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Buxton Project: 424-2104
Narrator's Name: Andrew Smith
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Interviewer's Name: Joseph Hraba

9000 11 1981

A. *Andrew Joseph

Q. Andrew Joseph Smith?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where were you born?

A. Mutchakinok.

Q. When?

A. 1892.

Q. 1892?

A. *Uh huh.

That's 5 miles south of Oskloosa.

Q. Who were your parent's Andrew?

A. My father and mother, original parents.

Q. What were their names?

A. George and Anna.

Q. George and Anna were your parent's names?

A. Yeah.

Q. What was the Slovak name of the family again?

A. Mital.

Q. How do you spell that?

A. ~~M~~-a-t-a-r-y

*No, it was M-i-t-a-l.

Q. M-i-t-a-l, Mital. Where'd they come from?

A. Dad come from _____ and mother come from

*Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia.

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Q. Okay, he came from some place in Germany?

A. *No, dad did didn't he but mother come from
It was called _____

*Pardon me for interrupting but he got

Q. Okay now when did they come to this country?

A. Oh my god, way back in the 80's.

*Mom was only 16 years old.

Q. In 1880 there about that they came to this country?

A. _____ dad come from _____ and ma come from _____

Q. Now where did they come to in the United States, where did they first?

A. Pennsylvania.

Q. In Pennsylvania. Where at in Pennsylvania Andy?

A. L _____ I believe.

Q. L _____ Pennsylvania. What did he do there?

A. He didn't do anything. He come there and he had a partner they used to go to school with together. There was too many mad at them. _____ dad was _____ and this buddy went to Minneapolis and they homestead in Minnesota.

Q. They went to Minneapolis from Pennsylvania.

A. *Didn't he work at a saw mill in Minneapolis?

In Minneapolis dad worked in the saw mill.

Q. Up in Minneapolis. When would that have been Andy?

A. Well as near as we could judge about it, he got half of his citizen paper in Minneapolis and he got the other half here in Mahaskie County in 1888.

Q. So he was here by 1888?

A. Well that's when this last half was got.

Q. So that date your father here in Mahaskie County by 1888?

A. Well as near as I can judge from that part see.

Q. Okay, how about your mother, where did she come from?

A. The same the old country. _____

Q. Okay, then did she go first to Pennsylvania?

A. No, yeah.

A. *Minneapolis first then.

Pennsylvania.

*Uncle Andy sent for her.

Yeah but they all landed at Pennsylvania first.

*Them days they didn't keep books or anything, it's hard to go back.

My father worked in the mills and and got mother to come there and she got
_____ a day.

Q. They are in Mutchakinok now. Are they married, your mother and father by the time they moved to Mutchakinok?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. They're married. Okay and they came as early as 1888 to Mutchakinok?

A. Well we judge by the last half of when his citizen papers was taken see. _____ in 1888.

Q. In 1888. Okay now at Mutchakinok. Do you remember him saying much about Mutchakinok? What has he said about Mutchakinok to you?

A. Well that's where they went into the coal work see.

Q. He was a miner at Mutchakinok?

A. A coal miner yeah. All of us was miners.

Q. When did the blacks come to Mutchakinok, Andy did your dad tell you about that?

A. Yeah. Well I know when they come but I couldn't say the date. They first come to Mutchakinok and then Buxton it open up and they brung all them niggers there in Buxton.

Q. Okay, now you can't say the date that they came to Mutchakinok?

A. No.

Q. How did your dad get to Mutchakinok, Why'd he come down here from Minneapolis?

A. Well his brother-in-law come from the old country and got a job at the steel mill you see. He was making \$3.00 a day and _____ worked around, ... was making about a dollar and a half so he quit and got a job on the steel mill.

Q. How did he get to Mutchakinok?

A. By train.

Q. What brought him down here though? How did he hear about Mutchakinok?

A. His brother-in-law.

Q. His brother-in-law?

A. Yeah. By a brother-in-law named Halaskie, John Halaskie.

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Q. John Halaskie?

A. Yeah. So he sent dad a ticket there to come here see.

Q. I see. Why were the blacks brought to Mutchakinok?

A. To dig coal. They bring them in by the train load.

Q. Weren't there enough other miners around?

A. They sent and got them by the train in the southern states.

Q. Do you remember seeing that Andy, the blacks coming up in train?

A. Well I'll be 90 years old my next birthday.

Q. Well how did they bring them up, did they bring them up in passenger cars or?

A. *It was Buxton, the boss that went to Africa and _____ cheap labor.

Passenger cars.

*9,000.

Passenger cars _____

Q. And then they moved to Buxton? Your parents moved to Buxton too right?

A. Yeah we bought this farm. _____

*We never lived in Buxton, just here.

