

Buxton Project:  
Narrators' Names:  
Tape Number:  
Date of Interview:  
Place of Interview:  
Interviewers Names:

*audited  
2/8/82  
JH*

424-2104 *Hart*  
Hucey Heart - Dorothy Collier  
23A  
Des Moines  
Elmer and Dorothy Schwieder

- A. I wanted to get down in there but I've been so busy. It sounds like a little
- A. We've both been sick, been in the hospital. I've been in the hospital, she's been in the hospital. We were both in there at the same time.
- Q. \*Oh my.
- A. She with her back and I had something down in here that was choking me, had to go down there and get that \_\_\_\_\_ cut out, a growth down in there so.
- Q. Oh Boy.
- A. #I told him he just got jealous because I was laying up in the hospital and he just got jealous of it. He went to the doctor and they put him in at the same time. Nobody was happy but the girl because she got to stay home and drive anybody's car.
- Q. \*Where do you work now?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ 16th and 4th.
- Q. The day care center yeah.
- \*Oh I see.
- A. #Do you drink coffee Mr. Schwieder?
- Q. Yes, that's just <sup>*great*</sup> ~~drink~~.
- A. I got some orange pop or diet pop.
- Q. \*No, I'll take coffee.  
Well why would you say diet?
- A. #Well I thought everybody was like me, I had to have diet pop.  
What I do, what I am I dust the floors, It take about an hour to do that, then the rest of the 7 hours I just walk around and keep peace.
- #Hucey, excuse me, you want some coffee?
- Yeah, I'll take some. And I just walk around and take care of the place <sup>*up there*</sup> and it's tiresome because I'm sitting and walking see but I ain't doing nothing.
- Q. \*I see, uh huh.
- Q. Let's get you on tape here officially. Tell us your name and address and where you're at.

A. Where I live at?

Q. Yeah.

A. My name is Hucey Herbert Heart and I live at 909 West 26th Street.

Q. Okay, that's all we need to start, now we can \_\_\_\_

\*And you've got to test it out.

Yeah I've got to test it, it's running. You mentioned that you hadn't been back to Buxton for a while, when did you first come there?

A. I was born there.

Q. You were born there?

A. I was born in Buxton, 1906, the 27th day of April.

Q. And how long did you live there?

A. I lived there until 1914.

Q. So you grew up there?

A. Yeah, uh huh. And then I went from there to White City Seven, a coal mining camp about 3 miles away and we left from there and then we moved to Old Maple Block which is another one of Buxton's coal mining camp, we were there about a year and a half

Q. \*Now where was that camp?

Where was Maple Block?

A. About 5 miles from Old Buxton.

Q. Now when you talk about Old Buxton, you're talking about the main part.

A. Main part of Buxton.

Q. And there was no mine there right in Buxton?

A. No not right in Buxton, no. The closest mine I think was 16 and 17, I think they were about 3 miles, 3 or 4 miles from Buxton.

Q. And White City was the other way about 5 miles then?

A. Well White City actually didn't belong to Buxton. A different company altogether but we worked, we was moved out there and we used to go back and forth to Buxton you know playing and different things. And then we moved from Old Maple Block we moved to Haydah, what you call Haydah, they call it Buckneal. That's the new Buxton.

Q. Oh Haydah is called New Buxton?

A. Yeah New Buxton, Haydah, New Buxton.

*Abner  
Jeb  
Smith*

*Moved  
from  
Buxton*

*White  
City*

*Maple Block*

*Mine*

*Haydah  
AKA New  
Buxton  
Buckneal*

Q. Buckneal, how did that fit into the name, was that another name for Haydah then?

A. Well see Buckneal was 19. See there was 19 call it Buckneal. And then there's Midway, that was in between the two and then Haydah. But they all was all New Buxton. See they moved all of Buxton's houses out there.

Q. \*Okay, now that we hadn't really picked

We didn't know that.

\*Yeah that we hadn't really picked up on before. Did they move almost all of the houses or like half of them?

A. All the company houses yeah.

Q. \*All the company houses?

A. All the company houses yeah. See what they did they tore them down in sections, put them in flat cars and hauled them out there and put them up in sections. That was 19 and Midway, that was in between 19 and Haydah and then Haydah was all Buxton homes.

Q. How far away is that from old Buxton then?

A. Oh I'd say about between 18 and 19 miles.

Q. Okay that's why, now the train went that way, the coal train?

A. Yeah.

Q. So when Buxton closed down, the company just took the houses and moved them out to 18, 19 and Midway?

A. Yeah from Old Buxton and moved them out there.

Q. Okay, I never understood that before. I knew they were out in there somewhere.

A. Yeah they moved them out there.

Q. And then how long did you mine at Haydah then?

A. Oh let's see, I think Haydah blowed up in 27, if I make no mistake, 1927. They went out on a strike and old man Ben Buxton told them if they went out on a strike they would stay out. They'd close the mine down. Well they didn't believe it. So they went out, we was out about a year and a half and he closed the mine down, brought all the mules on top, took dynamite and blowed the temple down. They left all the rest of the coal and the motors and things down inside the mine.

Q. Is that right? Blew the temple down ended 19 right there, and that was about 27?

A. About 27.

Q. Oh for heaven sake. But you were out a year and a half in a strike then?

A. Yeah about a year and a half.

Q. Now did you normally have summers when you didn't mine? You mined all winter and then you didn't have mine in the summer or was it 20 for 20?

A. No some of them they worked about a day and a half, 2 days a week in the summer months. But the winter months why they worked pretty steady during the winter months. They always had a slack in the summer.

Q. \*Now you say you were born in Buxton, your dad was a coal miner then?

A. Yeah.

Q. \*Where did he come from?

A. Virginia, West Virginia.

Q. \*From Virginia?

A. Yeah.

Q. And what was his first name?

A. Robert Thomas Heart.

Q. \*Robert Thomas Heart.

A. Uh huh.

Q. \*And what was your mom's name then?

A. Ella Black~~burn~~ before she married him she was a Blackburn. She came from North Carolina.

Q. \*North Carolina.

A. Uh huh.

Q. \*Now I take it, were they married when they came to Buxton or did they meet there or in Mutchakinok?

A. They met in Mutchakinok there and married there.

Q. \*I see. Were your both sets of grandparents coal miners too then?

A. No my grandparents all stayed down in Virginia. They never did come, my dad was the only one came from down there up here. See I've never seen my grandparents any of them.

Q. \*I see. Do you know how old your dad was when he?

A. Let's see, I think dad was 57 when he died. I think he was 57 when he died.

Q. \*But he came as a young man alone to Mutchakinok?

A. Yeah.

#What was their name then?

She was Sarah Walker before she married my dad.

#\_\_\_\_\_ that's your dad there?

Mine  
WK  
Summer

Parents

Muchy

Mutchakinok  
Mutchakinok  
Mutchakinok

Mutchakinok

A. That's my dad yeah?

#That's Mr. and Mrs. Heart.

Yeah.

#Un huh, I've got that picture at grandma's house. Isn't that something. I kept looking at that picture, it look so familiar you know.

Q. \*And you say this was your dad's first wife?

A. First wife.

Q. \*But his second wife was your mother then?

A. My mother yeah.

Q. I see.

A. See she was a Walker, her name was Sarah Walker.

Q. And she stayed in Carolina then?

\*No.

She died?

