

Buxton Project: 424-2104
 Narrator's Name: Mike Onper
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 Interviewer's Name: Joseph Hraba

A. Mike Onper.

Q. Excuse me Mike of course, when were you born?

A. 1903.

Q. Where?

A. In Pennsylvania.

Q. Where at in Pennsylvania?

A. It's _____

Q. What part of the state is that?

A. The state?

Q. What part of the state?

A. Gosh Mister I wouldn't know, I wouldn't but 3 years old when I left there but I just remember the town.

Q. You say it was around Pittsburg or around Philadelphia?

A. Well it's right in there.

Q. Okay like near Pittsburg you remember it being?

A. Yeah.

Q. What were your parents' names, your father first?

A. John Onper and mom was Barbara.

Q. Where'd they come from, did they come

A. Vienna, Austria.

Q. Vienna?

A. Yeah Vienna, Austria.

Q. Okay they both came from Vienna right?

A. Yeah.

Q. When'd they come to this country?

A. I don't know, John was born in 1900 wasn't he. Well they must have come here about 1899 or 1888 or somewhere along there.

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Q. And settled first in Pennsylvania?

A. Yeah, see them was all coal mining camps there too you know around Pennsylvania

Q. Was your father a miner all his life?

A. Yeah all his life, that's all he ever done.

Q. When'd they come out to Iowa?

A. Well let's see I was 3 years old.

*About 1906 when he come cause he was born in 1903.

Q. 1906 there about. Where'd they first settle in Iowa Mike?

A. Buxton.

Q. They came right to Buxton?

A. Yeah right to Buxton.

Q. Why was that, why did they come to Buxton do you remember?

A. Yeah because you see there's few of them people that was there well they come in looking for work too you know and that's all that _____ people know of work, see they worked the coal mine there and they all come to Old Buxton that's when it was just about open up everything down there. Buxton was all there when I come there when I was just a kid I could remember cause when we first moved there and that's where they come where there's work at.

Q. Okay so somehow your father heard about work in Buxton?

A. Yeah he heard about.

Q. Do you know from whom he heard it, how he heard?

A. No _____ I wouldn't know.

Q. Fair enough. So they get to Buxton about 1906, where did you live in Buxton, did you live several places?

A. No I lived in, the first place we lived was on West 9th Street.

Q. West 9th.

A. Yes, house #2, 2 West 9th.

Q. House #2 on West 9th.

A. Yes, Steve got the map of it there too.

Q. Here's West 9th.

A. This is West 9th.

Q. Here's house #2, is this it?

- A. Yeah #2, well see that road there, see there was a east side and a west side, well we was on the west side, the 2nd house.
- Q. The 2nd house.
- A. Yes.
- Q. This map doesn't show.
- A. Steve got one down there by god and I showed him just ~~w~~here it was at, that road went through there and just showed him just where we lived.
- Q. Well here's 9th Street here and here's, this must be the dividing line I would think Mike because see how the numbers start this way and they go this way to, this must be west over here. My guess is that, now wait a minute this would be east, I'm sorry, right here maybe huh? Do you remember living on a corner like this?
- A. No, it was the 2nd house.
- Q. It's the 2nd house?
- A. The houses were all numbered. There was 1 and across, no ~~w~~e lived the 2nd house. See they just across them 1, 2, 3 and you know just cross_____ They was all numbered.
- Q. So you lived on the 2nd house on West
- A. West 9th.
- Q. 9th, now who were your neighbors in here, do you remember?
- A. Gosh, yeah there was a Kocur, Mary Kocur she lived in the first house, see we lived right next to her. Yeah they were neighbors.
- Q. How do you spell that name do you remember?
- A. *K-o-c-u-r
- Q. K-o-c-u-r. Okay what were some of the other neighbors Mike?
- A. Well there was old man Shephard he was a colored guy right next to us but his name, he was on the school board a colored guy. Tell you the _____ Shephard's all I know I know his name but it's been so long
- Q. Can you recall any of the other names of neighbors?
- A. Well J.C. White lived across from Kocur on the other side of the street. But J.C. White's all I know and he was a colored guy too.
- Q. As you're telling me here Mike is that there was a lot of colored people living in this area right?
- A. 80% colored people all over the darn place, there wasn't very many white people there.
- Q. The reason I'm asking is I've heard from 1 or 2 people that there was a Slovak neighborhood.
- A. Well that's what I am, that's it.

I didn't know

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- Q. But would this be the neighborhood?
- A. Yes but then there was on 9th Street and then some lived on 8, 9th Street but there was a alley between them.
- Q. 8th and 9th Street?
- A. Yeah 8th and 9th Street but there was a alley, just like a alley anywhere.
- Q. Okay now Mike on 8th and 9th Street, where were the Slovaks concentrated, were they on west 8th and 9th or both sides?
- A. There wasn't any on the east side, they was all west.
- Q. They were all west?
- A. Yes, well after there was another colored lived well then there was a George _____ he was Slavish and then that George, he lived the next house, wait a minute I'll get around to it. _____ George _____ and then up on the hill there that was all Slavish but I tell you I don't know who all lived up there.
- Q. What do you mean up on the hill?
- A. Well down the hill
- Q. They started to ascend going east?
- A. Well just like any other, there's a little hill, if this is in the bottom when you're down in the bottom we lived kind and then you went up a little hill, a pretty good size hill.
- Q. What direction of the compass was the hill from you?
- A. West.
- Q. West okay.
- A. That was going west.
- Q. Just got to get that, and so as you had moved west along 9th Street as well as 8th street, the more more Slovaks would _____ here on the hill.
- A. Now we're getting back to 8th Street. 8th Street a Swede _____ they live on 8th right down there on the end, _____ no number the house, and then _____ lived the next place and then _____ lived the next place, them was all Slavish _____ yeah see there's all, that's where they all _____
*What they call going up west?
Yeah this was still on the west side see that road separated east and the west.
- Q. So there were quite a few Slovaks concentrated in here?
- A. Oh yeah right down in there.
- Q. On East 8th and East 9th Streets?
- A. No West 9th.
- Q. Escuse me, West 9th.

A. West 9th.

Q. You sure West 9th or East 9th?

A. No it was west because that road separated it was on the west 9th now _____

Q. Okay now west is this direction and over here West Swedetown, over here is East Swedetown. Just so it's straight for the record Mike,

A. Now you got it.

Q. Okay it's West 8th and West 9th?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay so you must have lived about in here huh?

A. I remember the house was #2 I don't know,

Q. Well I'm not so sure what these numbers mean, do they mean that the houses themselves

A. Well maybe it is but the one Steve got it was just right. See the road went through there to separate it from right down

Q. Was that Main Street?

A. Yeah that was the main street and separated the east and the west.

Q. Was it called Main Street Mike?

A. Yeah and then East Swedetown you see, whatever things up the east of that road was east and what was going toward Miami that's going west and that was west.

Q. Were there any other concentration of Slovaks in Buxton in addition to this area here?

A. Yes well then where old Joe _____ lived there was a bunch of hunks in there what they call them hunks a bunch of Slavish in there.

Q. Where was that?

A. Well now that's on 4th Street but that's on the west side too.

Q. On West 4th you remember Slovaks being

A. Yeah 4th Street yeah. Joe _____ lived there and there was _____ I tell you the truth I kind of forgot their names.

Q. That's okay Mike, that's okay.

A. And as far as I know there wasn't hardly any on the east side. They got started there on 9th Street and they all just kind of kept close together you know.

Q. Okay so the Slovaks were concentrated on the west side particularly 4th Street, 8th Street and 9th Street?

A. And 9th Street yeah.

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- Q. Okay, that's important Mike.
- A. No kidding that's the way it was I can see it
- Q. Okay now any other areas were Slovaks, where will it be found?
- A. Well now this is East Swedetown now see _____ but Buxton is right in the middle here you see, now that's all on the outside of West Swedetown and East Swedetown see Buxton is right in the middle.
- Q. And here's Mahaska county up here, this is downtown Buxton.
- A. Yeah, that's right Mahaska that's right and then Marion and Hamilton you know them roads where Steve lives at, that's where it separates. Mahaska go straight through there, this was Coopertown but you ain't got that though, East Swedetown.
- Q. East Swedetown doesn't show on this map.
- A. Oh yeah but _____
- Q. But it's out here?
- A. Yeah you see this is all Buxton but Buxton was all surrounded. There was Sharpe End and Gainestown and Coopertown.
- Q. Okay now while we're on that Mike, point to me where was Sharpe End?
- A. Now that was north.
- Q. North or south?
- A. The south, that's right Sharpe End that's it.
- Q. Down here?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Where would it have been down there?
- A. Let's see 13th Street, that's East 13th, but it's down in here see there's a road goes through there and everything was on this side of the road that was Sharpe End. You see the map that Steve got was just like this one. Buxton's all in the middle see and them other places was all on the outside.
- Q. Okay Sharpe End appears at the bottom of this map right?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. It's not drawn in where
- A. No it's south.
- Q. It's south of the map?
- A. Yeah.

