew about him and I knew him by sight. I knew his family by sight. They were \_\_\_\_\_ and very outgoing people and that's all I can tell you. I never had any contact with them.

\*Q. It was our understanding that Hobe Armstrong was black and his wife was white.

A. Well, the man that I have in mind was not black. He was color descent, I mean, black descent but ....

\*Q. But what you would call mulatto or mixed?

A. Yeah.

\*Q. We've heard from various people that he apparently was quite a business man. He ran a meat market and must have done some farming in that general area.

A. Well I would think that's true. As I say I didn't know them.

Q. Now your father came in 1909 and how long did he stay as superintendent?

A. Until September 1913.

Q. And then the mines closed in about '22 so there was first Ben Buxton and then your dad was mine superintendent in 1909 until 1913.

\*Do you remember who followed your father then as superintendent?

A. He had a Welch name and he came from the southern fields of Illinois where the Consolidation Coal Company also had property. It begins with "H" and that's all I can tell you.

\*Q. Well tell us what you remember of the life in Buxton. I take it was a pleasant time, just generally tell us about it.

A. Well, I enjoyed the few people that we became acquainted with. Some of the men in the office and none were married at that time and there was a woman in the office, we were good friends and the manager of the store, his wife was a sister of Mrs. Buxton, they were very pleasant to be with and the doctor and his wife, the white doctor and his wife were from Albia but they were not there very long and another doctor and wife from Albia came and we were very friendly with them.

\*Q. When the doctor from Albia came did they live there right in Buxton?

A. Yes, they lived in one of the gray company houses, and so did the manager of the store. Very close to the store opposite, see that medal that led over to the store and land began to rise and there were some houses along there and one other house along there was occupied by a young couple, an engineer and

- A. (cont'd) his wife, and those were the only homes that I was ever in. I don't know who owned the rooming house, but it was for white people as far as I know, whether any colored applied I have no idea whether we ever had any visitors there.
- Q. We understand that some of the salesmen used to come in on the train and stay over night.
- A. Yes.
- Q. What did they call it, the White House?
- A. Yes, that's right, it was.
- Q. But again we have never heard the blacks were not allowed. It's just that not very many black salesmen came to town.
- A. Well I don't say they weren't. That's it, I wasn't down there a lot and I have no idea whether they would have been accepted, I think they would have been, really I do. It was a good place to board I know, the people that were there liked it. The colored doctor, did I mention that in my letter?
- \*Q. I think you did, I think you referred to it. Was this Dr. Carter?
- A. Yes. He was semi-black, you know, and, I believe did I mention his wife?
- Q. I think you said in your letter she was a very nice person or a very attractive...
- A. Very attractive, yes. When I first passed her on the street one day I was approaching her on the street and I wondered why I hadn't met her and then as I passed I could see the sideview of her and then I don't know whether I mentioned but her niece, Magnolia?
- \*Q. Yes, you did, her name was Magnolia.
- A. She was a pretty little girl and right light too, but they had their \_\_\_\_\_ and she was not to associate with the Albia blacks. That's why she was called home.
- \*Q. Called home to Buxton?
- A. Uh-huh.
- \*Q. She was not to associate with the black, was it the feeling that the blacks in Buxton then were not of her same social class?
- A. It may not have applied to all of them. Her aunt, Mrs. Carter, had quite an aristocratic look, you know you think of a southern colonel. I've always heard that they have their casts.
- \*Q. I'm sure that's true.

- A. They had a very nice reception for us when we arrived, held in the upper floor of the YMCA and there were a surprising number of people. Well there were the druggist and his wife who lived up in Swede Town, there's another name for that I can't ....
- \*Q. Was that Cooperstown?
- A. No.
- \*Q. It wasn't Cooperstown?
- A. I don't know where Cooperstown was.
- \*Q. Was this a black druggist or a white?
- A. No, white.
- \*Q. White druggist?
- A. Yes, but I mean they were at this reception. And Whist was played and I never played Whist, and then there was a tennis court down in the woods and lighted and that I enjoyed greatly.
- \*Q. You play tennis then?
- A. Yes, and oh I walked a great deal, I've always walked a lot and still continue to do so and I walked along the railroad tracks. There never was the slightest thought of fear but I don't recall walking up on the hillside where the cottages were, not that I was afraid, I never had any fear, it was just well it wasn't attractive and I never had any association with any colored people except Magnolia and a laundress who came in 1909 or '10. She came and asked \$10.00 for doing the laundry. Well in those days that was an enormous amount of money; she just didn't know the value of money, an elderly woman. Well we had met in one another's homes and had a very pleasant social life, was very limited of course, but having cars we were able to get out in the summertime, but that car was jacked up in the winter time.
- Q. Because of the bad roads?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You couldn't get in and out and you just jacked up to keep the tires?
- A. Yes. My father had a team of ponies and just a one-seated buggy. I remember my mother and I went to Albia in the snow storm one day and we just had a happy time. The curtain was up you know, and it was very pleasant.
- Q. Do you remember the Buxton Wonders ball team at all?