Q. You never lived in Buxton?

A. *No.

Q. On this farm which is what from Buxton, this is what? A little north from Buxton?

A. About a couple of miles I believe.

Q. West?

A. *Uh huh.

Q. Okay, you were on this farm, how many acres did you have?

A. 40 acres. And still we dug coal.

Q. And still dug coal?

A. Uh huh.

Q. Okay. Andy do you remember the Slovak people here in and around Buxton?

A. Yeah.

Q. Your parents were part of that community weren't they?

A. Uh huh.

Q. Okay, did you go to church?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. Where at?

A. Lavilla.

Q. St. Peter's?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you go to church regularly over there?

A. Well during the time in Mutchakinok they attended church about once a year.

*Lavilla church wasn't built until 1910.

Q. Until 1910?

A. 1910 yeah. That's when they built, well they built a restaurant first and then they built the church.

Q. There was also a Slovak Lutheran Church _____ right?

A. Out east here.

Q. Were there any other Slovak churches?

A. Not in this state.

Q. Who were some of the Slovak families that you remember in those days?

A. Quite a few. _____ the come from the old country and they'd go in with a brother-in-law or something to learn a mining tradé.

*But their names.

Their names, every one wanted to buy 40 acres. Dug coal and farm too see.

Q. That was ideal for

A. That was ideal for the Slovaks see. Well a lots of them would soon or later a few hundred dollars and go back to the old country a rich man. You know cause money didn't have much value over there, the foreign money see.

Q. Do you remember the Slovak people getting together often?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. What would those occasions be?

A. Big holidays and things.

*Get a keg of beer and go to the neighbor.

Q. Was that frequent to have a keg of beer and go to the neighbors?

A. *Yeah.

Say you take, get a keg of beer for this Saturday, well you tell me Andy one of those will have a keg of beer. Well next time it'll be another neighbor. They'd go around like that.

Q. Did people come to this farm for a keg of beer? Do you remember that, your parents doing that?

A. Oh yeah.

*Not from Buxton.

Q. Not from Buxton, just farmers?

A. *The neighbors around the

Miami down in here was the northwestern junction. Well we might had to go on maybe 4 or 5 some men on a keg of beer. Say well we got a keg of beer on Saturday come on up. Well that's the way they entertained themselves see.

Q. Okay, you remember any weddings?

A. I say. Yeah my dad _____ at the wedding.

*Those are 3 day affairs.

Q. Sometimes they would last 3 days?

A. Uh huh.

Q. Well tell me about them. How did

A. Well say we had a wedding here it would continue for 3 days.

Q. What days would those be? Any three days?

A. *Mostly from Saturday till Monday.

They picked idle days see. Saturday was the _____ days.

*Some had long distance you know to go.

Come in from the other mining towns.

*They'd go Saturday afternoon and then come back Monday.

Q. When would they come in? They'd come in on a Saturday or a Friday?

A. They was invited to come in on a Saturday see.

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Q. A Saturday. They would stay all Saturday?

A. And Sunday.

Q. And Sunday and then leave again on Monday?

A. A lot of them would stay until Tuesday. That was a great occasion, the weddings.

Q. What would they do in the?

A. *Dance and drink.

Dance and drink.

Q. Dance, what kind of dancing?

A. *The Slovak dance.

Q. Can you describe the Slovak dances?

A. *It's something like the polish.

Q. Polka.

A. *Not exactly a polka but in that order.

Q. Okay.

A. *Then they'd all join hands and put the bride in the middle and they'd go in a circle and sing to her.

They had different things they'd perform see.

*Make her cry. They'd sing, they'd stick with it until she cried.

Q. Until the bride would cry, that was the tradition?

A. *Uh huh.

Q. Anything else about the celebration that you remember that were really traditional?

A. Well the 4th of July they'd have

Q. No, weddings Andy, let's stick with the weddings. Anything else. They circling the bride till she cries. What else did they do? What would the bride wear, a white dress?

A. *White veil.

Q. White veil.

A. *White gown.

You had dressed awful pretty.

*It would be all women in the circle.

- Q. Just women in the circle?
- A. *The women would sing to her.
- Q. What would they sing to her?
- A. *Sort of sad songs you know after marriage and this and that.
- Q. What do you mean after marriage?
- A. *Well what she run into. You don't know what the future is and all that,
- Q. The honeymoon is going to be a short thing?
- A. Well it could be considered a honeymoon.
- Q. So they would sing about that she didn't know what life beheld for her. And the bride was supposed to cry?
- A. *Uh huh.
- Q. Now what foods were served at these weddings?
- A. Oh man,
*Everything.
Anything imaginable.
*The women did all their own baking then.
They'd bake it weeks ahead, 2 or 3

*Different rolls and bread.
- Q. Ann Smith, Andy's sister is now joining us in this conversation, got her closer to the microphone. Now back to the wedding, did they have much Slovak foods that you two can remember?
- A. Well ordinary food like the big doings now. Have chicken, and ham and any kind of meat you wanted.
- Q. How late into the evening would they dance Andy?
- A. All night.
- Q. They'd dance all night?
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. Until sunrise?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Where would they dance?