A. This woman here, I don't know where he married her but she died in <sup>Muchakinok</sup> Mutchakinok.

Q. Oh I see.

A. Then my mother came up here and he met my mother and he married my mother.

Q. \*And had your mother come in by herself too then to <sup>Muchakinok</sup> Mutchakinok or did she

A. I don't know how she came here but my dad met her and married her, so that's what they say. Then they moved from there to, see my dad helped to sink mines all the time and he moved around, get one mine sinked and he'd move on to another one. Cause my dad came on to Buxton and we moved down there on 1st Street right down across from the post office. My dad helped to sink 16 and 17. My mother died before he got 17 done see, and then they wanted him to go to 18 after she died but he wouldn't go to 18 we kids were all, the 3 kids were all small see. So that's the reason why he left and went to White City Seven to work on that account cause it was closer and he didn't want to go way out \_\_\_\_\_ That way he had to be about 18 or 19 miles away from us at night you know.

Q. \*How many children were there all together then?

A. In my family?

Q. \*Yeah.

A. 4

Q. \*4 children?

A. Uh huh, 3 girls and me, one boy.

*mom*

*Buxton*

Q. \*I see.

A. My oldest one was name was, you want her name?

Q. \*Yeah.

3.6.5  
A. Oldest one name was Vivian Caroline Heart. My youngest sister, next to her, her name was Sybil Heart and the other one name was Helen Heart. So I'm the second oldest.

Q. \*Second oldest.

A. Vivian's the oldest, I'm next, then Sybil and Helen was the baby. Four kids all together. And my youngest sister I think she lived about 18 months after mother died and then she passed.

Q. \*What was your mother's cause of death then?

A. That I don't know, I was too young, I was only about 6 years old. That was too young to find out how she died.

Q. Now do you have then one sister still living?

A. Yeah I've got one sister still living.

Q. And where's she at?

A. She lives right down here, what is it? 720 24th Street.

Q. Now she was obviously born in Buxton too then?

A. Yeah in Buxton.

Q. How long did she stay in Buxton?

we  
Saw  
Simmons  
A. Well let's see. We all went to White City Seven the same time, it was about 1912 I think and then she went to stay with some folks on a farm that worked in the coal mining camp. Folks by the name of Sam Simmons and Ms. Jane Simmons. She stayed with them because they were both up in age and needed somebody to help around the house with the farming and things like that and so she went and stayed with them.

Q. Now she's married?

A. Her husband died.

Q. Was he a miner too?

A. No she met him here in Des Moines.

Q. I see. So her experiences are of growing up in Buxton and then going out to White City and then eventually coming to Des Moines?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you mine?

A. Yeah I started out in the mine.

Q. How early did you start underground?

*Starts work in mines*  
A. Well when I was, I was 15 when I started, turning 16. Gotta be 16 to go in the mine. So I lied about a half a day from a Justice of the Peace, a fellow by the name of Jim Bailey was Justice of the Peace and he wrote an affidavit stating that I was 16. So I started in the mine, but I started when I was 15, turning 16.

Q. Did you go down before then and help your dad? They wouldn't let you underground until you were 16?

A. That's right. But you know the first mines I went in myself was White City Seven, the first one I went into. Then when they closed, then that's when I went to Old Maple with my dad cause at that time my dad had a little light stroke and couldn't work anymore. Well the mines out there was working about, cause Old Maple look like it was a mine mine I think it was at that time. They were working about a day and a half every 2 weeks.

Q. And you say Shewing, the name of the company? That ~~wouldn't~~ <sup>wasn't</sup> Consolidated?

A. Oh no.

Q. It was Shewing?

A. Then I wouldn't doing no good, wouldn't making any money so I left. I walked up there to Buxton, Old Buxton and I went to my aunt, Susie Walker where I stayed at on a farm and I went to the mines with her husband which is my uncle and his son, my cousin and I got a job at 19. That's when I started at 19. It was Buxton and I started in 19. See I didn't work too awfully long in 19 before they closed, about 3 or 4 years something like that before they closed down. But all together actually I got about 7 years in the coal mine all together, in all the mines that I worked in.

Q. That's hard work.

A. Yeah I know it.

Q. \*Were you a loader then?

*Types  
to John  
mine of mine*  
A. I dug coal and then I trapped a little while and then I went to driving, the last time I was a driver.

Q. \* You drive mules?

A. Drove mules and wagon.

Q. \*Oh you did.

A.        when they closed I was driving.

Q. \*Did you like driving mules?

A. Oh yeah, oh yeah I liked that. It was dangerous and reckless and I liked that, I was just young and crazy.

- Q. \*You know that's, I've interviewed quite a few, ~~we've had~~ <sup>RETIRED</sup> coal miners and they all say the same thing. That a lot of appeal for a younger person because you really could kind of show off a little bit and you knew it was kind of dangerous and, that's interesting. Did you ever have any accidents?
- A. Well I had one, a pretty close one. A car jumped the track with me once and it was lucky I didn't get hurt. Of course it hurt the mule but it didn't hurt me but it hurt the mule.
- Q. Hucey I've heard somewhere that they had a young man that stood there and if the track had an incline he had a bunch of oak sticks, he stuck them in the wheels to slow them down, do you remember?
- A. Oh yeah, that's called spragging.
- Q. Can you tell me more about what a spragger does? All I've heard is a little.
- A. Okay see you got a hill, an incline coming down the hill.
- Q. Uh huh.
- A. And you've got 2 by 4's along the side of the track, even with the track. Okay say for instance that you've got 8 or 10 cars and you got about 2 mules pulling them. Well coming over this hill you'll have a guy called a sprag, there was a young man that's all he do is sprag. He'll put one to each wheel. Say for instance you got 6 cars, you've got 12 sprags. Then they got call check wheel, that's the wheel on the side and then they turn around and kick sand on, dust on them. That is the wheels slide coming down till they get down to the foot of the hill and then he'd stop and take the sprags out so they roll off. But that spragging is        in other words, they used it for breaking with, just like you be using breaks.
- Q. Now could those kids get a finger in?
- A. Oh yeah. There was a friend of mines out in Colorado right now got this finger off right there. Got it in front of that thing and it cut
- Q. Sprag in and the wheel whent right over it.
- A. Yeah.
- Q. That sounds like the most dangerous part of the mine for a young man to be.
- A. Well it is. Like I say you're young and you don't ever think of them things, all you know you never think of it see. And we have another one that probably        spoke about, coupler The driver brings the car, the loaded cars come around on this side and they got a young man that's all he do was cup them. He'd take the pin and stick the pin up sideways like this and he got a link, he had about 3 links about that long, all three of them. And you stick that link in and get his finger out <sup>8.10 check</sup> See you couple up maybe 15 or 20 or 30 cars so when the motor comes in, he come        your break you push it about 15 or 18 and you push them in on this side. Get a guy there that would <sup>stop</sup> stop them, if the sprag didn't stop them and he'd come up and then he'd throw the switch and then put them on the main line and hook up to these cars and then these trailers go to the back in and get on the back end of it and then he'd whistle at him 3

A. times see. That mean for him to take off. Then when he's coming out of there I guess he's coming out of the southwest here at the main west you got a trapper down here. Now what he'll do when the cars come down over the hill the main west, if anybody come in there he'll whistle, a long whistle. This motor would come out of the southwest. He'd kick that switch for him. This other guy coming out of the main west, if he'd get up there and he blow for him he'd take his light and do like that there and whistle see. That mean for him to hold it until this bunch get out. This bunch gets out and then he whistle him 3 times and flag his light like that and he'll come on down and he'd step back and let him go by.