A. I've never been a baseball fan so I don't know about them.

\*Q. Did you go back to the YMCA then for quite a few different things?

A. I don't recall going for anything other than the movies. We just met in our homes.

\*Q. Your social activities then would be when you would go to your friends' homes and they would come to your home.

Was it fairly unusual to have a piano in your home? Is that something that many did or very few?

A. I don't know. Of course we had one for many years, I have no idea. I didn't know any white miner's family either. That meadow seemed to separate us I guess and I didn't attend church there, just went once to the white. I don't know whether there was a colored church, I wondered about that. There was this Methodist in Swede Town. I went there once.

\*Q. Did you go to church in Albia then?

A. No, we were just backsliders during those four years.

\*Q. Well I suppose if you had to go a long distance or a \_\_\_\_\_ distance it would have been hard to do that in the wintertime. Were you an only child then or did you ....

A. Yes.

Q. You mentioned a minute ago that you enjoyed playing tennis, particularly in those years tennis would be pretty much a white person's game. Do you ever recall any blacks playing tennis?

A. No, I'm sure there were none, they wouldn't even think of it.

Q. It's not because they wouldn't be allowed on the tennis court, it's just that blacks didn't play tennis?

A. I believe that the tennis court was hacked out of the woods and prepared by the office men. There were electric lights supplied by a plant near the store and that supplied the steam that heated our buildings and our homes and all of the doctors' homes and all along there.

Q. They all had steam heat?

A. Yes.

Q. Rather than the coal stove?

A. Yes, oh I don't know about anybody.

Q. No, the miners' homes I'm sure did not, they were not connected with that.

\*Q. But the doctors and the professional people would have steam heat from the power plant?

A. Yes.

\*Q. That would be the power plant that would heat the company store and the business office and all these?

A. Yes, and it was piped up to the house where we lived.

\*Q. How far would you estimate that you were from the company store, like a block, two blocks, three blocks?

A. A block and one-half \_\_\_\_\_. There was a high walk over the meadow, I think they show the steps in that picture.

\*Q. It certainly shows the rise that the house was on.

A. The rest of that was about an acre, at least an acre on which there was a company house and the handiman lived in there. He took care of the stable and the horses and the yard and he had a garden in which we benefited. And he was a real handiman, his name was Franzen.

\*Q. Franzen. Now the stable was for horses that you had for your own riding?

A. Just for using the buggy, they were not riding horses.

Q. Franzen was a name that we picked, two brothers that live still in Lovilia.

A. I see the name in the Albia paper once in a while.

\*Q. Well, it looks like a very commodious house, it looks like it was a very large house that you lived in.

A. Well, the living room wasn't any larger than this and there was the dining room next to it and a pantry in the kitchen and the entry way was at the side. We didn't enter the front door. Through a small office, there was a switchboard in the \_\_\_\_\_ desk that made it possible to call out at night, the little switchboard down in the center of the town closed at 6:00 I think, but using this switchboard one could call all around anyplace.

\*Q. So that was in your home then so that made it very convenient didn't it?

A. Upstairs there were four bedrooms and three baths and a rear stair, and a partial basement, I think. I don't recall a full basement.

\*Q. So you had central heating with the steam heat and you say three bathrooms and electricity, so it really was as modern a home you could have had anywhere?

A. Oh yes, very comfortable.

\*Q. Very comfortable. And you had, you say, one maid, Magnolia, did you have more than one maid?

A. No we didn't. No, my mother and I took care of the house. The Buxton's had a Swedish woman, and I heard about her.

\*Q. What did your mother do for social activities?

A. Well, I'm afraid there wasn't enough for her. We didn't realize that she might be lonely but she had several friends there and we all met together really. The doctor and his wife were not my age, I was considerably younger than they were and they were in between and more family gatherings than just youths or married couples or older couples.

Q. You remember any fraternal organizations like Eastern Star or Masons or any of those active that you can recall?

A. I don't recall any of them.

Q. We know that there was some activities of this kind but how active and how big the lodges were I don't know, but every so often somebody would say I went to a lodge meeting or they had one, so apparently there were some lodges.

A. Are these white people?

Q. Both white and black. Now if you're talking Masonic Lodge which some of them did, if they're talking about a black Masonic Lodge, it's very different and the whites won't admit there is such a thing so I carefully try to probe and see which lodge, but apparently they had Knights of Pythias, and Rebecca, and...