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Q. Okay, what was down at Sharpe End?

A. Well there was John Baxter had a butcher shop there, old man Lucas had a big bakery shop.

Q. Okay who's Johnny Baxter?

A. Well but some of them Baxters down there, I don't know, John Johnny he's dead now.

Q. Was he Hope Armstrong's son-in-law?

A. Son-in-law, yeah. He was Hope's son-in-law and Hope Armstrong he had the butcher shop downtown. Well Johnny married his daughter.

Q. Which daughter, do you remember?

A. Gosh I know her too she used to work in the bank and she run the company store there for a while. No it wasn't Nattie.

Q. Nattie was married to

A. Doc Carver.

Q. Who was married to Kissman?

A. That's her Kissman yeah. One married Doc Car, what the heck was her name? We used to live up there by Armstrong, just about what, it wasn't a block up there in East Swedetown.

Q. Okay well back to Sharpe End, Lucas you said had a bakery, who is Lucas?

A. Well she was a colored guy and she had a good bakery shop.

Q. Okay, did you shop in there did you go in?

A. Yeah when us kids if you got a nickel that's back in them poor days you get cookies and cookies for a nickel, get a packed sack full you see after the cookies break you know the people don't want to buy them in them stores you know he peddled it all over town but then

Q. What do you mean peddled it all over town?

A. The stores you know different stores, you had a regular bake shop. Just like a bread place now that they

Q. And so he would go like down to the company store and they would sell

A. No the company store had their own bakery shop, they didn't buy any from him but there was several restaurants around there you know that bought from him.

Q. Restaurants?

A. Restaurants yeah.

Q. Which ones?

- A. Oh heck there was Chicken John's is all I ever knowed and there was several of them restaurants around there, John Moore had one and
- Q. John Moore
- A. And there's one on 10th Street there was a restaurant there and I _____
- Q. Do you mind doing this Mike, this is very important?
- A. No it don't bother me.
- Q. Okay Sharpe End we have a Baxter down there so far
- A. A butcher shop.
- Q. And Lucas has a bakery down there.
- A. Yes
- Q. Just a minute did the whole family, the Lucas entire family work in that bakery shop?
- A. Yes, they lived upstairs,
- Q. They lived up above it huh?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What did they bake there, you said cookies?
- A. Cookies and pies and bread, just a regular bake shop.
- Q. Let me put it this way Mike, did they bake anything special that sticks out in your mind, something that would be unusual?
- A. All I know was cookies and pies and cake, no I wasn't too small I was in school _____
- Q. Okay fair enough. What other businesses were down there in Sharpe End?
- A. _____ Lobbins had a great big liver barn there.
- Q. What was his name?
- A. _____ Lobbins.
- Q. L-o-b-b-i-n-s.
- A. Lobbins.
- Q. L-o-b-b-i-n-s,
- A. Yes
- Q. Lobbins had a livery barn there huh?
- A. Yes and then a Williams had a place in there, they had a store but then it was kind of like a little department store, they had a little and they lived upstairs in it.

- Q. Okay it was a small department store, the Williams had huh?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay, what else down there?
- A. Well there was a drugstore there at Sharpe End but I be darn it's been so long I don't remember, it burned down, it burned when I was just a kid yet.
- Q. Was that run by black or white?
- A. Yeah they all black, all but Johnny Baxter, he was the only
- Q. He was the only white down there huh in business?
- A. Yeah
- Q. What else, we got a meat market, a bakery, a livery, the small department store, a drugstore, anything else down there?
- A. Well there was another store right next to Johnny Baxter's butcher shop, hell there wasn't just so you say you drive a wagon through it there. I believe they was named Riders.
- Q. Riders?
- A. I believe it is now wait a minute cause when I was a kid I used to, they deliver grocery around town people order them and I used to get on the wagon with them and ride with him, you know how kids hopped on the grocery wagon back in them days.
- Q. I know. You think it was Riders huh?
- A. Now wait a minute.
- Q. Well take your time. Do you remember anything else about Sharpe End that's important? For example, we've heard it was it was a pretty tough place down there.
- A. It was.
- Q. Well why, why the reputation of being a tough place?
- A. I don't know that a whole bunch _____ and Coopertown and all of them seem them towns that surrounded Buxton they was all pretty rough, somebody got killed there about every weekend.
- Q. Where did people get killed down to Sharp End were they some _____
- A. Oh they bootlegging and drinking like everybody else you know at them coal camps. That was all coal camps. _____ about somebody get _____ Almost all them people got killed down there. It was rough, it was tough they say about the toughest thing on this side of Mississippi.
- Q. Now do you remember any salones down there or any houses that you could go to to have a drink?
- A. By golly every other house was there they sold that _____ I ain't gone say what they used to call it.

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- Q. By chalk now
- A. Well it's made out of corn and stuff and then it's you know just ferment
- Q. So it was basically corn whiskey?
- A. Yeah just kind of like wine, who it wasn't whiskey, whiskey was moon shine because whiskey
- Q. Whiskey was called moonshine?
- A. You got to cook that or you let it sour in a 50 gallon barrel and then you got a still see, you got to distill it and then you got to cook that mash and then you got coils and that steam that goes through them coils well then it goes through cold water and that flow turn to alcohol, that's whiskey but that chalk is just like wine you just make it and then you drink it.
- Q. So chalk was naturally fermented huh?
- A. Yeah just like wine.
- Q. Okay, good. Anything else now about Sharpe End before we leave it? Okay Mike maybe we'll come back to it. Now look at this map if you would please Mike and we're going to move north now, over what eventually turns into Main Street, do you remember the name of this street right here?
- A. They had another road they called that the Sendor Road but that's the one that went up toward Armstrong I don't know.
- Q. You're not sure what this road is huh? It doglegs into Main Street here according to this map. Now who lived in here, was this mostly black here?
- A. There's some white people here and there scattered but most of them was all black.
- Q. Most of them black?
- A. On all sides of you.
- Q. Okay this would be the extremem southeast corner of Buxton on this map, how about on the west side, the southwest side, was there anything particular or peculiar about the southwest side here?
- A. The southwest
- Q. This corner right here.
- A. Well you see that, no not that I know. Now that pond it wasn't a pond a great big reservoir now it was between West Swedetown, there was a Wells Hill there too they called it Wells Hill see that was all surrounded you know surround Buxton, Wells Hill and then West Swedetown well the big pond was there but that was all 4th Street going west. Did you say southwest.
- Q. Over here this would be the southwest corner of Buxton. See this gets out into the countryside now.
- A. Well all I know about the southwest that's on the road to Miami.

Q. Now this is one of Armstrong's places on this map. Where was the ball park, the amphi theater?

A. Now that was on 14th Street.

Q. 14th it would be down here and a man name Simms owns that farm down in here.

A. That's Earl Simms, no not Earl no that's Smith well Simms is across the road.

Q. And they used to have a porch on the Simms place that they could watch the ball game.

A. Yeah on Simms' place there was a road between, it wasn't too far from the park. They had a great big ball park all fenced off you'd pay to get in there but then there was some trees right along Simms' farm and the kids, each kids had a tree when they played ball and you get up in that tree cause I've done it myself not once but a lot of times get up in that tree and then you could look right over that fence, it wasn't very far maybe like from here to that building over there see you could see over there and each kid had a darn tree of his own and nobody else got in it. Yeah that's true man.

Q. Now how long did you live there in Buxton? 1906 till when?

A. Let's see I think it was about 1920.

Q. About 1920.

A. See I bachelored about 4 years and we got married in 25, about 1920. See Buxton was a camp by itself and it had them mines see, they had several mines belong to the Northwestern and they had several mines, they had miners train. Buxton was just a camp, the miners' train run to all them mines. You ought to see when them miner's trains come in at night, just like a bunch of ants going all over the darn place. People going home from work you know.