Q. \*And this was the trapper that gave all these instructions?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. \*When you were working in the mine, were trappers still younger boys or were they?

A. Oh yeah, they were all young men, teenagers.

Q. \*Teenagers?

A. Yeah. And then after they get to be 20 or 21, they usually go driving but they usually teenage when they started trapping, 16 age and up. See what they have, they have a door. A door a little wider little wider than that and they keep the door closed, had to keep the air in this and when the driver comes up, he'll whistle this trapper and this trapper, if this course is clear he'll whistle and open the door and stand behind and let him through and then shut the door. That's what you call the trapper opening and shutting the doors, letting the drivers in and out.

Q. That underground is a tough way to make a living as far as I can see.

\*Did you belong to the union then?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. \*UMW.

A. What was it we belonged to. John Wilson was our president, what his name? John L. Lewis.

Q. \*John L. Lewis, uh huh.

A. Yeah we had one of the best unions in the United States. One of the best coal miners the best. John L. Lewis he was real strong, nobody messed with him too much. He was pretty great.

Q. \*Did you ever see him, did you ever meet him?

A. Oh yeah, ~~they~~ they'd have them great big meetings he'd come, oh yeah.

Q. \*Do you remember a man by the name of John White, does that name

A. John White.

Q. \*He was president of, he was president of district 13 for a while and then he was president of the National United Mine Workers for a while.

*min*  
A. That name sounds familiar but I can't say.

Q. That would have been oh around 1913, 1914 I suppose you still would have been pretty young at that time.

A. I've heard that name but I can't place it. I can't place it.

#You said Shewing, was that Shewer? Was that connected to this Shewer here?

Oh yeah. \_\_\_\_\_

#She lives in Indianolia I think.

Q. I'd follow up on that Dorothy, is that Des Moines Shewer?

A. #Well I don't know, I think her people had something to do with it didn't they? I believe they did.

#She's married to a Shewler. *Spelling is inconsistent*

At that time Sholing had 3 mines, \_\_\_\_\_ they was assessed with 3 mines, Old Maple, New Maple and then out here Waukee.

#I know this Ms. Shewler she lived on 16th Street and I know they used to say she was connected to the coal mines you know. That's what I

Here's something, you probably heard this though. Many trains, there was 5 trains coming into Buxton at one time. You heard about that hadn't you?

*this*  
Q. No, go.

A. I was quite small but at one time there was 5 trains coming in there at one time. There was 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

Q. \*Now the trains from these different mines?

A. Different mines yeah. All of them had work at that time. I was quite small see I was around about 8 or 9 years old I imagine. And in the wintertime, see it was dark in the wintertime at 6:00 and it's the prettiest thing you ever seen to stand up on top of the coal ~~shute~~ hill. Look like a whole city moving. All the miners had the lamps on their heads you know walking coming home. It's one of the beautifullest thing you ever seen. It's 5 trains at one time come in.

Q. Now when you say 5 trains came in and then the main line out for coal was through Buxton?

A. Yeah.

Q. And they'd come into Buxton and then hook up with the main line and then take it right out somewhere else. Down through Lavilla and that way.

A. No see all the mines come in and the Northwestern pull all the coal out of there.

Q. I see.

A. But see all these different mines they came into Old Buxton. See people lived in Old Buxton.

Q. \*It was to pick the men up and take them out to work in these different places.

See back all the RR combinations

A. Well we had coaches. The miner's coaches they called them. The train would pick up the coal, the flatcars, the boxcars, a flatcar rather and they would come through Buxton going to different places, Belle Plaine and different places where they carry it to different places like that. It must have went into Belle Plaine on out through there. And as I said, they called them coal drags at them times come through there. Now 18, they'd pull in twice out of 18 and 19. They'd pick up a load at 18 and one train would take that on through and another train would bring from 19. Just like all the rest of them mines. They'd hook up them mines and bring it all through Buxton.

Q. When you talk about the coaches, how many miners were on a coach, remember?

miners train

A. Well now you got me there. I'd say roughly, just a rough guess, I'm not sure I imagine a coach would hold about 40 or 50 people I imagine cause they had seats along the side and seats in the middle, so I imagine they hold about

Q. 50 people?

A. I'd say 50.

Q. You remember how many cars they'd have on a train going out? We've heard 6 or 7, somebody said maybe as many as 10. But you forgot, that'd be 500 on a ship going out.

A. I'd say somewhere around 7 or 8, just roughly I'd say about 7 or 8. I never really did count them, I'd say 7 or 8.

Q. Now did they take these coaches to all the outside mines? That was the way the miners got out.

A. Yeah.

Q. So it wouldn't just one mine that was served by a coach, the whole bunch went out in the coaches.

A. Yeah. See the same train didn't take all of these, different trains see.

Q. I see yeah.

A. One train took 18 and 19. I remember, 19 had 9 coaches, I remember it had 9 going out there. Then they'd leave 5 at 18. Then they'd switch and take and they'd take ours, leave us four, take our four and push them on into 19. Then that same train that took us out there would take a load of coal out there. There'd be a train come out that evening, \_\_\_\_\_ pick it up, he'd bring a load of empty cars and he'd switch them and wait for us and bring us on in.

Q. And bring you back.

A. Pick up 19 and then go back and hook up to 18 and go on into Buxton. That's the way they did.

mining  
shaft  
one shift  
do

Q. So the mines then worked one shift a day then?

A. Yeah one shift a day, yeah.

Q. Was that an 8 hour, or you had \_\_\_\_

A. Yeah.

Q. That was an 8 hour. Did you get paid parted to parted. You got paid the 8 hour, you didn't get paid for the time you. You know there was a big argument. The union later on said you got paid from the time you run the time clock through the wash house and the whole thing.

A. See we didn't have no time clock at the coal mine.

Q. Didn't have it.

mining  
pay  
subsidiaries  
by job  
his work  
company  
work

A. The only ones that got paid by the hour was the company men. Now the diggers, the people that dug coal wouldn't no company men. The company men were your trappers, your timbermen, your track layers, your mule drivers, your cagers and your dump men. You call them dump men, the guy that dumped the coal and the guy that weigh the coal, and the check weight and all them see and the guy that run the cage and steam house. Now them was company men. But the guys that mined the coal was on their own. We was in there 9 hours if you didn't load no coal you didn't get nothing. See wouldn't no hour rate, you didn't get nothing. That's the way that went. Now we had some men would load high as 12, 14 cars a day.

Q. Is that right?

A. Oh yeah we had.

Q. Now how did they get those good seeds? I've heard that they kind of pussyfooted with the guy that made the arrangement.

mining  
investment

A. They did. They had a boss, I don't know what they done to him but some of them people would get mines get rooms tall as this place here and shoot one hole and load 8 and 9 cars off it and you get them little old places where about that high, you work on your knees. Sometimes you do good to get three cars a day out of it.

Q. \*And it was the foreman that did the assigning of rooms?

A. The foreman had a lot to do with it.

Q. \*So apparently if you were a friend of the foreman maybe or. Would miners do anything for the foreman to try to maybe win a few extra favors?