\*And Odd Fellows Lodge

And what was the black lady from Waterloo, Mrs. Brown, her first name was?

\*Marjorie.

Marjorie Brown was talking about her mother having a sort of literary society for the black women, which was surprising to hear a coal miner's daughter talk about my mother having a literary society for black coal mining women but apparently from her point of view, they did.

\*You made an interesting comment earlier that in Spring Valley where you had lived you had become accustomed to a particular situation in regard to blacks and whites and so when you went to Buxton then was it the same or was it different?

A. Well, not as far as I was concerned because ....

\*Q. You were separated.

A. We were separated completely.

\*Q. But what was your view at the time? Did you really have much of a sense that Buxton was really any different from Spring Valley, that the blacks were treated better, that there was more integration in Buxton and that everyone perhaps lived better in Buxton than they did in many other mining camps?

A. I'm afraid I didn't think about it. It just didn't come under my observation and never called to my attention. No one ever talked about that.

\*Q. This never came up in your family?

A. Never.

\*Q. Like with your father?

A. No.

\*Q. Have you since, maybe this is something that you're not aware of even now but the general view is, the view that we have picked up from talking to many of the blacks who lived there, some of the whites who lived there also. Now most of the people we've talked to so far came from these mining families, the fathers were coal miners or the men were coal miners and the general view seems to be that Buxton was different, Buxton was really different because blacks were treated much better in Buxton than they were treated in most other coal mining communities. One of the things I've been working on for five years is research on coal mining in general in Iowa and I've interviewed many Italian-Americans, families from Russian-American families, Welch families and the general coal camp. Like in Iowa you had places like Hiteman, you had places like What Cheer, or \_\_\_\_\_, just a whole host of places. A coal camp was about the most dismal place you could find. There were no social activities of any kind for the miners. Their houses were small, they would be square one-story homes where you had just the four basic rooms and the companies rarely planted trees or flowers. It was a very unattractive place to be. There would be problems with the water supply in the summertime and then you get to Buxton and Buxton was different. The houses were bigger. They've described these houses as having four rooms on the first floor and I never can remember 1 or 2 bedrooms, I think some had two bedrooms on the second floor and there would be a fairly large area around each house so the family could have a garden and they could keep cows and chickens and there was a YMCA so there were social things to do at the Y. There was a huge company store where you didn't have to trade.

A. It wasn't a company store.

\*Q. Well, wasn't it indirectly a company store though?

- A. It was owned and managed and I'm for sure owned by the members of the Buxton family. It was managed by relatives of Mrs. Buxton. Her brother-in-law and her cousin and her brother, I believe.
- Q. The Consolidation Coal Company didn't own the store then? That's interesting.
- \*Yeah, we didn't realize that. We thought the Buxton's just managed the store.
- A. I'm quite certain about that.
- Q. It was owned by Ben Buxton?
- A. Must have been the family owned it, yes.
- Q. The family owned the store.
- \*So there's this totally different view of Buxton and many of the black people we've interviewed have actually referred to it as a utopia.
- A. Well, of course, I don't recall any trouble there and ....
- Q. Do you recall any at Spring Valley?
- A. Sorry.
- Q. Do you recall any in Spring Valley or any of the other places, any racial trouble?
- A. No, occasionally we would hear of fights and I have associated Negroes and fights and razors because that's what they would \_\_\_\_\_. I know there was one man over there who had done something that brought him to the jail in Albia, Monroe County jail. After we moved over there I walked by there one day and out came a voice from the rail barred window, "How do you do Miss Baysoar."
- \*Q. Out of the jail?
- A. I was better known than I realized.
- \*Q. I'm sure you were, I'm sure people realized who you were.
- A. Well as I said, no thought of fear ever entered my mind there. I'd go any place.
- \*Q. So you didn't have a sense of this fact that Buxton was really any different than other coal mining communities that you had lived in?
- A. No, I didn't.
- \*Q. And you don't feel that your father had that perception either?