Q. How many cars did that miner's train have?

A. They went to 18 and 19 had about 14 coaches.

Q. About 14 coaches. How many men per coach?

A. Well they had a bench along the sides on both sides and they was pretty close together I mean the people sat there and then they had one in the middle they called the third rail. Well I don't know you get quite a few people in one of them train but see 18 Buxton had a bunch of people work there at one time and then after 18 broke up well then 19 that's where I went. See and my folks bought a part of that Buxton ground in East Swedetown. Yeah he bought that and then Archie bought the West and Sam Bryant and old man next to it _____ dad, Olsen but he bought some up there next to the old man, you know where the old man's farm was at.

Q. Okay Mike now let's continue moving along this map, we've already gone over that there were a number of Slovaks living on West 8th and 9th Streets and we're now moving past West 8th and 9th on the 7th, 6th and 5th, now on the west side do you remember much about the west side here from oh say 7th to 5th Street, anything that you'd like to tell me about that, anything that sticks out?

A. It was just a bunch of houses that people lived in that's about all I can think about.

- Q. Any specific group living there other than mostly blacks and some whites?
- A. Oh there was a few whites but like I said there was mostly blacks on all sides of you.
- Q. Mostly blacks. How about on the east side between those same streets, were these neighborhoods called anything in particular?
- A. Mostly colored people lived on the east side. Only that 1st street but that 1st Street was off from the white people, outside of old man _____, he was a check _____
- Q. Now that's interesting, are you telling me that on the east side as opposed to the west side there was more colored?
- A. Mostly yeah.
- Q. Mostly colored and then on the west side would you say that was mostly white?
- A. Mostly white yeah, no there was a lot of colored people there too, see there wasn't too many white people there but they was mostly
- Q. I don't mean to really press you on this but I need to know.
- A. But I don't want to say anything wrong you know what I mean but that's about the way it was.
- Q. What do you mean that there was mostly colored on the east side and then what was it on the west side, there were just more whites on the
- A. They were all pretty well mixed I tell you but the most of them kind of lived on the west side.
- Q. Most of the whites you would find in Buxton would have lived on the west side you're saying?
- A. And the east side of Buxton was a lot bigger than the west side, the west side wasn't too big.
- Q. You bet. Okay that's interesting. That's a nice piece, by the way point me out Globbler's Knob here on this map, are you familiar?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Where is it?
- A. Gobbler's Knob that's up there on Wells Hill. They called it Wells Hill you see but that wasn't in Buxton that was on the other side of the _____ They just called it Globber's Knob that's what they called it.
- Q. On 4th Street you said that there was quite a few Slovaks right?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Now among these Slovaks were there other Slovak groups like _____ or Lithuanian
- A. No there wasn't too many because on the end house on 9th Street on the left side there ^{Lithuanian} you wouldn't know them, no they was, no they was Lithuanians cause that's why I learned how to talk it because I had that one girl and we used to play together and she and I, well it's all about the about the same sign you know.

- Q. So you knew a Lithuanian there?
- A. Yeah, but that's the only one I ever knowed of.
- Q. What were their names?
- A. By god I used to know it too, it's been so long. John Ruben used to board with him. I tell you I forgot.
- Q. Well if it comes to you Mike you just tell me.
- A. I did know it to I just can't remember, it's all too quick
- Q. Yeah, just relax _____ no rush. Now we're up here on 4th Street and that was another concentration, at least on West 4th there was a concentration of Slovaks okay. Now we continue up to almost downtown Buxton, you mentioned earlier that on 1st Street was mostly white.
- A. Yeah but that was on the east, on both sides.
- Q. On both sides.
- A. West and east.
- Q. There was mostly white up there?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay, would that include around the YMCA and alike?
- A. No, YMCA was all colored ___ down there.
- Q. The people that lived next to the Y were they all colored?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay where were the whites located then on 1st Street?
- A. Gosh I _____ tell you, well they were just on the street there Buckingham lived there and he was the manager of the company store and there was a dentist there but he was colored but he lived on the same street. Ed Butler they lived down there, Bucklin was named after him at 19, and some people by the name of Hunts lived there, now that's on the west side and _____ lived down in there too but then on the other side that's where most of the whites people lived, on the east side.
- Q. How about out here in west Swedetown, did you know this part of town Mike very well?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What was out in West Swedetown, we show a couple of churches out here, you know those churches?
- A. Yes, one of them was mine.
- Q. What was that, Slovak Lodge.
- A. Yes, just the Slavish, Czechoslovak they call it.

- Q. What was it called the Slovak Lutheran Church?
- A. Yes a Lutheran Church yeah.
- Q. Was it the Slovak Lutheran Church?
- A. Yeah, and then right across from the other right across the road was a Swedetown church.
- Q. What demonination was that?
- A. Was ____ I'm ____ tell you now maybe like you know people, now I'm Slavish but I'm a protestant and alright and the most of them is Catholics and that Swedetown that's something I can understand. Now East Swedetown they had a Lutheran Church just like our, West Swedetown is about 3 or 4 times bigs as, I meas East Swedetown is a lot bigger than West Swedetown. They had a church of their own and then people never mix them Swedes didn't, maybe they were Catholics or Protestants they just didn't mix.
- Q. What was the demonination of the Swede Church in West Swedetown, was it Lutheran?
- A. No, that's what I don't know, East was Lutheran.
- Q. And you're not sure what this one was out here in West Swedetown?
- A. No sir I don't know but they had a church, right across the lawn you've been there you've seen it.
- Q. Okay and the Slovaks had their church?
- A. Yeah they had one.
- Q. Did you go to church regularly?
- A. Yes when I was a kid I used to. I got older and then I wouldn't go.
- Q. Did most of the Slovaks go to this church in Buxton?
- A. Oh the Lutheran people did, the biggest part of them. They'd a pretty good size church and it's full. They built it themselves, them Slovaks yeah.
- Q. When did they build it Mike?
- A. I remember when they built it cause after they got it built I used to go up there and kind of clean up around there. Gosh I don't know, I wasn't working in the coal mine yet.
- Q. You know that church just burned, the Slovak Lutheran Church they had moved it?
- A. Moved it out to #12 on ____ place.
- Q. And it burned down like 2 months ago or so.
- A. I didn't know it burned down, Steve never said nothing about it. Yeah I know when they moved it too.
- Q. Okay, well we understand Mike that most of the Swedes in both Swedetowns, now in West Swedetown owned their own homes.
- A. They did they owned their own home.

- Q. Did the Slovaks own their own homes?
- A. Yes, cause we lived there in Swedetown.
- Q. You did?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. You said you lived down here on
- A. Yeah but we moved after that.
- Q. When did you move?
- A. Well let's see.
- Q. You got there in 6.
- A. Frankie was just a baby, mama packed him in, how old is he? He's 57 years old, yeah cause I had just start to work in the coal mine and old man bought an acreage up there and that's where we moved, _____
- Q. You'd just started working in the coal mine, what were you about 15 when you started?
- A. 13
- Q. 13 okay. So you were about 13 at the time huh, about 1916, 1917?
- A. Somewhere along there, I wouldn't just say
- Q. And the family moved up here to West Swedetown?
- A. Yeah they moved, the old man bought the acreage see them company houses you pay rent for them.
- Q. Down here it was all company houses right on 9th?
- A. Buxton was all company houses.
- Q. And it was outside of Buxton
- A. Yeah all around Buxton people had their own houses.
- Q. Mike we understand that a lot of the Slovaks bought either acreages or farms of various sizes surrounding Buxton, do you remember that do you remember some, like the Smiths, Andy Smith?
- A. Andy Smith lived there long by golly I can remember they had, well 16 Buxton wasn't too far from that but you know like I told you the miner's trains went to them mines you know well that was the 16 Buxton they was there before I ever you know _____ them people lived there since he come, them Smiths out there you know west of Miami there.
- Q. Well now downtown Buxton, here we're on 1st Street, okay West 1st Street. Now as I move the pen here Mike would you tell me, what's this in here, this block in here of West 1st Street okay?