A. I don't know what they done but a lot of them got some awfully good rooms.

Q. I heard they made home brew that he liked.

A. Yeah

Q. \*They made a lot of that.

mining  
of  
rooms

A. Yeah they made a lot of home brew, a lot of wine. They made a lot of that. I remember once the best room I ever worked in my life was old man Calvin Thomas. We had a room we had to stand up on top of a 50 gallon drum barrel to timber it. See the timber like the trees out here, they cut these trees and bring them down in the mines see and they used them from 3 foot to 9 foot some of the trees. They call them timber. They round about that big around. They got a cap board that goes over top of them. See now you put this up against the roof and you put a cap board on top. That's why you had to have a sledge hammer and a sharpe ax in the mine, a sharpe hachet rather. See and you put that first cap board in there and it didn't fit tight enough and you turn around and take the other one and you trim it down, you know like a wedge and you put that over top of that so you could tighten it up. Now what you did that for, when you take the coal out, like this on the coal out here see, well you put timbers along on that side and all along this side. Just leave enough room for your track. That is to preserve the roof. Cause if you just leave it open the roof liable to fall. The timber help hold the roof up. Or it notify you if the roof is fixing to fall in. When you hear the timber cracking and things like that, it's time to get out of the way cause you'll have a fall of some kind.

Q. \*Would you usually have a warning of some kind before a slate would come down?

ACCIDENTS

A. Well just about all the time now. Only one that you don't have no warning, they call it a slip. That's what they call it but it's a great big board that run clean across this room. It's just slick as glass up in there. You very seldom get any warning on that, when you get that last piece just a cut loose right now. But now most of the time a little piece would fall around the edge somewhere. If you see that piece fall that means for you to get out of the way. That's why you use these timbers in there so when it start. These timbers won't keep it from falling but it'll let you know if it's falling.

The Lord was with me. Me and my dad was pulling pillows. What pulling pillows is, as you go down through the entry and all the mines are worked out so you got a pillow of coal runs, oh I'll say I guess 40 or 50 feet any way. What they call pulling pillows cause when you get all the pillows out of there you're through in there all together. So me and my dad was pulling pillows and we had a car out in the entry. We were back up under there. Two or three pieces of slate fell. See I was green. I stopped and was looking up like that and my dad reached and grabbed me and snatched me back under it. When he did that it filled that car and everything, you couldn't see nothing out from under there. If my dad hadn't done that well they'd had to dig me out from under there.

Q. He knew.

A. See he knew and I didn't know see. That's the reason why I said, that's one of them slips like I was telling you about. Right on the edges usually 2 or 3 pieces would fall off. Keep your eyes, keep your ears open all the time see when you do that then you'd get out of the way. I was looking to see what it was coming from, he just grabbed me

Q. He just grabbed you.

A. And \_\_\_\_\_ got me under there \_\_\_\_\_ it fell.

Q. \*This was all shooting on the solid

A. Oh yeah.

Q. \*Did they have undercutting machines?

A. Not at that time no.

Q. \*So this was all hand work then?

A. All hand work yeah.

Q. \*Getting it out.

A. See then when I started out in the mines you cut by hand. Have a pick you know and you cut say 5 or 6 foot and you get back on this side. Now what you do you have what you call a sunk hole. You start along the edge and you run it down in there about 4 or 5 feet and then you get back at the top and you call it \_\_\_\_\_ now the fuse on this one, your short fuse and the one on top is your long fuse. Now the shot finder comes around everyday. A fellow by the name of Bill Groves, he come around everyday and check. He say Q:Q how many holes you got? Whether you got 2 or 3 you tell him. He says okay, \_\_\_\_\_ fuse I light them. For now this hole, like this one got the short fuse and you light this one about 3 or 4 foot of fuse on there. That's so this one would go first. This one go first and this is \_\_\_\_\_ out from under and then the one on top would lay it on down.

Q. I see.

A. See in the later years everybody got them cutting machine, that cut back up under there.

Q. And then they'd just fire on top?

A. Yeah just hold on top and hold that all fall right down see.

Q. \*Okay, so before the cutting machine you didn't always undercut by hand?

A. Not under there, no you cut straight in like this. Now like this is the wall here, I'd cut straight in here. I'd start like this here and get back in here 4 or 5 feet, cut clean to the bottom and then I get over and drill me a small hole up to the top.

Q. And then pull the wall the cut there.

\*So then the bottom came first and the other \_\_\_\_\_ had something to \_\_\_\_\_ in and came down.

A. And in the later years why then they got like \_\_\_\_\_ got scientific and they started using cutting machines. The cutting machines cut right back up under there see. And all you have to do is just drill your hole in the top and come down.

250

Q. \*Come down yeah. Was your view of the shot firer's job that he had a somewhat more dangerous job?

many of  
shot  
finders  
checks

A. Yeah I would say it was awful dangerous yeah. Wouldn't nobody in there but him. In other words, now all the mines that I worked in there was 2 shot firers, one for one side and one for the other. And at night they'd have checks, what they call checks. They was made round about the size of a dollar, had a hole in the middle and had your number on there and they had a big long board and say your number was 33 or 32 well your check would be the same. You put your check on that. Before the shot firer started shooting, he'd be down on the bottom, engineer and then he check and make sure ain't nobody in there and he'll a little hoot, toot toot and he'll answer him down below. He say everything is clear up there and you go head on and start shooting.

Q. \*Okay and the engineer would know because everybody's little marker was

A. Yeah, \_\_\_\_\_ checked up on it if everybody wouldn't out they wouldn't go down and look for them.

Q. \*Are you certain you got that close enough now?

Yeah,

\*Yeah but close enough,

It's doing fine.

\*I don't want you to miss anything.

A. Like I say that shot fireman, well every room is got a, say for instance this is my room here and that's your room there well see you got a little break through, they come up like this and you had to come right on around to go through this break through.

Q. \*And that keeps you close to the facing room then?

A. See that way when you go through these break through why he lighten every room like everybody go all the way through and he'd come out. When he come out, but he's running all the time, he's not walking, he's running.

Q. \*Running, not walking?

A. Yeah, he's running. Got to have a lot of wind, he's running.

Q. What do you mean a lot of wind?

A. So he can run.

Q. Oh that kind of wind. I thought maybe you meant the explosions were pushing him along.

A. Oh no, but now they do have the explosions sometimes, the \_\_\_\_\_ shot finders, now what causes that, you get a person that drill they hole too far, to straight in and put too much powder or dynamite in, it'll kick back sometime.

Q. Now was that called a windy shot?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. That's the windy shot?

A. Yeah, it blow a man down, blow down doors too. Powder       

Q. Was the responsibility of the digger to put the dynamite in and pack it and then put the fuse in.

A. Right.

Q. \*And it was not dynamite it was blasting powder.

A. And if they find out, if the shot fireman report him, then he'd bring him on a carrot and they really chew him out about that. See you not suppose to do nothing like that. Some of them have the hole sometimes have the fuse too short and we don't have a chance to get out of the way. Now we can

Q. How did you drill that hole, did you have a

A. Auger

Q. Regular Auger , coal Auger

A. I don't have one, I did have one before they        I had all that stuff. Now I take you back to one fellow she know very well, Clinton Cohern. Now that's where he got killed in Buxton. He was a shot fireman. He lite a shot and the fuse was too short and before he could get out it went off. Coal knocked him down and killed him.

Q. \*What if the shot didn't go off. Did they ever try to go back and relight it.

A. No, when he light it if they don't go off he's through.

Q. \*He's all through, he just keeps right on going?

A. He just keep right on going.

Q. \*Right on going.

A. He keeps right on going. You come in the next morning, you turn around and pull it out and see why it didn't go off.

#Hucey do you remember about Tousant Massley?

Oh yeah.

#When his cap fell off, he told me he was in a mine illegal you know and his cap fell off and made kind of an explosion in there. Do you remember that?