- A. Well we took all this furniture out. The wedding was here at this _____ place.
- Q. Would it be at the bride's house or the groom's house, the wedding would be held?
- A. Well it depends on how they wanted it. Some wanted the bride and some _____
- Q. When would the married couple, would they leave the celebration or did they stay there the whole time?
- A. They wouldn't leave until Monday or Tuesday.
- Q. So they were there the whole time?
- A. The fiddle _____ was right along here. The orchestra played.
- Q. Where would people sleep?
- A. They wouldn't sleep.
- Q. They wouldn't sleep?
- A. No. See a drunk now and then,
- Q. So they'd take a little nap now and then when they could?
- A. Right. They'd fall asleep see.
- Q. Were you married here Ann? Did you have that kind of celebration?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. When was that Ann, when were you married?
- A. #In 29, May 11th.
- Q. Of 192
- A. 1929.
- Q. And they still had the Slovak celebration?
- A. #In this room. Took all the furniture out.
- Q. How many people came?
- A. #Oh I imagine about 200.
As many come as you invited.
- Q. At these affairs, did many non-Slovak people come?
- A. Oh yeah.
#A few, not too many.
Quite a few at some. Now like I said we was acquainted, we had quite a few outsiders come into to that.

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- Q. Let's change topics a little bit. You belonged to the church. There were a lot of Slovak people in the church weren't there?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. What other kind of people were at St. Peter's? What other nationalities?
- A. Well I don't remember any being there at all. There were Lutherans didn't mix, Catholics didn't mix.
- Q. You remember Ann at St. Peter's were there Iris people, were there
- A. #There were some Iris.
- Q. Were there Khoisans?
- A. Well Khoisans were classified themselves as Slovaks. We invited them too.
- Q. Invited them too?
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. Some Italians? Okay. I hear that the Slovaks had a lodge, had fraternal organization.
- A. Yeah, sure did _____
- Q. The _____
- A. The _____
- Q. Did you belong to it Andy?
- A. No, my dad did.
- Q. Your dad did?
- A. _____
- Q. Now did the women have some sort of fraternal society that _____ women?
- A. _____
- Q. Just the men?
- A. Just like now they have _____ society
- Q. I've been told Andy that there was a Slovak neighborhood in Buxton. Andy do you remember one?
- A. Well they kind of pulled together and lived together you know in the same district.
- Q. Where was that, do you recall what street that was on?
- A. Well it went from 1st Street to 14th Street. It was 14th Street.
- Q. The Slovak community did?

A. Well lots of niggers in between that see. They moved anywhere they wanted. They didn't have no _____ this and that.

Q. In other words there was no special place in town where just Slovaks lived?

A. No.

Q. They lived all the place?

A. There was a Swedetown and all the Swedes were congregated there together.

Q. Did the two of you go to Buxton? When were you born Ann?

A. #1905.

Q. 1905? You were born here on this place?

A. No.

Q. Where?

A. #White City, Mahaskie County.

Q. White City, okay.

A. #That a camp, mining camp.

Q. Now again, when did you move here.

A. #In 1906.

Q. 1906, just after you were born.

A. #I was a year old.

Q. Now ^{where} ~~when~~ did you kids go to school?

A. #Right up here on the hill.

Q. What was the name of the school?

A. #Fairview.

Q. You too Andy went to Fairview?

A. No my schooling was done when we come here. I was 13 years old.

Q. Where had you gone to school Andy?

A. At the _____ a mining camp.

Q. _____ Street

A. _____ Street, that was 3 miles east of Eddieville.

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- Q. What was the school like there? Was it a one room school?
- A. One room. Just say you take the partitions out of this house. Had some benches and _____ chairs.
- Q. Okay, how many grades did they have at that school?
- A. Well it went to 5th grade.
- Q. 5th grade
- A. I went through it twice. Teacher told me you better go to high school where that don't do you no good down here. She was a high school teacher from Eddieville.
- Q. Okay, you went through 5 years grades there, when was that Andy, what years were those?
- A. Let's see you were born in 1905. I wouldn't have no _____. When we left there you were
#He means you.
- Q. When were you born again?
- A. 1892.
- Q. 1892?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. So you probably went to school when you were about 6 or 7 years old.
- A. 5 years old. The kids started at 5 in them days.
- Q. So about 1897 you started school?
- A. I imagine.
- Q. Went 5 years about 1902 or so you were done with school?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. So you were 13 years old. You moved from Mutchakinok first to White City, right?
- A. Yeah. Loss Creek.
- Q. Oh Loss Creek. Mutchakinok to Loss Creek. Do you remember when you moved from Mutchakinok?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. What year was it?
- A. Well I don't know the date.
- Q. But you remember it, the move?