- A. Well the depot was right down there.
- Q. The depot was in here?
- A. Yeah, is that the railroad track down through there somewhere?
- Q. Yeah this is the railroad track.
- A. This the railroad track?
- Q. Yeah, this dark line in here.
- A. Well here now wait a minute here.
- Q. This the depot here?
- A. Well the depot is kind of in the middle and then the post office was just right in behind it and that Chicken John he had a restaurant right next to it they call it #1 restaurant, Chicken John's all I ever knowed.
- Q. Okay now that was on West 1st Street right?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Toward West Swedetown he had a, Chicken John he was called? He was a black man?
- A. Yeah he was colored yeah. They owned about everything down there anyhow, the the business places.
- Q. Do you remember a Jeffrey's restaurant?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Where was that?
- A. Now that's, you're going east now he was, yeah Jeffrey's yeah he had a restaurant, they was colored people too. When we was kids we used to go down there and pack water where the boilers was at, well they had a power plant you know where that steam water came out you know sometimes how it comes out and she'd give us a dime a bucket to go pack that water and I ate a lot of her sweet potatoe pie.
- Q. Sweet potatoe pie huh.
- A. Yeah boy.
- Q. What did Chicken John fix, what did he have at his restaurant?
- A. He just sold a little pies and stuff you know, kind of a little restaurant, he didn't do to much business I tell you the truth.
- Q. Chicken John didn't?
- A. No. He didnt do too much business and in the mornings when the guys were going to work see the train stopped at the depot, it was down there the the stores where they kept it, but the guys from the west they get on it there and then most of the guys on the west I mean well stop at the depot but a lot of guys coming to work you know, they scattered all over the place down there well she had tobacco a lot of people

- A. chew and a lot of people smoke well John made the biggest part of his money selling that tobacco in the morning. That's when he had his best
- Q. Chicken John sold tobacco there huh?
- A. I never did know his name and they called him Chicken John, #1 restaurant, it wasn't too big.
- Q. He had a sign out there says #1 Restaurant?
- A. Yeah #1 Restaurant, yeah no kidding. Somebody said that no you're telling something.
- Q. John came from Mutchakonak?
- A. Yes, stealing chickens I guess that's what they called him. If you call him Chicken John why he get mad at you, I never did. I used to stop and get a piece of pie there once and a while.
- Q. Now the depot was on West 1st Street. Now we cross Main Street here Mike and what's over in here on East 1st Street, what is this?
- A. They had a big coal shut here now you see well that street went through here that's it there ain't it, that go straight through there. Well then the coal shut was on 4th Street too. I dont understand all them marks there but anyhow down in here when a big hill and then a great big horse made out of iron and had a cart to pull that coal up there you see and dump it because it was so steep the mules couldn't pull the coal up and they haul coal all over town in the wintertime. Well just right in the bottom see they had it dug down and had just a little and the coal cart come up and then they dump it in the shut down there in the bottom and then he dump it in that you know it was a pretty good size car maybe about 2 tons maybe 3, 4 I don't know how big it was and they haul it up that hill, it was about well from the top of 3rd Street to the top of 4th Street. See that engine down there and they pull it up with that rope, that's what they called coal shut hill.
- Q. This was Coal Shut Hill huh?
- A. Yeah, that must have been well then from then on you on down to the company store, I don't know where in the hell it's at.
- Q. Where is the company store? Here's the Y.
- A. Well here, there's the company store right there, that's the track right behind it. That's the YMCA, that was a big baby too, all color to. I used to go there and do a little boxing and play pool.
- Q. Okay, for the record, the company store is perpendicular and it would be east and north of the YMCA. Now tell me about the Y.
- A. It was just pretty near right straight across from the Y, no by god they got it right it was just a little bit east. By god they got that right there.
- Q. That's right?
- A. Yeah. And then Armstrong was just right next to the butcher shop.
- Q. Okay, Armstrong's just east of

A. Yeah _____

Q. Okay what's in here?

A. They had a great big barn.

Q. Right here a livery barn?

A. No where the company store kept their horses. See they didn't have no trucks then and every two or three streets had a you know you go downtown and order your grocery once a week and then them guys, they had a great big barn I don't know how many teams of horse they had, just haul groceries all over town. They'd deliver groceries there wasn't just one wagon, Buxton was a big place boy, 8 or 9 thousand people there. That includes Sharpe End and Coopertown and Hayestown and Gainestown, Wells Hill you know all around _____ Buxton in the middle but quite a few people that lived all around it you know like West Swedetown and East Swedetown. East Town had 2 street _____ on both sides just like a little town, had their own store, Lawson store.

Q. I talked to the Lawson family. That's the first I've heard of this barn for the horses.

A. Yeah well they had a regular barn. Now then across the track there was well back off in here there was the machine shops they were all along there and then I bet you that _____ building is still down there. It's that old big, made out of big square rock, it's still down there.

Q. What was that?

A. They called it a warehouse. That thing would hold well if the bucks so darn big you know that's _____ people bought all their groceries and everything.

Q. Was there a ball park down here at one time?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where at?

A. Where's Swedetown?

Q. Here's West Swedetown.

A. Well it was right down in there across the track.

Q. Across the track from West Swedetown?

A. Yeah.

Q. That was the ball park?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where were the stock yards?

A. Right there too, just on the side, there's the track, the stockyard maybe that's the stockyard I wouldn't know _____ The stockyard was in there but then the ball dimond was just off from it, north.

- Q. Was there anything ever over on the side of
- A. Now the Buxton Wonders their big ball diamond was there, I mean the old one. That's the second one you know.
- Q. Why that moved from one ball diamond to
- A. That's something I wouldn't know.
- Q. But they played for a while down there at the amphitheater in the south.
- A. Yeah they played south. Now that was all fenced off, that was a good ball park. Well you see people kind of scattered around me but I know, I don't know how come they got that one there. They tore the fence off here and I think Armstrong owned the ground I think there's a corn field there, Armstrong owned it. I'm pretty sure he did because I think he, I know he did and there was houses all around there too.
- Q. Okay what was this over here, this east side, where's Coopertown for instance?
- A. Well now let's see, there's the railroad track, by god about right along in here.
- Q. That's Cooperstown?
- A. Yeah. I don't think Coopertown was in, I think Coopertown by god was in
- Q. Mahaska?
- A. Mahaska if I ain't mistaken now.
- Q. So across the county line?
- A. Now see that's the track there is it?
- Q. Yeah that's the track, that's the old railroad _____
- A. Well by god Coopertown was, I'm pretty sure
- Q. Close to the tracks?
- A. Yeah right next to it. Ruben Gaines had a great big hotel there they call the Buxton Hotel. That's the track.
- Q. Mahaska County had that hotel?
- A. Yeah. If that was in Mahaska County. I'm pretty sure it was because down there where Caper's Corner was at, Mahaska and Marion and Mahaska and all three right in the corner. I'm pretty sure Coopertown was in Mahaska and I just really wouldn't think, but I'm pretty sure it was though, That was Coopertown.
- Q. That was Coopertown?
- A. Yeah.

- Q. Okay and ever here was East Swedetown right?
- A. Yes now this's East Swedetown yeah.
- Q. Okay, you remember anything about some of these outline areas here?
- A. That's on the West side, I wouldn't Mr. I'm telling you, you ask me I could kind of but just to say something _____
- Q. Nothing, you'd have to be asked something specifically? Well what about, remember any land owners out here?
- A. Well right off 9th Street John Jenkins he went right down 9th Street and then he had a little place there just right off 9th Street, he was a colored guy too John Jenkins. Well he had a little farm in there and then Ashby they had a farm right there too next to John Jenkins. Yeah but that's been a long time ago. Well George Woodson I think he was _____ Ashby had that, it's been so darn long.
- Q. Now you mentioned the Y, you said you had gone down there to box some.
- A. Yeah, _____ a few guys went down there any but then I don't know I just hung around downtown _____ well you know all the colored guys _____ go there and play pool in the daytime and the wintertime, the big guys worked in the mines but they had them tables then they had the first table and the second table and the third table but in the daytime there was nobody down there. The kids go down there and box and play.
- Q. There were 3 pool tables?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Were they on the first floor of the Y?
- A. Yeah first floor. They had a big gymnasium back there and then they had a little Y right next to it. That was, and they had a great big swimming pool in there, oh it was quite a place.
- Q. Where was the little Y?
- A. Right next to the big one.
- Q. Next to it meaning what Mike was it to the south of it, to the east of it, to the north?
- A. No just right next to it, it was south of it. That's _____ there, it was just right next to it and then they had, it was all just maybe like from here to the street and then they had, it was all built in like a house to go from one to the other one, you didn't go outdoors. They had the big Y and then they had that place to go you know it was just like, oh it was pretty wide, wide as this rug it was pretty good size just enough to go through and then that's where the _____ was at when you first got _____ great big that thing was long they had the swimming pool in there.
- Q. What was in the little Y?
- A. A swimming pool.
- Q. How big a swimming pool was it?