- A. Well if my father had anything to do with it, it was all set up when he arrived here, of course, but I know he would continue any fair treatment because that was his reputation among all the people that worked under him, that he was very fair and just and he thought this Dr. Carter was tops, he respected him as a man highly.
- Q. We pick up some stories about the doctors in terms of coal mining, the slate would fall and the men would get hurt and they'd have back trouble and these doctors, because they dealt with these problems, they brought the company doctors into Chicago to do some back operations because they were experts.
- \*Now, did he work for the company then, Carter would have been a company doctor?
- A. Yes he did. I know that because my father fired the white doctor that was there, he was not attending to business and got another doctor.
- \*Q. Do you remember if they had a medical plan whereby the company doctor took care of all the family members or ...
- A. I'm sorry, I don't know. I'm afraid I wasn't curious enough.
- Q. Now your father was superintendent here and then he went to Buxton and then where did he go in 1913?
- A. We moved to Buxton so that he could go out to the mines that he and three friends owned and they had a coal washer also at Lakonta.
- Q. At Lakonta?
- A. L-a-k-o-n-t-a.
- Q. Now was that a coap camp in Iowa or a mine?
- A. It's in Iowa, right near there was a place on the railroad, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad.
- Q. And they owned a mine there and how long did they mine or dig coal in that location?
- A. My father died in 1923, he wasn't 59 years old and he had just about closed up that company, they found all they were going to mine and they were no longer washing coal.
- Q. Buxton closed up about the same year, about 1929, '28?
- \*Oh, I think it was earlier than that.
- A little earlier I guess.
- A. I said he died in 1923, and he was closing.

Q. That's about right.  
\*Now you were living in Albia?

A. Albia.

\*Q. You remember, did Buxton decline in size? Some of the things I've read have stated that around 1914, 1915, quite a few of the people began to move away from Buxton, do you recall any change in size?

A. No I don't, I only returned there once after we moved to Albia. We went over for a night's stay. I really don't know.

Q. Was any prejudice shown toward you because you were the mine boss's daughter?

A. No, I had no contact.

Q. They sort of left you alone, more or less?

\*It wasn't even that. It was just separation?

A. It wasn't the plan.

Q. I look at your home and it's obviously a very nice home, you mentioned electricity and water and steam heat and some of the other things and then I think, both Dorothy and I teach at the university and the President has a daughter. In some ways, she was a little different because she's the president's daughter. Some separation, I should think.

\*Now, did you marry someone who was in the coal mining business?

A. No, my husband was the chief engineer of West Clock here in Peru, and he died and later on I married Dr. Morgan, a clergyman. And he died in 1964.

Q. This looks like a fascinating town. We finally drove along the old park down along the river and there's quite a bit of action down there yet.

A. It was developed as a town because it was the head of navigation of the Illinois river in the early 1800s and there was also a lot of coal here so they brought up zinc ore from Missouri and that brought in people from Germany into the zinc factory and there was one in LaSalle and one here in Peru, and they're both gone now. And then a car company developed and one of the manufacturers of zinc, Mr. Matheson, and that became a very large business here. At one time they employed 3,200, they made West Clocks. I mean Little Ben and Big Ben.

Q. Oh, really right here in Peru?

A. Yes.

Q. \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Sadly gone. My husband got his master's degree at Illinois and had been offered a job as manager of the clock works before but he didn't want to quit then. He hadn't been there more than a year until he invented a machine that combines the operation of three and that really set them up on their feet. It supplied many more jobs, they could compete then with other clock companies and right at that time, alarm clocks were the business and they branched out into quite a large company and eventually they bought other plants and became General Time Corporation. And then \_\_\_\_\_ a conglomerate of California came in and bought shares at a very high price and secured management of the company. General Time fought it through the courts and finally lost out and then \_\_\_\_\_ warned several times during the year they would close this plant because of labor disputes and last year it finally closed down completely and they've had an auction disposing of the final equipment and no bids for the buildings. You drove past it. I think because unless you went directly, you couldn't go directly to Water Street. You must have driven by the offices on the north side and the factory plants around the south side and one of those buildings appears to be one floor, but it goes down five floors.
- \*Q. Oh my, on the riverside?
- A. Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ the railroad track. And as I said they employed 3,200 people. This area doesn't attract as much manufacturing as it should because of the Illinois compensation laws for one, and strong unions and the unions were warned repeatedly that this would happen, you know, and they finally did it.
- \*Q. Are there still some coal mines around here?
- A. No, there hasn't been for many years. The coal is there, out here, near \_\_\_\_ I know there's enough for 200 years in that area.
- \*Q. The slack piles are big.
- A. You know they take pride in those, they won't sell them.
- \*Q. Really?
- A. No.
- \*Q. They want a monument there to the fact....
- A. Well in 1910 or '11, or someplace along in there, after we left Spring Valley there was a very bad disaster, \_\_\_\_\_ and that's their memorial they say, that pile.
- \*Q. I think that of all the mining accidents in the United States it was one of the very worst in the entire history of coal mining. Yeah, a large number of men I don't remember the number, but it was large. We drove down along the river front and then we happened, before we realized that we were in LaSalle, didn't even realize the two towns were together.