- Q. And then how long did you spend in Loss Creek?
- A. Well I think 3 years. You heard of the explosion they had?
- Q. No.
- A. In the coal mines at Loss Creek?
- Q. No.
- A. That was _____ years.
- Q. How big was Loss Creek? How many people there?
- A. Just oh I think 100 houses.
- Q. About 100 houses?
- A. Just one little mining camp.
- Q. How big was Mutchakinok?
- A. Well it was a little bit bigger.
- Q. It was bigger?
- A. You take Mutchakinok was spreading out all over. Us kids would peddle _____ when you had a rig to get over the camp in a day. It wasn't what you call big but it was scattered. Swedetown, here's Swedetown. Here's the nigger district and all that.
- Q. Now this was in Mutchakinok, right?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Okay, you went to Loss Creek. From Loss Creek you went to White City, right?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And then here to the farm? How was your father able to get this farm? He had saved some money or what?
- A. Well the man bought, my uncle bought the other one here next door. Another one bought that down on the _____. Well he just _____ 40 or \$55 an acre. That's what they sold for. That's what I was telling you a man that come here the first thing he wanted to know to save up enough to buy a piece of land.
- Q. That was really important?
- A. Coal digger and he farmed and dig coal too.
- Q. So you came here, what do you two remember about Buxton?
- A. Well the only thing I it was the biggest camp in the state of Iowa and anywhere as far as the country goes.

- Q. Did you work in any of the Buxton mines, Andy?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Which ones?
- A. #10.
- Q. Just #10?
- A. I started at #10 yeah.
- Q. What did you do, what happened? You worked only at #10. where else did you work?
- A. That was my beginning, #10.
- Q. Okay, what others?
- A. Well then there was a mine sunk right here. I worked at 16, I worked at 18, and White City 7. We dug coal 40 years. And the still farmed 60 acres.
- Q. You, Ann, you were going to school at that time. You were born again, 19
- A. #5
- Q. 5, okay, sometimes it's hard to keep all this straight. You were born in 1905 and you went to school up here at Fairview?
- A. #Uh huh.
- Q. Any black kids there at school?
- A. #There were only 3.
- Q. Only 3.
- A. #Two boys and a girl.
- Q. Okay, did you two get into Buxton much? Ann did you go to Buxton often?
- A. #I remember Buxton very well. He'd have to take me down to the movies they'd have down there at a big YMCA.
- Q. Who ran those movies?
- A. #Two French women but I don't remember their names.
- Q. You don't remember their names. Do you Andy?
- A. Yeah. Ms. Lengoy.
- Q. Lengoy?
- A. One of them name was Ms. Lengoy, _____

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- Q. So you two would go to the movies together down in Buxton ?
- A. #Walk down the track.
Walk down the track, the track run
#Railroad.
- Q. Okay, how far a walk was that?
- A. #Oh it was about 3 miles I guess. I was little.
I wouldn't be 3 miles.
- Q. What else did you go to Buxton for, you two?
- A. Groceries, we done all our trading there.
- Q. Okay, you shopped in Buxton?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. What stores did you go to?
- A. There was only one store there.
#It was just the one but it had everything in it.
- Q. You mean the company store?
- A. Yeah.
#Clothing, furniture, everything.
The company store, they didn't buy your horse and buggy.
- Q. Did you ever go to Larson's store?
- A. Yeah, on the corner?
#No.
- Q. Armstrong's meat market, any of those places?
- A. #Yeah.
That's the only market they had there, the meat market.
- Q. Okay, that was the only one?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Well tell me a little bit about the company store, what was it like?
- A. Well it was what they call all merchandise.
#It was large.
You'd get anything you wanted in there. They'd order their