- A. I don't know I never swim in it but I've been in there after they drained it after they kind of broke up. Oh it was pretty good size. I'd say it was about 15 foot wide and it was plenty long. That little Y was awful long and then upstairs they had the dance hall upstairs.
- Q. Is that where they would have the movies?
- A. No the movies was in the big Y.
- Q. That was upstairs in the big Y?
- A. Yeah in the big Y.
- Q. Remember the sisters
- A. Yeah I used to work for them I ought to know.
- Q. What were their names?
- A. Langloid.
- Q. I understand that the Langloids had operated a roller skating

Side 2

- A. because they took the train off you see so you had to move out to the mine if you wanted work. And they went to _____ because I used to go up on 19 to the show me and _____ they used to run a dance there too the Langloid.
- Q. How often would they have these movies.
- A. At Buxton they had them I don't know, Fridays and Saturdays they didn't have on Sunday, oh I dont, it was 3 or 4 nights a week. Friday was at there a 2 real deal _____ and all them and all them kind of shows you know. Boy the kids would hussel to get in there. I'll tell you it was something.
- Q. Would the black sit on one side and the whites on another?
- A. Yep that's what they done. But they didn't have to but the most of them did it. The black was on the right side and the white ones on the left side.
- Q. But they didn't have to?
- A. No they didn't have to, they kind of mixed once in a while but not too much the most of colored on the right side.
- Q. Now downstairs in the Y.
- A. That's where the pool hall was at.
- Q. That was the pool hall, 3 tables, were they pool tables or was one a billard table?
- A. No just all straight pool, pocket pool.
- Q. Just straight pool okay. Anything else in the Y that you remember?

- A. Well then when you come in they had a reading room they had books in and paper you know, they got the paper. No it wasn't no library it was just you know just a place with big chairs like that one there, _____ better than that maybe or that one and yeah you go in there and read the papers _____ and checker boards in there they play checkers. The ^{oldest} ~~oldest~~ you know they belong to it too but they just played checkers and you know read in there.
- Q. How big a room was it Mike?
- A. It was pretty good size, I wouldn't know but it was pretty good size room it wasn't a little small room it was a big one.
- Q. About how many chairs do you remember seeing in there?
- A. Oh heck they had a whole bunch of chairs on one side and they had a great big round one like the hotel is got you could you know _____ up the middle there so you could sat around them you know. It was a pretty good size room I wouldn't just say but it was pretty good size and then the office was just right across from there and then you go right straight pass the office and you go right down there to the pool hall and the boxing place where you could box in there, jump horses, a regular gymnasium _____
- Q. Okay the gym was here relative to the pool hall, behind it?
- A. It was at the back.
- Q. At the back?
- A. You come in from the east well then you go to the west and go through it.
- Q. You did some boxing down there huh?
- A. Oh yeah I done a little boxing, that's all I ever done of course go up to that pond and swim and go down there get through swimming go down there and box.
- Q. Were you any good at boxing?
- A. Well I got knocked down a few times, I got pretty good at it _____ when I was young, I'm an old man now 78 years old.
- Q. The boxing, were there ever any good boxers through Buxton?
- A. Yeah, Pep Webster.
- Q. Pep Webster.
- A. He come out up there, he killed a guy up there on the west coast I guess that's what they say after Buxton broke up he and his dad dug coal and he boxed and he was good at it too, yeah Pep Webster. Of course that's been quite a while ago maybe people wouldn't know him now.
- Q. I've heard the name.
- A. Oh yes there was some good boys come out of there. That's all they could do was drink and play pool and maybe got damit shoot a little crap, gambling was all around everywhere you look around you see a crap game.
- Q. In the Y?

- A. No, you know around the corner here and there.
- Q. A lot of gambling you remember?
- A. Yeah a lot of ____ It wasn't even incorporated Buxton wasn't, it wasn't incorporated.
- Q. Now you went into the Y quite a bit didn't you?
- A. There was no place else to go. ____ Town was a drugstore they had a pool hall there too but that's where most of the white boys went but I just kind of hang around the company store, just loaf around there was nothing else to do. ____ go to the show at night that's all there was.
- Q. We've heard from some people Mike that they were reluctant to go to the Y because they saw that as the territory of the colored kids.
- A. Yeah they did, they didn't care about you coming in there but when I was a kid well you go around with them colored boys ____ go swimming together, you talked together, go to show downtown together, ____
- Q. So you were treated sort of as an insider?
- A. Yes it didn't bother me any, I went down there and read the paper and sat down just like the rest of them.
- Q. Do you remember many white kids being down there at any time ____
- A. No only when they went to the show they used to come down they kind of go back and watch the guys play pool but they never hung around there too much.
- Q. Where'd the white kids hang out at, Thomas' drugstore?
- A. At nights, the biggest part of them worked, they put you to work when you were pretty young in them coal camps. The most of them worked ____ the ones that go to school see they had 4 school houses.
- Q. Where'd you go to school?
- A. 11th Street and then I went to 5th Street.
- Q. 11th Street?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Where was it on 11th Street?
- A. Well see I lived on 9th Street, see 11th Street was just south.
- Q. Now 11th Street where was the school?
- A. Yeah there it is.
- Q. There's a church across the street.
- A. Yeah right across the street there's a church.
- Q. What's the name of that, you remember the name of that?

- A. No it was a colored church I believe it was a baptist. Yeah that church there now you got it. You see now there's that road here the one here I was telling you about but that went right straight down through town there I don't understand how yeah the church right across the street by gosh yeah. That's who we played us kids played, you know school kids play ball and you know and go to school.
- Q. What's the other school you went to?
- A. 5th Street. Now that's on east.
- Q. That's East 5th Street.
- A. That's East 5th now see that was across the road but this one here now see maybe, yes that's East 5th that's the school house right there.
- Q. Now it shows behind it a church.
- A. A church right behind it yeah.
- Q. Was that another colored church?
- A. Armstrong bought that church after Buxton broke up and they moved to 19 and made a store out of it.
- Q. Now here seem they show another school here, remember that school? Remember the high school in Buxton?
- A. No there wasn't no high school. They had four rooms primer and second grade and third grade and then on up. No there was just 4 rooms, they was pretty good size school houses.
- Q. Now Mike we had heard that there was a high school for one year in Buxton and burned down, do you remember anything like that?
- A. Well maybe I don't cause there wasn't no high school on down in there I don't remember.
- Q. You don't remember any high school?
- A. No there wasn't no high school there. I can't understand this the school house here unless that's it.
- Q. ^{the} map could be wrong Mike you know don't worry about it.
- A. Well now 5th Street I was just trying to think there wasn't, there was a water tank there on 4th Street, that's where they got their water, a great big water tank see they didn't even have no wells in Buxton. You had a cistern but didn't rain you ain't got no water. Well they got their water from that water tank and a water wagon by gosh that haul it to them and dump it in your cistern.
- Q. While we're on that, did people keep animals in their yards?
- A. Oh everybody had a dog, chicken or something like that.
- Q. Some chickens, did many people have a hog ?
- A. If you live kind of along you know a ditch or someplace you could have a hog. That was just like being out in the country people didn't care what you done. We lived

- A. in Buxton we had a cow. Yeah old man got a cow, we had a cow.
- Q. But that was up here?
- A. No that was when we lived in Buxton _____
- Q. You had a cow?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. A dairy cow or what?
- A. Yeah a dairy cow for milk and butter. Yeah we had a cow.
- Q. So most people had at least chickens on the place huh?
- A. Oh yeah they had chickens.
- Q. What about gardens, did most people _____
- A. My people always did, some didn't but the most of them did. Some that would fence it off, _____ old man always had a garden. And Buxton _____ on into 9th Street right next to _____ they had a whole bunch of hogs but see that was on the end of the street and that's where the pond ran off well that was kind of flat down in there they had 4 or 5 hogs down there, always kept hogs down in there, didn't nobody bother them. Brooks was their name.
- Q. First of all what color were the company houses?
- A. Grey.
- Q. All grey?
- A. All grey.
- Q. Okay, your family for a few years at least lived in the company house right?
- A. Oh yes, yes.
- Q. Can you describe the house for me?
- A. Oh yeah they was pretty good size houses, they was but they was all 2 story houses and some had a kitchen built on well that was see for bigger families. Where in the hell did he come from. Yeah and they had upstairs, 2 big rooms upstairs and then they had a front room and a kitchen and a pretty good size bedroom. They was pretty good size houses.
- Q. Some had built on kitchens and others didn't?
- A. There was some that maybe about a third of them maybe and they had them in piles, now some places they had 4 or 5 with the kitchens built on, that was somebody that's got a family and then maybe there was just straight house from then on and then maybe they had 2 or 3 more houses with the kitchen on it.
- Q. Okay now downstairs would be a living room right?
- A. Yeah a kitchen.