I don't remember that.

Well he was telling me about that.

Q. Now that would be a carbide lamp explosion?

A. #Oh yes. He said they told him not to do but he just careless let his cap fall off and set off some fuse or something I don't know but he was telling me. Of

A. #course I don't know nothing about the mines.

*mine*  
*2 of*  
Here's another experience. In pulling pillows in an old room that you drill through into an old room and empty for months and years maybe. Now you got a white damp and a black damp, you heard about that?

Q. \*Yeah.

Tell us some more about it.

*damp*  
*black*  
*white*  
A. white damp but anyway, a black damp is something you can't see but you can see the white damp. A white damp is like a smoke it moves up and down like that but the black damp is something you can't see. When you drill a hole through it and you don't stick your nose in there. What you do you stick your light there. If that suck your light out what you do then you turn around and get you some mud and tap that hole back up and don't go that way no more cause that stuff will kill you.

Q. It'll pull the light out?

A. Yeah.

Q. Suck it in.

A. And it suck your light up you got to get rid of that light. See I had a way I was gone look. My dad said don't do that. He turn around and put the light white damp so he explained that to me and then he showed me white damp. Now white damp is no more than about like that. They claim you can crawl under them see. But you can see them. Just like a white fog just going up and down like that.

Q. \*Now it sounds like your dad was really the one that taught you how to mine?

A. Yeah.

Q. \*He was your teacher?

A. Yeah he was a coal miner \_\_\_\_\_. Yeah my dad could sat down and cut a 6 foot cut and I couldn't cut over 3 foot to save my soul. He'd cut it, keep it open like it all the way in there. I get in there about 2½ feet, I get it in like like this I just couldn't keep it open, that's one thing I never could do.

Q. \*This is the cut you were making.

A. Yeah.

Q. When you talk about the lamp, it was a carbide lamp?

A. Yeah carbide lamp.

Q. And did you have to buy your own carbide?

A. You bought your own everything.

Q. Your own everything.

A. Yeah.

Q. Take your water and your bucket so you had enough.

Q. My dad had a dairy and we've got a carbide lamp at home. I've still got one. My dad used it on a milk route because it was cheaper than a flashlight but the odor got to me. They have an odor.

A. Oh yeah they did have.

Q. Carbide smell I just probably never forget.

*mining mules*  
\*That raises another point. They kept the mule stable underground. Did in fact that there was so much what you call manure?

A. Yeah, uh huh.

Q. \*Didn't that cause a terrible odor through the mine or did they keep it cleaned out well enough that?

A. They kept it cleaned out. See they had 2 men, they call them mule bosses they called them.

Q. \*Mule bosses?

A. Mule bosses, the two men and they go down in the mines in the night or in the morning and they feed and curl the mule and harness him. If you're a driver and you grab your mule, your mule got the harness and everything on it. You turn him a loose in the morning and he go on in the stall and that's all you do to him. They night man would come pull the harness off him and feed and water him.

Q. \*Okay, so the mule driver didn't have to do that?

*ventilation*  
A. Oh no no. And they kept that clean and they'd shoot that stuff up on top like they do anything else and they kept it clean down there and the reason why it wouldn't no odor, see they have two entries. One it was called the air shaft and they have a great big fan on top. You've probably seen one, a great big fan that turn over and over. See that fan drives that air down in the mine and circle around and come out through that entry.

Q. \*Comes out the other way?

A. Yeah so that way it's just as cool down there as it is up here.

Q. \*So also it provided ventilation where if it had been closed up then obviously the odor would have built up or been a lot worst.

A. Yeah. Now that's the reason why after you go every, I think it's every 30 feet, you have to make a break through. But what a break through is you open a kind of a door, an opening like say from one room to another. That's where the air circulation. See air come in and go right on around the face and on out through this and on to the other place.

Q. And that's where you had the canvasses hanging in there to direct the air?

A. Yeah.

Q. You mentioned something a minute ago about the pillow. After you went through on the room and pillow<sup>ed</sup>, then did they try to go back and get the pillow out too?

A. That's what we'd be doing pulling pillows, yeah.

Q. You expected then or hoped that the timbers would hold up the roof while you took pillows out?

*Mining  
removing  
pillows*  
A. They did, they had to tell these timbers start popping and then they begin to get on out and leave it alone see.

Q. \*Okay, you continue to take the pillow out until the timbers couldn't hold up anymore and then you just got out?

A. You put your timber off \_\_\_\_\_ and you put them about 2 foot apart all the way through there.

Q. \*Was the job of pulling pillows, was that regarded as more dangerous maybe than some of the

A. Oh yeah.

Q. \*It was more dangerous than regular digging coal?

A. Yeah.

Q. \*Did you get more money for that then?

A. No, same amount of money, same amount of money. I had seen 3 rooms fall at once.

Q. Oh my.

*Accidents*  
A. Like I say, I was with my dad and my dad was pretty well educated and maybe a timber would jump clean out, like you do a \_\_\_\_\_ just jump clean out. My dad said son get the tools together. I said what's the matter. He said it's gone be a good one pretty soon. And pretty soon it said \_\_\_\_\_ like that you know. I was getting the tools. I wanted to see what happen because I was green. So we'd get them and put them in the car and we'd take out down to the entry and pretty soon you hear a big fall comes, see my dad grab me and lay down, that big fall comes and blow \_\_\_\_\_ over top of, and blow *Repdors* and everything. Any time two or three rooms, see like you drive them rooms in about 60 feet each one of them. And ain't got nothing in, nothing but just timbers in them three rooms. Them timbers don't mean nothing, but just out from under like that there.

Q. \*What did you particularly like about being a coal miner? Did you like

*mule drivers*  
A. Oh I liked it but I didn't know nothing else. I was raised up in the coal mines. And I like it but what I really liked about it was driving mules, for the simple reason that all youngsters, teenagers, he started to driving mules he thought he was a man. See you had a pad, you ware a pad around you and you had your whip you know, that means you're a man see then. Made the girls like you cause you were a man mule driver. See that made me feel big. Yeah and I started driving mule, you got to tell dad, I could be home when you get ready, go when they get ready, come when they get ready, they was a man they see. That's the only thing about it. But every young man, teeanage starts in the mine, that's his intention.

Q. \*To be a mule driver?

A. Be a mule driver. And to me it one of the dangerous jobs in there but that's his intention, to be a mule driver.

Q. Did the mules know the difference between a new man and an old man in the

*mule driver*

A. Oh yeah. I'll tell you an experience I had once. They had a mule they called Sam. Tommy Mitchell drove him. Tom Mitchell was off on a trip that day and I drove that mule till noon. Clyde Wright said to me, said man you're sure lucky. I said how's that? Said you drove Sam till noon. Say you know Sam don't let nobody drive him. And fear got in me. Before that I was just singing and whistling and driving and take a paddle and hit him you know and I went back to and start to get my tail chain and Sam looked back at me and took his foot and he done like that. I told him get over there Sam and he turned and he looked at me and he raised his foot. I couldn't drive no more that day.

Q. \*You couldn't drive him anymore? He just wouldn't go then?

A. I was scared of him.

Q. \*You were scared of him?

And he knew *it*.

A. And he knew it see but it stirred up fear in me, seen that fear in me. But at first I went on in the barn say you take Sam today. I went on in and got him you know and hit him and told him to get on out of here see and followed him on inside. Hooked him up with my head down and everything, wonder he had kicked me near knocked my brains out. But see I wouldn't scared but when he said that I got scared and that mule knew I was scared. So Clyde laughed and Clyde got off and give me his mule and got on the tail team and drove the rest of the afternoon.