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- A. #You could tell by the size of the employees there, that picture I gave you.
- Q. These are employees of just for the company store?
- A. #All of those worked in that store.
They had a store and _____ too.
- Q. Okay, thanks.
- A. The company store had, well you can call it a department store right now. This part sold this and this this and on down the line see.
- Q. Do you remember about the prices at the company store?
- A. Oh yeah.
- Q. Do you?
- A. Yeah, boy.
- Q. What about them?
- A. Well I done all the trading see, a sack of flour was 75¢.
- Q. Were the prices the same as prices at other stores that you could have gone to?
- A. Yeah, the same.
- Q. Do you remember the company store charging more than other stores?
- A. No, if anything they was cheaper.
- Q. If anything, cheaper?
- A. The company store was cheaper.
- Q. Who were some of the people that you knew in Buxton?
- A. Oh Christ we knew them by the hundreds, be hard to number.
- Q. Now Steve _____ says that you knew his parents in Buxton.
- A. That's where I got acquainted with them yeah. He was born there, had a little boy and he died. Born on 2nd Street.
- Q. They lived on 2nd Street?
- A. Yeah. When his little boy died.
- Q. Who were the people that you'd visit frequently there in Buxton?
- A. Oh we had an aunt.
- Q. What was her name Andy?
- A. _____

Q. Minochick, okay. Who else?

A. I can't just remember right off. But they would get together on Sunday, holidays, wedding days, and also have what they call a christening, when you baptise your new born baby. That was a big occasion. They danced for 2 or 3 days.

Q. On the baptism huh?

A. Yeah.

Q. What other big holidays do you remember?

A. Well I wouldn't know _____ a ball game, they had a _____. They had an awful good ball team.

Q. How was Christmas celebrated?

A. Oh awful nice. All the niggers had _____ Swedes and Slovaks.

Q. Did you do anything special here at home for Christmas?

A. Oh just decorate here and there a little. She done the decoration.

Q. Any other special holidays that you observed? Do you recall any? Christmas, weddings, we've talked about weddings, Thanksgiving.

A. Oh yeah a big day.

Q. Did your father sell product or anything down in Buxton?

A. No. They sold their grain and hey, people that had a cattle.

Q. To whom would he sell this?

A. #Butter.

Q. Butter, okay.

A. #Eggs.

Q. Did he sell it to people?

A. No.

#Store.

Q. The company store?

A. Yeah, the company store.

#He took it to the store, didn't he?

There's one time that I took butter in and _____ our butter cause it was so nice. One of them showed me they had a barrell that they throw this bad _____ butter in and send it to the bakery. See Buxton had its own bakery.

Q. What was the name of the bakery?

A. _____ Bakery I guess.

Q. Did the company own the bakery?

A. Yeah, company employees.

Q. Who were the superintendents there in Buxton that you remember?

A. Well a fellow name _____ he was the owner of this, mine just across the fence.

Q. Remember much about the company houses there in Buxton, Andy?

A. Yeah, they was pretty nice houses, 2 story.

Q. 2 story, 2 bedrooms upstairs?

A. Yeah, a cistern at every house.

Q. Did they haul water to each house?

A. Yeah.

Q. What'd they have, a water tank?

A. They hauled from the river, by rail. _____ 10 or 15 water cars and they took _____ where they made their pond they'd run that in the pond and go down and get another trip see.

Q. I see.

A. But it was _____ that they had

Q. Where at?

A. Purified.

Q. Where was that done?

A. Buxton, done right there.

Q. Where was that, where was that done in Buxton, right downtown?

A. Downtown, it was right in town. You had what they call water haulers. You had the men that hauled water in the tanks.

Q. Did people have gardens in Buxton?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. Did they keep livestock on their place?

A. No.

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Q. People had chickens or pigs on their?

A. _____

Q. Do you remember the houses being well kept or were they

A. Yeah, awful nice. They had a repair man. If anything go wrong he'd go along and fix it up see.

Q. The company had a repairman?

A. Yeah, to keep the houses. That's all he done is keep them in shape.

Q. What was it one man or was there several?

A. 2 of them.

Q. You know who their names were?

A. I know them but I can't think of it. Tate I believe, one of them was name Tate.

Q. Okay. What about the churches in Buxton, do you remember?

A. Oh child yeah.

Q. What churches do you remember Andy?

A. They had all kinds of churches.

Q. Can you tell me some of them?

A. They had methodist and baptist. Looks like every little tribe had their own church. Schools, they had good schools.

Q. They did?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where were the schools located in Buxton?

A. Right in the camp. I think there's one on 10th Street, 14th Street. They were pretty well

Q. Was there ever a high school in Buxton?

A. Yeah, 2 of them I guess 3.

#No, no high school.