Q. Was there a dining room?

A. No a bedroom and a front room. The front room was pretty good size. There was 2 bedrooms downstairs.

Q. 2

A. Yeah 2 bedrooms downstairs and a front room and a kitchen. Yeah there was a bedroom off the kitchen and then _____ just like them camp houses you know there was _____ we lived at Rex 5, _____ they were small, Buxton houses were a lot bigger. You slept in one room you and the baby and I slept in the other at Rex 5 there was 2 bedrooms _____ the big house was the same way. They built the same only they were higher, bigger. No they all had upstairs.
*Ours didn't at Rex 5.

No I said at Buxton they all had upstairs.

Q. Okay now Mike you'd walk in were the 2 bedrooms downstairs connected by a hallway?

A. Yes.

Q. One was off the living room and one was off the kitchen?

A. No along side the wall there was a little partition off the kitchen and off the front room. Just enough, you know just like a door, upstairs was in the middle and you go upstairs and there was 2 rooms one on each side. Yeah that's the way they was. Well there's one off the kitchen and one off the front room yeah.

Q. But they weren't interconnected by a hallway?

A. No, just like this room like there's a door there where you come in here you see, alright well right off the kitchen you got a room in there bedroom like Rex 5 and off the front room well you go through a door to get into the front room and then off the front room there's another one they're both right together only a wall between them that's all there was.

Q. And then there were 2 bedrooms separated by a partition upstairs right?

A. Yeah you went right upstairs and you got through one door to one room and turn to the left to the other room which way you was going.

Q. What was the foundation?

A. Just nothing but post.

Q. What do you mean?

A. Post, they just put a big post in the ground you know

Q. Sat the house on it?

A. No and put the foundation just them big boards whatever they are you know what I mean and made them on to them and from then on built the darn house up. They was just built on posts.

Q. Like railroad tires or something?

- A. Yeah pretty good size and they never did rot, _____ they were there until they were torn down. Yeah they had boards around it you know like Rex 5 where we kept our jars you know and the boards all around, yeah you got to have boards around it because some of them houses was flat you know pretty close to the ground and some was on the hill side the got darn house would be level with the ground and then you'd have to have 4 or 5 _____ under, well just like any other kind of house _____ sat up on the level _____ you know up the hill that way.
- Q. They have porches?
- A. No it wouldn't no porches, just a straight _____ house and you in the house and that's it there wasn't no porches unless you built one on yourself. Some of the people thought they was a little better than everybody else so they had to get some boards
- Q. Some people put porches on the house?
- A. Yeah a little porch themselves. Buxton didn't have any it was just flat, I mean just square, it was kind of long but it wasn't square they
- Q. What was rent on those remember?
- A. Mr. I wouldn't know it's been so long. My old man paid a lot of rent. The company owned the houses, owned the store, owned everything, everything went to the company store paid the company everything _____ they charged you for that miner's train ride the train.
- Q. Oh they did charge you?
- A. Oh yeah they charge you so much a month, you draw your pay you draw a snake. For you got to go to the company store. You never starved cause you cause you always got the company store if you got a job and get something to eat. That's the way people lived out of it. A few of them maybe that kind of save a few dollars.
- Q. Well it seems like your dad was able to save some money because he bought some ground didn't he?
- A. Yeah, that's during the first World War me and my brother worked but he didn't work too long. Oh I say about a year and maybe 2 but then I worked _____ what I made he took by gosh and then.
- Q. When he was working alone there was just barely enough to go around?
- A. That's right, that's what I say you didn't have no money. If you want to go to the show by gosh you go down and got damn and hussle some bottles or something or jugs to the stores that buy them and just hussle, summertime _____ old lady Jeffries. She lived not too far from there and she had a garden. But they had a good restaurant too and I was kind of her buddy you know. I'd go and hoe that darn thing, she had a pretty good size garden, 2 days of hoeing and I hoed it too by gosh for \$2.00, a dollar a day. Yeah man I had money I'm rich _____ no kidding you know them old times wasn't raised like I was.
- Q. 2 bucks huh?
- A. Oh yeah boy and I was rich, go to the show, if I need me an old cap, _____ go buy me a cap and then have enough I didn't have enough clothes to hid the skin. That is the truth.

Q. Could people buy at stores other than the company store?

A. Yeah they could, a lot of them did.

Q. Did the company put any pressure to buy at?

A. No they didn't. They had all the trade they needed. That store was about a block and a half big, and had anything you wanted in from a tack by god to an automobile if you want to buy one and everything was partitioned off, hardware and everything, just whatever you want that store had. You didn't have to go no place.

Q. You could check off at the company store?

A. Yeah the company checked it off.

Q. Could you check off any other place?

A. No the most of them you paid out of your hand like my ma used to buy from Lawson and then I worked for the store in the summertime when the mines didn't work, worked at Crookshank. A lot of the people traded with him. Yeah but he'd give it to you on time but the company store was the only people that checked it off.

Q. The only people that checked off

A. And the only body that checked it off was Armstrong and then the company store. If you bought meat there they give you a check for \$2.00 or a dollar and it had numbers on it 1, 2, and 3 you know whatever some sell 4¢ a pound and maybe some for 9, well then he and Charlie would go around and that out for you see but the company checked it off for Armstrong and the company store and that's it but the rest of the guys if they got some credit at them other stores if you didn't pay it the store was just out.

Q. Now let me get this straight Mike. The company would let you check off at Armstrong's right?

A. The company checked it off.

Q. At Armstrong's store?

A. No butcher shop, that's all they had the butcher shop, Armstrong owned the butcher shop, you wanted some meat you had to buy it from Armstrong or Johnny Baxter. Johnny was on Sharpe End and Armstrong was downtown. The only 2 butcher shops there.

Q. There was no butcher shop in the company store?

A. No, no competition see.

Q. So Armstrong had the butcher shop next to the company store and you could go in there and check off at Armstrong's?

A. Yeah, but like I said, they'd give you if you wanted \$2.00 or, it's just like a ticket. You know what I mean or whatever you want to call it, well you could just go there and

Q. Who'd give you this Mike?

A. Armstrong, the butcher would. You buy it, they give it to you, you tell them how

- A. much you want, they had some for a dollar some for two dollars, you know how big a one you want and then when you go get the meat and if it was 15¢ well they clip off 15¢ you see, that's the same as cash to them and if you lost that, see they would turn that ticket in that get there and turn it in to the company, well the company would check it off and if you lost that that was, you just lost it but Armstrong got the money anyhow.
- Q. Okay the company would check off for Armstrong?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. He was sort of a special man wasn't he?
- A. Yeah, you see from Mutchakonak you see that's when they was striking and he went to Atlanta or somewhere and bought a, he was a colored guy himself, and he married to a white woman and he brought a whole bunch of them colored guys in, that's how Buxton got started with all the colored people. You see well then after Mutchakonak broke up they all come to Buxton and they all, he's the man went out and got them for the company. So that's why he was, they was rich, they wouldn't poor.
- Q. He had a slaughter house though didn't he?
- A. A slaughter house and them other mines that was in Buxton, there was several of them little mines around there Cricket's _____ you know and all them other _____ little mines and he had them meat wagons running, every morning them meat wagons would take. The butcher had it all ready, had them wagons all loaded and then in the mornings they take off and they go to them other camps. But you paid cash for that see, that wasn't no
- Q. You remember a guy named Lou Warraven down there around _____
- A. Yeah. I seen a paper the other day where he's down there at that hotel down there. I'll tell you how come I know him. Now see we moved from Buxton for a while to Evans. From Evans we moved to Crickets for just a little while but Louy had a little pool hall there and he lived right across the street from us. That's when I was just a darn kid and then after Cricket broke up when he got a job there at Buxton well then he worked, him and _____ sat together on the miner's train coming back home. Yeah I know _____ like I know myself. Yeah and his wife, Georgia Hooks, yeah it was in the paper the other day where he was down here at, down here where he stayed. I was gone go down to see him by god but I didn't.
- Q. He was in the hospital a while this winter and he lives with a woman out in West Des Moines now.
- A. Well he was living at that hotel _____
 *Well didn't they make him move out of that hotel?
 Well maybe that's it. He married George Ol _____ wife, that Pierce girl, and old man Pierce was the cop down at Buxton. Pierce and Tom Roman, a guy by the name of Charlie Watson, Ed Peterson, took me to jail once in a while.
- Q. What was law enforcement like, were they pretty strict on people?
- A. No they wasn't too bad unless you had done something pretty rough, they got by a lot of things down there, they wouldn't too bad.
- Q. Things ever get out of hand for them?