A. It's just a little ravine between.

\*Q. Anyway, coming back we passed the most unusual church, St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

A. Oh, you were on Fifth Street.

\*Q. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, does that have an ethnic flavor of any kind?

A. Oh yes. If you notice there the building joining it was St. Joseph's Hall. Very German.

Q. German.

A. There was Zion Church, there is E.N.R. Church,

Q. \_\_\_\_\_ Reform.

A. Yes, that's right. And Pastor Braun was there for years and spoke in German but the time I came here in 1926 he was alternating, it was an English and German sermon and he was quite an autocrat, a real German of the old type, you know.

Q. Almost \_\_\_\_\_

A. Really, I just thought of \_\_\_\_\_ and then there is one Polish church above the West Clocks.

\*Q. Is there anything different about the architecture of that church that would mark it as a Polish church?

A. I never been in it. The church that I attended is right on the corner at the stop light there, it's been, of course, rebuilt about 10, 12 years ago. And in LaSalle there's a Lutheran Church and an Irish Church and a German Church, all Catholic.

\*Q. All Catholic, Irish Catholic, German Catholic?

A. Old Peru has an Irish Catholic Church but it's not strictly catholic now, I mean not strictly Irish now, I see Polish names listed in their activities. Great Polish population here \_\_\_\_\_

\*Q. But we noticed so many eastern European names, now did the coal mines attract most of these people originally?

A. Yes. Here in Peru it was the clock works and the zinc companies that attracted the Germans. This was a decidedly German town and LaSalle, Irish. After, well, I can't say just when it was they decided to build a canal so they could go from New Orleans to Chicago and they brought in Irish workers to dig the canal and they had that terrible disease that kills people overnight.

\*Q. Cholera?

A. Yes, cholera. But anyhow many of them settled in LaSalle. It was a decidedly Irish town as far as politics was concerned. Of course there were all these other nationalities, you know.

\*Q. Very democratic?

A. And they never got along, the two towns, entirely different. La Salle used to be in the red as far as city government was concerned and Peru in the black. I don't think there's much difference nowadays. But they had tried over the years to make one city and they have a township high school and you'd think that.... I don't think you need to record this.

### Side Two

\*Q. I find it very interesting.

A. The Catholic hospital in LaSalle, the only one there was long standing and was operated by nuns and then they were not helped by the order in which they belong and so they could not modernize enough to meet the state requirements and so it was decided that they could not continue and then an arrangement was made whereby they would merge with the one here in Peru which was called People's Hospital that was the Protestant \_\_\_\_\_. I mean it wasn't distinguished that way because, but it wasn't the catholic origin, no nuns had ever been there and they were expanding all the time, now the Illinois Valley Community Hospital, but there was a great uproar in LaSalle, they just felt it was terrible that they'd have to come to Peru, many are still opposed to it and they will go to Spring Valley which is a Catholic hospital. That was started in a home, a priest gave his home and they \_\_\_\_\_ and it's a very large hospital. You may want to go out through Spring Valley to get on to 80, you can very easily.

\*Q. Oh, let's do that, we'll see a little different area then.

A. It's to your right as you come out up the hill. It's very large and both hospitals are expanding yearly, it seems, and acquiring all this expensive material, equipment. Now the Illinois Valley Community Hospital \_\_\_\_\_ putting out feelers for a scanner which will cost \$225,000 by the time it's installed and I have a strong feeling that hospitals in an area ought to work together on equipment of that sort.

Q. Instead of everybody being in competition, absolutely.

\*That's the point where the feuding gets to be ridiculous, it just gets to be ridiculous.

When you were talking earlier, do you remember much about Albia, was it a pleasant place to stay?

A. Oh yeah, very nice residential town, there were no factories there when we moved there, but now there are small ones. One of them moved from here over there.

Q. Is that right?

A. Chamberlin Company.

\*Q. Did the coal industry influence Albia in many ways that you remember?

A. Oh, I think so. It was not wholly farming, yes it was the center of shopping for Hiteman and Lovilia.

\*Q. And I suppose a lot of people from Buxton went in to Albia?

A. We used to go there, yes.

Q. They had a hospital there and the miners' hospital was there.

\*Q. Did you remember that, the miners' hospital that they had there?

A. There was a privately owned hospital.

\*Q. There was a Dr. Guetch. Goutch or Guetch?

A. Jutch, J-u-t-c-h I think, yes it was his hospital.

\*Q. But I think they had a plan whereby the miners' families could subscribe to, well if they paid like 50¢ a month or \$1.00 a month, then if anyone in the family got sick they could go in and be treated for that amount of money.