Q. There was never a high school? Was there ever a high school there that burned down? You recall that?

A. #In Buxton?

Q. Uh huh. You don't recall that?

A. Why are you whispering?

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- Q. Well that's okay. Now you were around Buxton for a long time. How did the town change over the time?
- A. It didn't change, it stayed about the same.
- Q. It stayed about the same?
- A. Yeah. Well they had 2 little what they call suburb, Swedetown, one on this end of town and one on the other end.
- Q. But Buxton did loose population over the time?
- A. Oh yeah, there lately. Lately it last.
- Q. When did that start Andy, do you remember when it started to decline?
- A. Well it started, they had Mutchakinok a man owned all that land and him and his boy sunk a little coal mine and when they got to going good there's a friend come there from the Consolidated Coal Company and bought him out and
- Q. Who were those people that sunk that mine? You remember their names?
- A. No. They were farmers, I forget his name. _____
- Q. And the Consolidated Coal Company came in and bought the rocks?
- A. Bought the _____ and everything see and it started from that and they built up to 18 and 19, 19 coal mines.
- Q. That was a big operation, wasn't it?
- A. Oh yeah. _____ opened new mines every year see.
- Q. When was Buxton at its peak?
- A. Well I guess all the way through.
- Q. All the way through?
- A. Yeah. It stayed about the same.
- Q. About the same?
- A. They hauled coal in wagons about 2½ miles and load it on the flatcars and that continued as long as the coal last.
- Q. Okay, now you never lived in Buxton, did you?
- A. No.
- Q. Always out here on this place or in White City before that and Loss Creek and Mutchikonak before that. Well when you were in Buxton, how did blacks and whites get along?
- A. Awful nice. The only trouble they had was the niggers would fight among themselves.
- Q. Among themselves?

- A. Yeah.
- Q. Over what?
- A. Well just over anything that they had.
- Q. Were there any rough parts of town in Buxton?
- A. Yeah, lots of them.
- Q. Where were these parts of town, what were they called?
- A. Well bad alley or different funny names.
- Q. Remember Cooperstown?
- A. Yeah. Coopertown was in Mahaskie County and the line when right through about middle of Buxton population. This would be in this county and you go over across the road there you're in another county.
- Q. Do you remember a place call Sharpe End?
- A. Yeah. That was the rough neck.
- Q. Why was that rough down there?
- A. Well they get to arguing over women and gambling and stuff.
- Q. Was there a lot of gambling in Buxton?
- A. Oh yeah.
- Q. Did you see it yourself, Andy?
- A. Sure.
- Q. What sort of gambling?
- A. Well shooting dice, playing polka.
- Q. Where would they shoot dice?
- A. Well most anywhere in the back of the salone or there was a hotel built there. A man live there he built a hotel out of cement blocks, that's mostly where they done it.
- Q. Was there a hotel down here too at Miami?
- A. Yeah, Northwestern?
- Q. What?
- A. Northwestern Railroad.
- Q. They owned the hotel in Miami?
- A. Yeah.

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A. #No.

Q. No?

A. Yeah.

A. #For railroad men.

Q. It was for railroad men to hold over huh?

A. Yeah.

Q. What other parts of Buxton do you remember?

A. Well I remember all of it really to tell the truth.

Q. Would you go into Buxton, you went to movies at night, did you feel safe to walk through Buxton at night?

A. Didn't pay no attention to it. That's one thing, the niggers never bothered the white people.

Side Two

Q. Any other nationalities there? There were some Welch weren't there?

A. Welch, English.

Q. As you remember Buxton, was it mainly Black? Were most of the people there Black?

A. Yeah I believe. Would it be over a population of black and I wouldn't know.

Q. What percentage would you say black would have been, 90%, 80%?

A. I guess about 80.

#The biggest majority was black. There was 9,000 people.

Q. Were blacks, did blacks work in other towns?

A. Oh yeah, anywhere.

Q. Anywhere?

A. It didn't make no difference. They go to work anyplace they wanted.

Q. How were the blacks in Buxton treated in other towns around here, in the other camps?

A. They really didn't pay no attention.

Q. Didn't pay any attention huh?

A. Blacks they were black.

- Q. So people get along?
- A. The blacks would be a best friend to a man. If anybody tried to get on you in some way the black man would stick up right away. What are you uoang to that white man? I ain't bothering him. I was just talking to him.
- Q. Did you have black friends, Andy?
- A. Yeah, I went to school with a lot of niggers.
- Q. Who were some of those friends, what were their names?
- A. McDowell, Jones, common names they had.
- Q. You went to school with mostly black kids huh?
- A. Yeah. but we never did have a black teacher.
- Q. She was a white teacher?
- A. A white teacher.
- Q. We hear there ~~were~~ some black teachers in Buxton though.
- A. Oh yeah, and at 18 too there were black teachers.
- Q. Did you go to the doctor in Buxton, Andy?
- A. Yeah, they had 4 doctors.
- Q. Who were they?
- A. Some come in from Chicago.
- Q. Do you remember the names of the doctors, Andy?
- A. No I don't.
- Q. Now with pregnancies, Ann, did they have midwives or doctors?
- A. Colored doctor.
- Q. Did you ever go down there for holidays in Buxton, like the 4th of July?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Tell me abut, Did they have parades and picnics?
- A. Oh yeah a band would play and parade around town.
- Q. How long would the parade be?
- A. Oh not very long. The niggers would _____ everyone belong to a secret lodge, they all march with the
- Q. You remember those lodges, Andy?