#He was a mule driver too, Clyde?

Yeah he was a good one.

#That's my cousin in Waterloo.

Q. \*Oh right the one that

A. #Yes.

*Recreation*

Like I say, just like anything else, I was raised up with that and that's all I knew, it was a lot of fun. Get off work in the evening and played ball and go swimming and do things like that you know just all I knew. Tell you the truth if I knowed then what I know now I wouldn't work underground.

Q. \*You wouldn't work under ground?

A. No, indeed. I've had this fear since I've come out from under there, had the fear.

Q. \*So how old were you then, the last year you worked in the mine? You would have been in your twenties then?

A. Yeah I was in my early twenties I think, in 27 I think I just turned 20 or 21 I think. I just turned 20, no 21. When the mines closed I was 21.

Q. \*What did you do then after that?

*Heart  
John Deere  
money*

A. Well Johnny Jackson was a coal miner, and Harold Reasby was a trapper and so he'd just bought a brand new car and we decided to go to Waterloo. You see his folks was up there working at IC shops and my folks had moved to Waterloo and they worked        up there with the hotel places. We went to Waterloo and I started working at the packing house, the Ralph Packing Company. And I worked at Ralph Packing Company until 29 and I went out to John Deere cause I made more money.

Q. \*What did you do at the packing company then?

A. Well I started out packing house I was working in the sweet pickle cellar. What I was doing, grading ham down there.

Q. Grading ham?

A. Grading ham. See the ham run from 14 to

Side 2

A #Now I can remember, he said it was up by the cubbard. You know as you go for the tract and you go up to Coopertown. Now \_\_\_\_\_ it comes to me that white building setting there. Now what direction was the company store?

I don't know directions.

#That \_\_\_\_\_ me, I can't get it in my mine.

Q. You're talking about Buxton <sup>direction</sup>?

A. #Yes.

But I can come down from this way. You got your <sup>past</sup> office, and about a block from there, then about another block I'd say a block and a half was your pay office, what you call it the what's his name off, superintendent where you paid. What's the name of that office, White office I think they called it.

*Buildings downtown  
my office  
AK off  
white office*

Q. \*The White House.

A. The White Office, I think.

Q. \*The White Office.

A. Yeah.

Q. \*This was for the pay.

A. Yeah, where they pay. They took care of all the time and stuff over there. And across the track from there, a little old <sup>alley</sup> booth about big as for a jail and you cross the track coming back this way and then you have your coal <sup>shute</sup> where they send a car in there and they unload this coal down into this harper and then you had a car that come down from the coal <sup>shute</sup> come down and load that and then you had a machine that you start. What kind of machine was it, one of them there steam machine, what they call it, steam machine. And that pull that car up to the big TIPPLE up on top of the hill and dump that coal in there. Now the people that hauled coal they backed their wagon in there to get different kind, gut coal, slag or lump, 3 different <sup>shutes</sup>. If you will back up under there and they would pull that lever out and the coal would run down there and he'd shut it off. Now the people that hauled coal and different ones round through town there. Now the coal <sup>shute</sup>, they call it Coal Shute Hill, the <sup>shute</sup> is up on I imagine it was about 5 or 6 blocks from where the tracks went up the hill. And then over back from there was a little undertaker, parlor that place, undertaker parlor. Then along the side there inside the track you had call a lumber house where they had a little of everything, lumber sawdust and cement and different things like that. And you're going on down to the company store.

*also  
bus downtown*

#That's the way I remember it.

A. And then you leave the company store and you go on down to the warehouse. Now next to the company store was Armstrong's meat market. He had what you call a little wood sidewalk where you walk along going down and you go up the \_\_\_\_\_ to the meat market.

# \_\_\_\_\_ worked in the mines but I'm curious.

Q. No well we'll get back there too I think. Hucey what do you remember now that you're in Buxton itself, do you remember any lodge in Buxton? Too young maybe.

A. No I joined one. Mr. Calvin Thomas had me to join one they call Columbus Knights of Pythians I believe it was.

Q. The Pythians. How often did they meet? Once a month?

A. Once a month yeah. But I wasn't with them too awfully long before Buxton was closed down. I was with them short, oh maybe a year.

Q. You mentioned that you played ball, that you could come up out of the mine and then play a little baseball. We've heard a little bit about the Buxton Club. Did the Buxton Club

\*Buxton Wonders.

I mean, sorry, the Buxton Wonders, were they all miners?

A. All coal miners.

Q. They mined all day and then go play ball at night?

A. Uh huh.

Q. They must have had all kinds of strength.

A. They did. They go down practically every evening and they've played some awful good leagues. They beat the Whitesocks, they beat the Kansas City Monarchs.

Q. Where did they beat them at?

A. There at Buxton.

Q. They came to Buxton. The White Socks and the Kansas City Monarchs came to Buxton and got beat. That's interesting.

A. Down there right on 13th Street out there by Ruston's where Ruston's place is now. Where Ruston place out there. They had, they call it the Ruston Walnut Grove. All the walnut trees on the side.

#Is that out by Sharpe End.

No out by Tates, Tates Pond out there. Going toward old Bluff's Creek out in that way. Then when they moved from there they moved it down cross the track there beside the cemetery.

#I never went to it when it was down there, we always went out the other way.

Q. Who provided the uniforms? Did anybody help with that or

A. We had a manager, Ed Peterson was the manager and Bill Pearce he was his assistant or something. Now both of them was deputy sheriffs. Ed Petterson and Pierce both

Some

Lodge

Bill Pearce

Wonders

A. were deputy sheriffs. I think he's on one of them pictures that you got. He was the manager.

#That was the team before

The town furnished the uniforms I think.

Q. The town did.

A. Oh yeah.

Q. \*By the town you mean the company.

A. The company yeah. The company furnished all that stuff.

Q. And then they bought the baseballs and the bats and they maintained the park?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did they Buxton Wonders ever go anywhere else to play outside.

A. Oh yeah.

Q. Now who paid for them when they went out of town?

A. The company.

Q. The company would support them to go out and play baseball?

A. Oh yeah. One thing about the company, the company went out for baseball. They had it good round there.

Q. \*Why would the company do that, was this sort of public relations that they would do or?

A. Oh I don't know, I'd say that. I can say it this way that Buxton was about one of the best men I'd say the world's ever known.

Q. Ben Buxton.

A. Ben Buxton to anybody, I mean to Buxton, the people that worked in Buxton. You never wanted for nothing. You go in there if you want a suit of clothes. At that time they'd get a tailored made suit made for about \$30, the best. You ain't got to do nothing but go in there and say I want a suit of clothes. How you want to pay for it, 2 or 3 dollars a pay. That's every two weeks. Now if you need some money you go in there and old lady Christenson, she's one of the big wheels in the store there. If you want to borrow \$25 or 30 dollars and how you gone pay it back, a dollar and a half, 2 or 3 dollars every two weeks. You never wanted for nothing, your credit was good there. Old man Ben Buxton took care of Buxton.

Q. You'd call him a fair man then?

A. I'd say the's one of the best. He's one of the best.

Q. Did you ever hear of anything like a miner who maybe just came, who just got started and maybe was killed in the mine, did Ben Buxton see to it that he had a burial?

Co. Store  
Credit

A. Oh yeah.

Q. So if a guy was really down and out he'd take care of them too?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. \*Earlier you had said that your parents had moved to Waterloo, what did your father do then?