A. I don't know anything about that. Many people went to the Ottumwa hospital, however.

\*Q. Do you remember anything about the union, United Mine Workers or how that ....

A. John Mitchell who was instrumental in forming the miners' union was born in Spring Valley and they have a marker at each end of the town.

Q. That's very fascinating because Dorothy's been working with that and everybody said oh you, the name that comes up is John L. Lewis, he really wasn't very active in Iowa politics, he got in the national scene very quickly but it was Mitchell?

A. Yes, and in the '90s, 1890, Grover Cleveland was president and he ordered the army, I don't think it was the militia, it was the army to Spring Valley to quell a miners' strike.

\*Q. I'll bet that was a bloody encounter.

A. I guess so. It's too bad Judge \_\_\_\_\_ died last week. He loved \_\_\_\_\_ Spring Valley and you would have found much of interest in his memories.

\*Q. Does the name John White mean anything? John White lived at Pekey, the coal camp in Iowa.

A. Near Oskaloosa?

\*Q. I think so.

A. Yes I know he wanted my father to use his influence to help him borrow money for his company and we were all up at the lake, not \_\_\_\_\_ near Mason City.

\*Q. Oh, Clear Lake.

A. Clear Lake, together and Mrs. White entertained for me all the young people around there, that's all I know of the Whites.

\*Q. That's interesting. Well now, if we're talking about the same John White, he was national president of the United Mine Workers.

A. Oh this man owned the mine, at least he was in charge of the mine.

\*Q. Was that at White City? There was a Whiteburgh or a White City that was fairly close to Buxton.

A. Yes, there was.

\*Q. It just strikes me that maybe that's the same person that was associated with that.

A. You think it was a mining camp? I might think that White City was over there in Swede Town, I know it had another name than Swede Town. Well, I'm sorry I know there was such a place, but I can't remember.

\*Q. I think in fact on maps, early day maps I've seen it listed as White City, I don't know how big it was or....

I think it may have been a \_\_\_\_\_ really not kind of large \_\_\_\_\_ We've got somebody that was on the road to White City on the railroad to White City.

A. You know the mines didn't last very long. I think I told you that 14 was operating when we went there and several others and I think it was 22 they were opening as we left.

\*Q. So each mine played out pretty quickly?

A. Very quickly, shallow \_\_\_\_\_.

\*Q. Do you remember your father talking about his business at all, I mean what things ....

A. He never was one to do that.

\*Q. He didn't bring his business home?

A. No, he never did.

\*Q. Because he certainly had a major responsibility. He had a great many men working under him.

A. Yes he did.

Q. Was this Chicago and Northwestern, they brought him from Illinois to Buxton?

A. The Spring Valley mine, the Chicago and Northwestern mine was in Spring Valley but it did not own the coal company. They probably had some interrelation because my father went from the coal company railroad to the coal company.

Q. That's what I was curious about, he'd actually started out as a telegrapher.

A. Well not down there, many years later, many years earlier.

Q. Earlier, and he was working for the railroad and the next thing he knew he'd become the mine foreman in Iowa.

A. He had been in charge of mines in Southern Illinois, single mines if I remember correctly, I don't know much about that.

\*Q. What do you remember of Muchakinock, anything?

A. Nothing.

\*Q. You were how old, quite young when you moved from there then?

A. Yes, there was nothing ever there to go back to.

\*Q. Now as we understand that, they moved most of Muchakinock to Buxton, the houses. They just cut houses in half and moved them on.

Do you remember any fires or excitement or things like that?

A. Oh yes.

Q. How did they put out a fire, or what happened?

A. I missed the big fire. I was over in Oskaloosa the night the store burned. And I've never seen a big fire, not particularly anxious to, but I don't know what they did, I wasn't there. Well the hoses of course, they had water.

Q. And the hand pump machines I take it?

A. Well they had all this electric power.

\*Q. That's right, we keep forgetting that. And the store burned clear to the ground didn't it, or considered they rebuilt the thing?

A. I don't think it burned to the ground, I just don't remember any long gap in between going there.

\*Q. Do you remember the new company store there, the second one?

A. The only one I knew was right almost at the end of that walk beyond the light plant.

\*Q. So when you described the store, you're talking about the store that burned down or the one before the fire? It's my understanding that they built the second company store.

A. It wasn't a company store.

\*Q. I'm sorry, Monroe Merchantile Company, I think was the name of it.

A. Well, there's a very good store there when we left, in excellent condition and it's either repaired or rebuilt. As far as I know it was on the same spot.

Q. Was this the one where they put the money in the little tubes and then zing up to somebody in the cage?

A. Yes, I'd forgotten that, I'd forgotten that. They put in a soda fountain, oh that was a big attraction, I gained weight right away.