- A. The flags, the special flags _____
- Q. They strut along huh?
- A. I'd say.
- Q. Where would they hold the picnics?
- A. They had them right there on the camp ground.
- Q. At a park huh?
- A. A park yeah.
- Q. What would they do, did they have
- A. They had a speakers, selling _____, ice cream and stuff like that.
- Q. Did they sell other kinds of food there?
- A. I don't know, just refreshments.
- Q. Did any other groups march in these parades?
- A. No there never was.
- Q. Just blacks?
- A. Blacks.
- Q. Just the black lodges huh?
- A. Well the band consisted of about half black and half white.
- Q. What was the band, the Buxton band?
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. And that was mixed, both black and white?
- A. Yeah, about half and half I guess.
- Q. You mentioned earlier about the Buxton Wonders, you saw them play a few times huh?
- A. Yeah, I played with them.
- Q. You did?
- A. Played first base.
- Q. You played first base, what years, Andy?
- A. I wouldn't remember the year.
- Q. How many years did you play for them, do you recall that?
- A. It was a couple of years.

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Q. A couple of years?

A. And then a lot of times if they were short, some of them was sick, I'd go in.

Q. Who were your team mates?

A. Well it's hard to tell, that many niggers see. The druggist there sponsored that ball team.

Q. The druggist sponsored?

A. B.F. Cooper.

Q. He sponsored it? How did he sponsor it?

A. With cash. He'd send and get different teams they'd play. We had a team, well it could almost pass for the leagues; awfully good players.

Q. Remember some of their names?

A. _____

Q. Remember a man name John Haloska?

A. That's my first cousin, he done ~~the~~ pitching.

Q. He was a pitcher, right?

A. Uh huh. I was the catcher.

Q. You remember Charlie King?

A. Yeah, shortstop.

Q. Shortstop, right. When would you play, Andy?

A. Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

Q. During the summer months?

A. They'd play during idle time. A lots of times they started to playing at night, play after dark but didn't have no lights.

Q. So sometimes you'd play in the evenings?

A. In the evening yeah.

Q. Where were the ball parks?

A. Well they had 3 different parks.

Q. Where were they? Where was the first one?

A. One in the south end of Buxton, one on the east side and the other in the north side. Had 3 ball parks.

Q. The one on the east end, was that in East Swedetown or where?

- A. Yeah, Swedetown.
- Q. It was in Swedetown?
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. Are you sure about that Andy?
- A. Well that was on the east side of Buxton.
- Q. Was it in Coopertown or Swedetown?
- A. A couple of towns see. That's where I was telling you the counties join. Coopertown was there.
- Q. Go ahead, I'm sorry.
- A. Monroe County area, there was 3 of them.
- Q. Which was the first one, was it the one in Sharpe End?
- A. Sharpe End.
- Q. Was that called the amphitheater?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. You don't know?
- A. No.
- Q. Okay, then where was the second one? On the east end?
- A. In the west end, the west end.
- Q. Okay, and then the third was at the north end?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Was there ever any labor unrest in Buxton?
- A. Well yeah, we strike now and then.
- Q. Over what?
- A. Well we'd just
- Q. How often did the strikes occur?
- A. Not too much cause when Buxton he could open up the Illinois mines mines and shut us up.
- Q. He could open other mines and that shut you right out?
- A. Illinois, Yeah. So we come on a strike and Ben give us a special meeting that he could shut us off and it finally got settled and they called him, settled and to go to work see. Like tonight they'd send you an order to go to work tomorrow

A. morning and by God . niggers didn't go.

Q. They didn't?

A. No sir and the white people _____ niggers might _____ the union see. And they all went to work the _____ miner's trains and we didn't go to work and the president down from Albia had orders and told us what the matter we don't go to work see. I don't know _____ niggers got and said. Well sir Mr. President says we didn't go to work cause we _____ he says when you get hour signals here to go to work? Says yeah, but he says we don't have anybody to that paper says we want a _____ president in this company _____. He was the president of the district. He says what are you gonna do when your grub run out? He says we're gone eat walnuts. One of them says Mr. President what become of the walnuts _____ gone eat snowball. Says what are you gonna do with snowball _____ He says have to go to work see. _____ in a big bag like that with both ends, open. They had to come across.