- A. Not that I know of. Some _____ they used to do a lot of fighting and killing down there but then you know. Well there's a law in Albia you know the regular law they come down if they couldn't do anything but the law down in Buxton wasn't too bad
- _____
*I lived on the farm west of Lavilla and we'd hear once in a while about something going on or something happening you know.
- Yeah they done a lot of fighting and shooting and killing down there, it was a rough place boy.
- Q. You remember some of the, first of all do you remember a guy named Reasby that had a lunch wagon?
- A. Did I? His boy used to bring me if I didn't have a car his boy used to bring me up to 19 to see my wife before I married her, Jelly Reasby. Oh man he made a fortune, he had a little place there by god wasn't oh about half big as this room and had a little window and he sold hotdogs, them little recruit cigarette and pop and stuff like that.
- Q. What are these cigarettes?
- A. Recruits
- Q. Recruits?
- A. Yeah kind of a little, it wasn't wrapped with paper, you know like cigar leaves you know kind of. Well it was alright. Jelly used to steal for us see his old man well he lived in Buxton well that's where the place was at, in one of them Buxton houses and they had a cow and they used to keep it down where the ball diamond was at. They'd go pass that pond and we were just kids and Jelly would steal them recruits for boys when you help him you know bring the cow back. That man made a fortune out of that little 2 by 4 shack there. He never worked in the mine, yeah that Reasby man he was something, a great big guy. After he got that he sat down no wonder he was big, open that window and he make good hotdogs, I've ate a lot of them.
- Q. I understand that they'd cook something like 250 chickens on a Saturday and sell them.
- A. Maybe he did but he didn't sell them cause the place wasn't big enough unless somebody had a party or something maybe he'd.
- Q. I understand that he had a wagon too that he, or was it a house?
- A. No they called it the lunch wagon.
- Q. But it was a house?
- A. No this was just downtown. But be the YMCA and then the company store.
- Q. And he had a big window and he'd just serve it out of that?
- A. No just a little Biddy window about that high and about that wide, push it open _____ had a little shelf outside, just hand it to you. Maybe you're thinking about Avington. There's a guy by the name of Avington he was a colored guy, he went all over town selling ice cream and pop and stuff like that, peanuts and you know yeah.

- Q. You remember the bottling works there in Buxton?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Where they made soda pop?
- A. See that started on the other side of White City 7, a Nesbet started it and then _____ his name, he married the Issacson girl but you wouldn't know them anyhow, well he had it then and that's when he sold it to Art Bloomgreen. I used to go out there and help Art, he lived up there in East Swedetown, we used to go out there and you know and make that pop. Yeah they had a little pop _____ it wasn't too big but then when Buxton broke up he moved to 19. Well he had a _____ next to _____
- Q. What was the name of the pop, what was the brand name?
- A. Oh just ginger ale and strawberry and any kind of
- Q. No that's the kind, the flavors, what was it called?
- A. The big one that started out there and then they moved it between Miami and Buxton, right next to pretty near to the ball park it's kind of in the bottom down there, if you fix it kind of in town too many darn flies, that sweet stuff you know was kind of back
- *He want to know what the name was.
Well mama Bloomgreen had it and then that there, I don't know his name.
- Q. Did they call it Buxttn pop or something like that?
- A. No I don't think it had a name, just he sold it all over the country. Art Bloomgreen had it last. He moved it to 19.
- Q. What about the pñices at the company store, were they about the same as pñices at other stores?
- A. About a nickel higher.
- Q. About a nickel higher?
- A. Well you couldn't get nothing to eat no place else so you had to get it there but if you ain't got no money and the company store you get it you know it's on time they check it off your pay when you get it. Oh they was higher than them other stores.
- Q. Are you certain about that Mike, that's really important to us?
- A. I'm pretty sure it is cause I used to hear ma and then after the old man got a little bit of money when I started work _____ she started trading someplace else she could pay she get it a little cheaper. Oh yeah see that was on time and a lot of them people maybe they get quit or something and owed the company store well they just move out and go someplace else by gosh well then the company store was just lost, that's why they charged you a little bit more just so you know get even. But they didn't get hurt any. Now listen, I'm pretty sure but I wouldn't don't put something down there damn company come here getting on me.
- Q. But you remember it being a little bit more expensive there than at the other private stores huh?

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- A. Well that's just common sense because you're getting it on time or you got to pay for your, just like you get something on time now well you got to pay that you know what you call interest but they just took it _____
- Q. Let me switch a little bit Mike about the Slovak community then, was there a Slovak lodge around Buxton?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. What was the name of it remember?
- A. Just a lodge old man had that darn pen and they used to have it, they didn't have a hall and they used to have it in our front room when we lived there on 9th Street old man made some benches. I don't know what lodge it was Mr. I wouldn't know but they had one.
- Q. They met in your front room?
- A. Yeah, that's the Lutheran people. maybe them Catholic people maybe they had a differen one you know they had different lodges.
- Q. You don't remember the name of it?
- A. No.
- Q. But they didn't have their own lodge hall so they met?
- A. No they didn't have it. If anything you wanted like some kind of a _____ go down to that YMCA but then you have to go upstairs. They was 3 stories high and there wasn't no elevator you have the big steps along the side of it. Yeah I think that's where the Catholic people used to have church there once and a while I know they did.
- Q. I think you're right about that Mike, I think the Catholics did have church up there once in a while.
- A. Yeah they did, I know they did because they _____ built one but see so many, my people they just built that church themselves.
- Q. You remember any of the Slovak celebrations, get togethers like for weddings? Ever go to any of those?
- A. Did I?
- Q. You had one yourself?
- A. No I didn't have any. I didn't marry a hunk, no I didn't.
- Q. What do you remember about the celebrations?
- A. Oh they'd start on a Friday night by gosh and last up till about Sunday night, them guys would get drunk and dance and eat. Every time you got married you got a big doing, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. You had _____ Joe _____ got married
- Q. You lived close to where?
- A. * _____
_____ coal company in Des Moines.

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- Q. Tell me about, how would the wedding procede? When would people gather on Friday or would they gather on Saturday?
- A. No Friday, they stat drunk all night Friday night, they just dance and drink all night. They take in Saturday again.
- Q. You would have the wedding would be on Saturday.
- A. No on Friday, they get married on Friday.
*Mike _____ Saturday morning and then they had all day Saturday and all day Sunday. No they always got married on a Friday, and it start on a Friday night.
*Oh maybe the Lutherans did.
Saturday wasn't good enough, they had 2 or 3 days.
- Q. But you remember it being on a Friday not on Saturday?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. But you remember Saturday?
- A. *Uh huh the Catholics especially they married on a Saturday morning and be all day Saturday _____
But they were Catholics you see.
- Q. When would they marry on Friday Mike?
- A. I don't know man, that's all I remember getting married. Get married on Friday and start Friday afternoon and then
- Q. What was the liquor there, did they have some wine?
- A. Beer, wine or whiskey or anything you want.
- Q. Anything you'd want? Okay, how about the food?
- A. Oh they had good food. Table from got darn it to yonder, you'd sat down and eat. They just had one eating I believe that was after the wedding that night and then everybody throw in you know, throw dough, 5 or 10 dollars, whatever you wanted to throw in cause that's where they got the money to pay for the food and the beer and stuff.
- Q. Pass the hat?
- A. Yeah pass that big thing, oh they used to get quite a bit of money in there. _____ had that money give you quite a little bit.
- Q. Do you remember, then describe to me that the women would dance around the bride at a time in the ceremony, not the wedding ceremony but at the party and sing to her in Slovak until she cried, do you remember that custom?
- A. Well I know they done something, I don't know I never seen them cry though, they all get to dance around them ____ I never heard any of them cry. Maybe they did maybe back in the older times but they didn't afterwards.
- Q. Your parents, who were their friends, mainly Slovak people or did they have friends?