A. No, my father didn't move to Waterloo, I did.

Q. \*Oh you moved to Waterloo?

A. My father was gone then see when I moved.

Q. \*I see.

A. I missed that. My father died in 25.

Q. \*And you still would have been, would you still have been in the Buxton area then?

A. We lived in Haydah, <sup>o.k</sup> when my dad died and then they closed the mines next year in 26, no 2 years in 27. That's when I left and went to Waterloo. <sup>might be</sup> When the work <sup>o.k</sup> was <sup>o.k</sup> not when they first closed the mines I, generally like everybody, I hadn't been nowhere. I said well what I'm gonna do. Old man Dick Davis was          he said man as young as you is you better get the hell out of here and go to town somewhere and get you a job. He said I don't know where to go. He said go to Waterloo, any place down there. So guys going to Waterloo so I'm going to Waterloo with them see.

Q. \*So it was really just because your friends were going there in a way?

A. Yeah uh huh. I got there one day, went out the next morning and got a job.

Q. In the packing factory.

A. Packing house Rath

Q. You were obviously there and remember then, we were told that when Buxton as a town ended they just simply closed the mines and the store was left with some things in it and it wasn't you know that the mine went down they just, one year they just said we can't make it and closed Buxton and that was the end of it.

\*Yeah, what happened to the company store when the mines

A. Well now old man Dupree, now Old Buxton they moved that stuff out to Haydah. <sup>o.k</sup>

Q. \*They had already moved that. They'd moved it by then. They're out to 18 and 19 and places like that.

A. When Haydah closed down old man Dupree had a store there at Haydah and when Haydah closed down they bought that stuff out here to Wauke. He opened a store in Waukee, him and his son, Lucius. See Lucius was a butcher. The old man was the manager of the store and at that time he had a couple of women working for him, one by the name of Fern Ferguson and one by the name Ethel, I can't call her

might be

End Buxton

low Buxton

A. last name but he had a couple of women working for him. That old man he was the manager, he didn't do much of nothing just walk around in there. His son was the butcher. Then after he put up oil and thing why his son would take the mule team and oil around different people houses.

#Did Crookshank move his store to Des Moines?

I don't know, \_\_\_\_\_ where he went to. I lost track of him. When I went to Waterloo I lost of track of them. I don't know where they moved to. In fact I don't remember them up here at all since I come to Waterloo.

#I heard the name Crookshank around here but I don't know whether there's any connection.

Q. \*What happened to the YMCA building and the big company store in Buxton? What happened to those buildings when they moved all the houses away?

A. Tore them down.

Q. \*Tore them down.

A. They never did move anything like that out to the other place. Didn't have no Y out there. Ruben Gaines, I don't know where, he must have bought his lumber from Buxton because he built out of some old lumber. He built a great big cooler, oh I guess I'd say anyway it was a hundred foot long anyway. He had a upstairs and down. He had a dance hall upstairs and downstairs was the pool hall. Ruben Gaines had that put up out there. That was our recreation.

Q. \*This was at Buxton or this was?

A. At New Buxton, out to Haydah. That was recreation. We miners would go up there you know and they'd play cards and stuff like that and pool and stuff like that. But it wouldn't nothing like Old Buxton see you didn't have too many places to go like you did in Buxton.

Q. \*So how many of the miners would you estimate, how many of the families actually moved to Haydah would you estimate, half of the Buxton population moved or 3/4 of the population?

A. I'd say 3/4 of them I believe it was out there. Didn't too many of them leave Buxton and go elsewhere. The most of them went out there. There was a few of them left and went to Chicago and Milwaukee. I'd say 3/4 of the went to Haydah.

Q. Do you know if any of the people went from Haydah then out here to oh you just mentioned it.

A. Waukee.

Q. Waukee. Did any of them go there?

A. Yeah, I can name a few. There's George Karr, Art Francis, \_\_\_\_\_ and Tommy Mitchell and Dale Garland seems like can't get the rest of them

#Did Southall come from Buxton?

A. Yeah Southall went out there.

Q. Now they mined out there until about the thirties or forties.

A. Yeah in Waukee. But see I didn't stay out there too long. I was out there about 3 months. One morning it was 18 below zero. I was riding with Yale Garland, I didn't have no car of my own. He was picking us up at the depot on the east side that was Northwestern depot. He didn't pick us up that morning and so my brother-in-law he went and got some money and rode the train out to Waukee and walked to the mine. The mine was about 3 miles from town. I told him I said I ain't gone do no walking as cold as 18 below zero. So he said well why. I said well whether like this, I ain't got nobody but myself say when I eat my whole family done eat. So I go up town here and I got a job washing ears up at the Yellow Cab Garage, piece work and I done that and I went from garage to garage and then finally I left and went on back to Waterloo. We wouldn't making no money \_\_\_\_\_ I went back to the packing house and I stayed up there until 37 and I come back and been back here every since. Worked the packing house here until they closed.

Q. \*And what was the name of that company then?

A. What you mean the packing house.

Q. \*Here in Des Moines?

A. The packing house here?

Q. Un huh.

A. Swifts.

Q. Is that in where they call the Chesterfield area?

A. Yeah. I worked with them, I went there in 28, no 38, in 38 and they closed down the 9th day of June 1967.

Q. You remember a lot of labor strikes in Buxton? You mentioned that you had a union. Were there a lot of hard feelings or was is mainly okay we get a raise and things are pretty fair \_\_\_\_\_ Ben Buxton. Do you remember any really bad strikes or were there any in Buxton?

A. Yeah we had one bad one there. We was out practically all that winter. Old man John L. Lewis said told us not to go back. They was, what was it they wanted, I forget what we was getting a dollar, sixteen and ton I think and they wanted 1.21. We was out pretty near all the winter well we finally got it. They finally give us a raise. It was \$1.21 a ton for coal.

Q. 5¢

\*1.21.

From 1.16. 5¢ a ton.

\*Oh but that made a lot of difference?

A. Oh back in them days yeah.

Q. How many tons could you load out in a day?

*new  
found  
per  
week*  
A. Like I say if you could knock it down you could load, I seen one guy load as high as 14, 15 cars.

Q. Now how much in a car?

A. About a ton to a car.

Q. About a ton.

A. Ton cars.

Q. \*You figure so many days a week, that was quite a difference for all of them.

That'd be 75¢, 75¢ per day.

\*That was a lot of money.

A. We had one fellow, old man Jim Washington and Pete Moore, them two every two weeks it wouldn't nothing for them to draw 80, 90 or a hundred and something dollars every two weeks. They'd make more money than the company men would. The company **was** only getting 7.50 an hour, I mean not hour, a day. Trapper got \$4.00, all the company men got \$7.50 an hour.

Q. \*Was that **what** the mule driver got too?

A. Yeah.

Q. \*\$7.50.

A. The guys that was trapping and coupling and spragging, they paid them \$4.00 a day.

Q. \*I'd like to ask you some questions too Hucey just about, not so much about actual working in the mine but just sort of your general life in Buxton and some of the things you remember about oh the housing that you lived in that your family had and general social activities and kind of your general attitude when you comply that it was very good. At least you certainly feel very positive toward Ben Buxton and the kind of person he was. Was the whole experience of Buxton as you remember it all that positive?