\*Q. What were all the departments they had within the store? They must have had a lot of different ones.

A. It was a grocery section and dry goods. Now whether they had ready-to-wear or not I don't recall at all, but there was a bank and I ordered furniture through the manager of the bank. I remember that after we moved to Albia. There must have been some hardware there, I don't recall. I only recall the grocery section. We got fresh lettuce and celery on weekends and the dry good section. But it was a good sized store.

\*Q. And it was a good place to shop. I take it that you remember that as being a good place to shop, with a good variety of everything?

A. Well we had all of we wanted, yes. I mean in the line of food. We didn't ever buy any clothing there because that's why I don't know if they had any.

Q. Do you remember buying any clothing by catalog, Sears or Wards?

- A. We went to Ottumwa or mostly Oskaloosa and of course my mother and I went into Chicago when we came back to Illinois to relatives. We were only there for a year.
- \*Q. I take it you did most of your travelling by train then when you would come back to visit Illinois.
- A. Yes, we have to go up to Bellvidere I think and somehow change at Bellvidere. That Bellvidere is in Illinois. Where did we go in Iowa? I don't know. I had a pass that would have taken me anyplace in the United States and my father, of course, did, he didn't use it except once to go to Yellowstone Park. Of course he had passes all his life. It wasn't the custom to take vacations then, it wasn't.
- \*Q. You just considered you ought to work all the time, I suppose?
- A. Well you come back to visit \_\_\_\_\_ but it wasn't a set period or you wouldn't go off for a month or 2 weeks.
- Q. Count if you go?
- A. Yes.
- \*Q. Someone was telling me to that there was an interurban between Hiteman and Albia. It was just kind of a short line that ran, people could get on in the morning and come into Albia, do their shopping and then go home later on in the afternoon.
- A. Yes, I think that's true, I never used it, I think that's true. Interurbans had short lives. The one through here didn't last very long.
- \*Q. Don't you wonder why, they seemed so practical? To me it always seemed so practical to have.
- A. Well, it was quicker to go into Chicago on the Rock Island Railroad from here rather than Interurban.
- \*Q. How far are you from Chicago?
- A. A hundred miles.
- \*Q. A hundred miles. That's a good convenience distance I would think.
- A. I rarely go in now, I just don't enjoy it but when I first came here, I went in every two weeks. I'd go on Wednesday because there were ten good theaters when we find the matinee without reservations. And I would have things to buy, \_\_\_\_\_ it was good transportation at that time. And later we drove in frequently. I really only go, maybe I'll go into Chicago once a year now. Go to see something special. I just ride right through to O'Hare to the airport.

\*Q. As you said earlier, it sould like you did quite a bit of traveling.

Traveled a bit, that's nice.

A. You know all the continents, well over a hundred countries.

\*Q. Do you have children?

A. I acquired families and we have a very good relationship. Two of them were here earlier in the week. I mean the end of last week, two were here the week before.

Q. Well, Mrs. Schwieder, can you think of any more about Buxton?

\*No.

A. I know I haven't been able to help because I wasn't observing.

Q. Well, some things, you've reinforced the fact that the store was owned by Ben Buxton. It had been referred to by almost everybody else as the company store, but see you were in the position to know that it was the Buxton store and the rest of them just took it for granted that the company owned it and that's very different. This is the way you get that information.

\*Do you remember though when the Buxtons moved out of there, what they did?

A. No, they had to go on before, months before we did.

\*Q. They just hired other people to manage, relatives to manage the store for them, and probably continued to own.

A. They may have some interest in it, I don't know. You see we never heard of any friction between the whites and the blacks, never heard of that so there was this integration that you found.

Q. And yet there was some separation too. You recall that the blacks and whites went to the movie houses and sat together and some have gone so far as to say there were dances and some have said there were dances but there were white dances and black dances, there was no innermixed dancing at all, and I'm sure that is a color line that there was no mixing on the dance floor.

A. I doubt that the colored wanted to go there, that they never think of it at that time.

Q. I'm sure that's quite true. There are certain things that you \_\_\_\_\_. I guess I just don't go much, we were curious about restaurants. We've asked about the White House where a drummer or a salesman might stay. Apparently the restaurants would serve both blacks and whites but the blacks simply didn't go out to eat, that's the story we've got. That we never yet had a