Q. Did you work the full year round in Buxton, Andy?

A. That was one thing in Buxton, never lost a day. He supplied such a big demand of coal he got it from Illinois. But still we worked.

Q. Never lost a day except for strike?

A. Yeah.

Q. Was that unusual?

A. Well yeah. You go on a strike see we loose 2 or 3 weeks, 4 weeks, 5.

Q. But during the working year, you worked year round?

A. Yeah. If you lost a days work you got a little notice from _____ boss, sickness, for deaths and stuff and all that. They had us sign that little card to show why you stayed off work see. It was all mine in the state worked steady.

Q. Only mine in the state that worked stead, huh?

A. Uh huh.

Q. There was a lot of money in Buxton, wasn't there Andy?

A. It took 90 something thousand on the payroll, 90,000 dollars.

Q. People got paid well?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. Did they pay better in Buxton than they did in the other camps?

A. Well about the same scale, a dollar a ton. They had _____ the same way. Well that's part of Ben Buxton's style. Whatever he paid, Ben Buxton would pay.

Q. Did you check off at the company store?

A. No we didn't, no.

- Q. A lot of miners did I suppose?
- A. Yeah. We had to sign up yeah. Signed up for the check off. To have permission to check off their statement see.
- Q. Did you belong to the union?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. How much that cost you?
- A. It was 75¢ a month.
- Q. How much did medical care cost you?
- A. At first here in Albia at the hospital we pay a dollar a month. We were in this here _____ and you got everything
- Q. How much money did you make a day?
- A. That depend on what kind of place you have here.
- Q. Waht was the range?
- A. If you had a good place, you made 10, 12, 15 dollars a day.
- Q. Make up to that much?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. What would you make on an average day?
- A. It'd be maybe about \$20 average.
- Q. Remember people being dressed up there in Buxton?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Really dressed up?
- A. They wore better clothes to work than I wore as _____. On an idle day everyone would dress _____ the hang out place.
- Q. What was it?
- A. The company porch, sports _____
- Q. By the company store?
- A. In front of the store, yeah.
- Q. And people would hang out there on that porch?
- A. That's where _____ an argument you know.
- Q. Right there, a lot of people congregated there?

- A. _____ the store just for that, killing time see. See the niggers they thought was to break the strike we'll have to go back to work but we didn't, we were the last ones to go to work after we signed the agreement you know. It's a guy and they called him Holly Moley and 10 shoes I bet you that long and it stand about 6 inches high like that and come walking up to the store porch you know _____
- Q. Who were some of the characters that you remember?
- A. He was one of them.
- Q. He was one of them?
- A. (Can't understand response)
- Q. Remember pay days, were paydays big times?
- A. Every two weeks.
- Q. They used to pay in gold, didn't they?
- A. Yeah. We were on the gold _____, choked up today.
- Q. Was pay day a wild time?
- A. Yeah, that was a big day in Buxton, a big day.
- Q. You want to talk a little bit about mining, Andy? What were the mines like?
- A. Well as fars as the ones _____ how coal is, it's pretty hard to describe.
- Q. What was the best mine that you worked in?
- A. #10 the best coal in the state, clean coal see. You never was in the mines?
- Q. I never have been. How high was the coal, how high was these?
- A. _____ it'd be depth cause _____ we dug coal that high. Some coal was 8 foot high, 9 foot high.
- Q. What was the day like, you'd go down, what would be the first thing you'd do after you'd go down?
- A. Well you'd examine your working place to see if it's solid. Your entries was laid out certain p_____ of the city. They'd put a highway like that and a highway across there see and all them little square shapes there they'd turn what they called room work. The entries you drive 8 feet wide and the rooms you drive 32. That's about all _____
- Q. What would you do, dig coal the rest of the day?
- A. Well yeah. You do your drilling they shot the night before _____ that and you go home again, shoot your _____ some more.
- Q. Did you go in first with your dad?
- A. Yeah, all the kids went in with their dads well the company wanted the experience

A. See men with experience take care of the little boys.

Q. How old did you have to be before you'd go down?

A. In them days it was different, 11 years old, 12 years old.

Q. And that was considered old enough?

A. Uh huh. But now is now today you have to be 15 years old.

Q. Is there anything that I havent asked you about Buxton that you'd like to tell me about?

A. Not that I can think of.

Q. Black and white miners at work got along really good?

A. Yeah.

Q. That was no problem?

A. Not at all.

Q. Were many accidents in the Buxton mines or were they pretty safe mines?

A. Well they were pretty safe, still there's quite a few got killed.