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- A. Yeah that's about all there was on them ____ Yeah they just come visit me tonight and tomorrow, yeah they just visit back and forth. See they couldn't talk too good American so they had to talk the old language.
- Q. Was it common when you went to Buxton to hear different languages Mike or would you hear mostly English?
- A. No I could talk Slavish myself and a little bit of Lithuanian and a little bit of Italian, there was a few Italian around Buxton but there wasn't too many. Kids you know, you play with Italian kids his mother be talking to him you'll catch it like nobody's business. But my language see something you don't forget but then like them Italians I used to do pretty good on that but you know some words I can talk now but you can't carry a conversation.
- Q. But when you were a kid you could?
- A. Yeah, see you got to stay with it you know every day, you forget it.
- Q. I understand. Okay, how did people get along with one another in Buxton, was there much friction?
- A. No they got along pretty good. They all kind of kept to themselves, I mean you know they visit back and forth but there wasn't too much of it, I mean the good people, some of them roudy they go off downtown maybe here and there and just look for trouble. No they got along pretty good the neighbors you mean or something like that, no they didn't have no trouble.
- Q. You remember a guy name Daddy Red?
- A. Yep.
- Q. You remember him?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. I understand that he was a huge man.
- A. Yeah he was. Now he lived down in Coopertown. He ____ a salone down there too. Yeah Daddy Read, he was a great big guy and he look like a money, his face was all he had smallpox or something it look like it, he had pretty deep ____ in his but he was a good enough guy. He was the law down there in Buxton there too, yeah he was a law down there.
- Q. The years that you lived in Buxton, did Buxton change Mike?
- A. Not that I know just about the same old thing till after they tore it down.
- Q. Where were it's peak years, when did it start to decline?
- A. Well they moved it about 1920 and it started when 18 started, I don't know somewhere maybe about 1918, 19 somewhere along in there but then they just move the whole camp, they didn't move to camp 18, they moved it to 19 and some of them houses was left, they're some good houses down there. But old man had a couple of them Buxton houses then he had that house that Lee Meadly has, but that was his own house and Joneses had a house there, chickens. After the old man bought the ground what was left the people didn't want them ____ what they gone do if they cant move so they just left them. Old man made a barn out of Jones, boy I mean a good house.

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Q. Why did they move the houses?

A. They tore them down and moved to 19 you see, 19 and 20 they just _____ 20. That's about 25 miles west of Buxton.

Q. How did they move them?

A. They just cut them in sections and moved them down and put them in a flat cars and moved them out and put them back together in sections.

Q. A flat car huh?

A. Yeah I got beat out of a few dollars.

Q. What happened?

A. Well you see them Buxton houses they had chimney all the way down to the ground and they wanted to keep the bricks when they was taring them houses down, the bricks was okay if they fall down and when they got the house moved, _____ of bricks you got to clean that plaster but then that wasn't no plaster it was mostly that back in them days they made it out of lime and sand it was kind of soft and I got me a little ax and I'm just cleaning it all up and got it piled up and then _____ in a little square pile you know and had them all kind of had _____ I never did get paid for the darn thing. Old man Pierce was taking care of the books and I never did get paid for that. I worked out there every day and I never did get paid for them bricks and that they left well then when the old man bought that when they was taring down these up there at Swedetown well then they fill them cisterns with them. Them old boards and stuff that they couldn't use, every house had a cistern cause that old man thowed that stuff all in them cisterns. Boy you don't know what was down there and I went down there after he got, well and my brother Andy he was staying home then and we fill them things with them boards and stuff, I was scared to walk down through, I used to walk down through you know _____ by god all them dang wells and cisterns and toilets and everything, I was scared I was gone fall in one of them damn things. By god they got them all filled and the first year didn't have too much corn, the second year I went down there after he got it all piled up the second year he had corn there long as your arm hanging. See that ground was never used and they plowed it the first year and then the next year it was all ready you know _____. And then we sold it to Armstrong. Now he traded to _____ in Bussey. Armstrong wanted to buy about 70 or 80 acres, he wanted it for nothing though.

Q. In school, do you remember your teachers?

A. Yeah, my first teacher was Ms. Findley and then there was Ms. Bates and Ms. Blackburn they was upstairs and Mrs. London, she was the principal, yeah.

Q. Were they all black?

A. Yeah.

Q. What was school like there?

A. Well that 11th Street school, that was that 11th Street School I just showed you a while ago.

Q. Were the teachers pretty strict there Mike?

A. Oh yeah. Used to wear me out and that old lady Findley, that was in the 2nd grade

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- A. and she used to send me, she never brought nothing to eat she always send me out to Sharpe End, see that wasn't too far from Sharpe End, see Sharpe End was on about 14th Street this was on 11th just about 4 block just right down the road. Well that Williams was what his name, she had a store there and that's that big round cheese and you know get a piece about that wide for a nickel and a box of crackers. And just before noon you know she'd give me that darn money and I'd go get her cheese for her and then, she had switches and when she run out of switches she'd send me out there to Sharpe End, there was a ditch along there and there was some pretty good switches out there and I'd get them switches you know and then the kids didn't like me too good. I was her you know her pet, got darn and then this old lady Shephard that lived right next to us, she was the janitor at school. Her husband was on the school board and she'd give me a nickel on the weekend to go out there and help sweep and I don't know a couple of pencils laying there on that darn desk and I just took them and I don't know somebody said you got my pencil that's one I left on my desk and old lady Findley got hold of it and oh she wore me out with my old switches I got for her and that ain't no kidding. ~~you~~ you ain't suppose to steal, you know how kids will do.
- Q. You remember any parades or picnics there in Buxton?
- A. They didn't have no parades, only when a circus come to town or something like that but then they had an awful good band too there Buxton did. Every so often well they'd come up that street that separates
- Q. Main Street?
- A. East and West and go to Sharpe End and then they turn and go down the Sendor Road see that was another road that went, yeah about every so often and that was a very good band too. That band was all right.
- Q. Now did you see the Wonders play often?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Do you remember the people on the Wonders?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Remember a guy named Johnny Halooska who pitched for them?
- A. No, see that's the second Buxton Wonders.
- Q. That's the second?
- A. Yeah but the first one that's out there by Armstrong. There's John Halooska yeah he pitch and catch.
- Q. On the second one?
- A. Yeah and Mack White he catch and Clarence Morrison he played field, Boston played first base and Zebo Lewis played 3rd base. Oh heck yes.
- Q. That was the 2nd set of Buxton Wonders?
- A. Yeah that was way after the 1st one.

Q. What about the 1st one?

A. Well the 1st one.

Q. Name me the ____

A. George Rocky he was a white guy, he was from Albia he caught and George Neal he played 3rd, Skinny Wilson played second, short and George Bowman played 2nd and a guy by the name of Jim _____ he was white and guy by the name of Frenchie Brown they just took turns about. Frenchie Brown was colored and Jim you know Jim he was white.

Q. And they alternated what position?

A. 1st base.

Q. 1st base. Who played short again?

A. Skinny Wilson.

Q. Charlie King, did he play on the 2nd Wonders?

A. That's the 2nd team, Charlie King, and Zebo Lewis played 3rd, and who in the heck played 2nd for by god. Bcston played played 1st, I be got darn if I know. And that 2nd Buxton he wouldn't pitch on Sunday, his last name was Carter, he wouldn't pitch, he was a good pitcher but he wouldn't pitch on Sunday he was awful religious.

Q. That was ah

A. That's the 2nd.

Q. When you talk about a 1st and 2nd Wonders what do you mean exactly?

A. Well the old Buxton Wonders kind of broke up well then they started the other one you see but then they tore the ball dimond down up there by Armstrong up there on 14th Street and then they started this other one. But Ed Peterson _____ he started them again you know but then the older ones all died off and got too old.

Q. Ed Peterson owned the Wonders?

A. Yes he ran them. He used to run the old ones and the other, Ed Peterson. He was Swedish, he lived up there in East Swedetown but he was a law too.

Q. Okay there's Ed Peterson lives in Lavilla now, is that any relationship?

A. Who _____

Q. Ed,

A. *Ed _____

Q. Yeah that's what I've heard.

A. * _____
What you say his name was?

Q. Ed Peterson, Ed. Well anyway.

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A. The other Ed is dead ____

Q. Yeah _____

A. He had some kids but I wouldn't know

Q. What was the admission charge for?

A. Oh a quarter of 50¢. I think about a quarter back in them days cause I used to go down and watch them I'd give them a quarter.

Q. I understand they sold concessions in the ball ____

A. Well that Abbington he had a concession stand down there. He had a truck.