- Q. (cont'd.) white or a black say that, "Oh, blacks weren't served, that they didn't have signs up, no blacks in here." They make their money and spend it on other things but to go to a restaurant was just rather unusual and they didn't do it.
- A. Well now 1909 is 72 years ago, there wasn't the salutation and there weren't the leaders like there are today you know. I think it never occurred to them.
- \*Q. Let me ask you one question, maybe you could compare a little for us. Now I know quite a bit about coal camps in Iowa, I don't know anything about coal camps in, say, Illinois. For example, what housing might be like. Do you remember at all what the miners' homes were like in Spring Valley with what the miners' homes were like in Buxton?
- A. I have in mind the miners' homes over in \_\_\_\_\_ which is another mining center and I think that Spring Valley was pretty much like one floor and you see over there in Spring Valley and West End enlarged or the fronts changed you know but they are there the original homes are all through the west half of the town.
- Q. Do most of them have the roof that goes up from the four sides to the chimney in the middle, the house and then there's a chimney in the middle and the roof comes up from ...
- A. Four sides, no.
- Q. They'd have a gable roof?
- A. An, A roof.
- Q. An A roof, like this? That's interesting 'cause many of the mining houses in Iowa, if this was the house then they'd put the chimney in the middle and then there'd be roof and they'd come up a bit of a gable like that.
- \*It was called truncated I guess, it was the architectural term truncated. But almost without exception, Albia, Hiteman, Boone, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, almost every ...
- Used less lumber.
- \*Pardon.
- Used less lumber to do that.
- \*Did it?
- Saved a few dollars \_\_\_\_\_.

Q. (cont'd.) \*That's interesting, it might have been outside influence. But you remember that the mine homes in Buxton would have been larger because they did have the two floors, so they would have been larger. The thing we've trying to get at and it's so hard to get at is if Buxton really was different like we think it was, if the Consolidation Coal Company and its people like your father and Ben Buxton and all of those people, if they really did have a more progressive, a more enlightened -- I'm not sure those are the exact words that I want to use, but they really were promoting this more progressive community, why? Could they just have been motivated or the different set of motives, what made Buxton different?

A. It must have been the planners.

\*Q. That's what you keep coming back to, that it had to be there from the beginning.

It's interesting because we can share with you some of the things of course which might jog your memory. The blacks will tell us, "Oh, it was perfect, there was no prejudice, we could go and buy at the store and charge at the store and we could go to the drugstore and we could go to the movie house," you know and they're recalling -----, and yet when you push them down to the end of the rope in terms of, was it that perfect, then why was it that way or who were the people that were making it this way, well Ben Buxton comes to mind, but Ben Buxton left. Was it the Consolidation Coal Company that wanted to have a marvelous community? In spite of all of this it appears to us that there was not much prejudice, they weren't beat up and they weren't mistreated in that way and yet the mix that they try to tell us that took place, we have not found very many whites that visited in black homes or very many blacks that visited in white homes, now they just don't think of it. Oh we could have, well we could have but we didn't is different than we dare not and there's a whole thread through this and of course we're very interested because your husband was the first manager, your father was the first management person (after Ben Buxton) that was in charge of the mines. The miners that are down there digging coal, they don't know much about what's going on in between the time they come out of the mine and go.

A. Well I've heard and read about that in other cases, of course. I wouldn't say that it didn't happen there because I don't know, but I'm surprised.

Q. The miners themselves have told us.

\*Well now some, I mean I'm sure there were many that were \_\_\_\_\_ and saved their money and had a profit to show but.

And this one lady that's a very articulate black lady talks about her mother and her aunt and she had a peacock feather, she had two of them and how elegantly she dressed and this lady said those peacock feathers were \$25 per feather and her mother had two and she's very proud of it and oh, she brings out her picture of her mother, so there is something different about that community, just trying to get on to it.

- A. The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad of that period was dissolved after 1929, crashed you know. Then the stockholders, I happen to be one, of that company had no rights and the new company was formed. It seems impossible that they could reform under the same name and crowd out all the previous stockholders. I was thinking if that weren't true you might secure records, ask them for the early history.
- \*Q. Well you know we have written to the main office in Chicago and what they told us was that in 19, now they didn't mention anything about 1929, but they mentioned that in 1972 Northwest Industries, they said 1972 Northwest Industries owned the Chicago Northwestern Railroad and in 1972 that company sold the railroad to its employees and so this supposedly is causing a problem. Northwest Industries isn't too certain that it wants us looking at their records because they're sensitive about their tax records. We don't care about their tax records, but what we want to look at are management records, how many men did they employ, what were their wages paid, causality list or management problems. You know it has nothing to do with the tax, but I don't know whether they \_\_\_\_\_ I'm very hopeful we would be able to look at the records because it would really fill in a whole area that otherwise we simply won't know anything about.
- A. Would there be any chance of a magazine, a railway news or something like that having some records or putting you on to, I'll go and get a cool drink if you'll excuse me.
- \*Q. Oh, yes.