*find  
Att  
Buxton  
relates  
Buxton*  
A. Uh huh. Everybody was happy go lucky. Everybody, nobody had no worries, no problems. Yeah but one thing about it you leave your house the windows open, the doors open and go on about your business, didn't nobody bother nothing. And I'll tell you another thing I loved about it. The holiday people just go from house to house carrying liquor and food and eating and just going around and they'd get together and they'd have dances, yard dances and things like that. Everybody mixed. Everybody was just like one, everybody was.

Q. \*What was the yard dance, was this in somebody's front yard, was this in an empty lot or?

*yard  
dances*  
A. Just in yards. Everybody had plenty yard and what they did, the ashes you took out of your stove, you spread them around in your yard and them when the big lumps, you get you a broom and sweep them lumps and it'd be like this floor and and we'd dance and play out there in the yard.

- A. #I don't ever remember any grass in the back yard cause mama always swept it out, clear out to the coal house.

*school*  
I'd tell you, you know something about my            I go back to my school life when I was at school we would enjoy school, everybody got along and we'd get out from school, we'd go home, we had our chores. See them little party cans just about that big around and stood about that high. Dad would bring them home from the mine and cut the top out of them and take a piece of old fuse and make holes and put handles on them, for handles. Now you had any~~where~~ from 10 to 15 of them you fill up every night and you had some lump coal about the size of that you put on top of that you see.

- Q. \*Oh you fill these cans up with the slack coal?

*daily lunch*  
A. Not too much slack, mostly little small lumps see. Now that would be for your kitchen stove. These big lumps was for your heater, for your dining room and your living room and you get your kindling and you got to go draw your water, had to draw the water like            got cistern water there. And we get that done then we'd ask our parents and we take off and go downtown to the Y and we'd            had recreation down like playing pool and you could box and you had them jumpers. Them jumping horses and things like that. We had movie picture show.

- Q. \*Kind of gymnastic types?

*recruit*  
A. Yeah. And we had shows about 3 nights a week there. We call them Talley            the Langloids, they called them tallies but they showed up early and the motor, they'd start that motor with gasoline, they had shows about 3 nights a week. And then they had a big dance hall there for people to dance in and they had a great big bandstand where they practice. They practiced about 2 or 3 nights during the summer months you know. Go up to the school house and sat out there in the shade or some place like that and just sat and visit, talk and play mumble peg you know we kids do things like that.

- Q. \*What was mumble peg?

A. Flap the knife.

- Q. Flip the knife. You've never played mumbly peg?

\*NO.

A. We kids used to do it. Now the parents they usually get together say about 5 or 6 of them, they'd be sitting somewhere around the shade tree, drinking their beer and home brew and stuff like that and talking about the mines, about I done this and that and you know that old place they give me down man ain't nothing but a whole lot of rocks and stuff like that. They'd be talking about things like that and discussing things like that. And we had a big reservoir and we could go swimming, fish and then in winter months

- Q. \*Did you do any hunting?

A. Oh yeah, hunting was good, see why hunting was so good down there they cut these trees down and pile up in these brush, and see rabbits stayed under the brush pile see. Get down and shake the brush and about 4 or 5 liable to come out from under there.            go hunting wouldn't nobody bother you down there. They didn't have no law, you hunt anytime you wanted.

Q. Did you eat a lot of rabbit as a kid?

A. Oh yeah. About every Sunday morning we had rabbit and fried potatoes and biscuits. That was our favorite for Sunday morning.

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Q. \*That was the favorite Sunday morning breakfast?

A. Yeah.

Q. \*Did your mother belong to any activities that met at the Y, any particular lodges or social groups?

social  
groups

A. Some kind of sewing club I think my mother used to attend quite a bit and she was quite a church goer. She was at church quite a bit. Wednesday night they'd have their prayer service last 2 or 3 hours and then Sunday in church all day Sunday they'd go to church, take their food and go to church and stay all day on Sunday.

church

Q. \*Now all day long?

A. On Sundays.

Q. \*Would it be like regular church in the morning where the minister would give a sermon?

A. Uh huh.

Q. \*And then what would be during the rest of the day?

A. They take the food and eat and just visit.

Q. \*Oh everybody would take the food and have a potluck dinner?

A. Yeah, uh huh.

Q. \*Would the afternoon be mainly visiting then?

A. Afterward they had a sermon in the afternoon. They'd have preaching in the afternoon.

Q. \*Would this at the baptist church or the methodist church?

A. Baptist church.

Q. \*Baptist church.

A. #They had BYPU, Baptist Young People Union.

Yeah, BYPU.

#That was before church in the evening.

Q. \*So you'd be there for that too then?

A. #Uh huh.

See we didn't have no fans like they got today \_\_\_\_\_ They'd set out \_\_\_\_\_ when the sun goes up on a certain side of the church be shade and everybody get their chair and sat round on that side around there until time to go back in.

Q. Do you remember any special kind of, oh Christmas and so on? Were there a lot of

Q. things that happened, did the company give you a turkey or any kind of a special?

*Company  
got  
4*

A. They gave something, but I don't remember what the company gave you. I don't know whether it was money or whatever but they got something, I forget. Oh yes I do too they had baskets. The company store had little small baskets, peanuts and candy and different things like that in it you get.

Q. That's fascinating. You told us that there weren't very many people that if you were really broke or hard pressed or something happened the company could, did anybody really get rich in the mine? The characters that made 90 or a hundred dollars a week, did they save it or spend it or did they work hard and blew hard?

A. I'd say that these two that I spoke about I think they saved a lot of theirs because they didn't live in no company house they lived in their own home and they had everything there you could think of, they had nice bank accounts. Old man Jim Durham, he's another fellow that made some good money. He bought him a big farm out there on #10, of course he had 14 children so I imagine.

Q. He needed every bit of that \$100 he could get.

\*His money went to support his family. Your family lived in company housing then?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. \*This is the regular what, like yours Dorothy 4 rooms.

*company*

A. #Outside, 5 to 6 rooms. We had 5 rooms.

I think 5 or 6 yeah. Most of them had 2 bedrooms up and 4 rooms down see.

#Ours had 3 rooms down and 2 up.

We had 2 up and 4 down.

#You had a 6 room house.

Yeah. Kitchen, a dining room and go to the front and go back into the bedrooms see.

#Our bedrooms 2 were upstairs.

*winterizing*

Q. Now would the company take care of these pretty well if they got, we've heard of some Italian miners said you could see daylight through the cracks in the wall the company houses were so bad. Were they that bad in Buxton?

A. Where I lived they weren't that bad. But in the winter, now what we had in the wintertime what you call these shutters you put on the north side of the house and at night you close them up and lock them from the inside. That'd keep the wind out. Then we used plastic quite a bit over the windows. Now it was pretty cold house. Down there in Old Buxton it got cold and stayed cold until along about March or April, about April around in there somewhere. What we'd do, they close the front up all together. They close that door up and turn around and put plastic over it. Now we done some chink it was pretty cold. We chink the windows with rags and things like that. We did a lot of that.

#Papa used to what they call chink.

Q. \*And this was with the rags?

A. #Yeah, all around the windows.

Q. So they wouldn't rattle I suppose.

A. #Yeah, keep the air out.

Keep the air out cause see all we had was coal stove see. Now you take this 6 room house, we had 3 stoves, the cook stove in the kitchen. They used to call them the monkey stoves, you all heard about that hadn't you?

Q. \*Yeah.

A. This was a monkey stove \_\_\_\_\_ well that'll be in the dining room. They had a great big stove in the living room. Well that one taken care of the bedroom and the living room and the hallway and upstairs see. They had little vents something like that that heat your upstairs.

#We had a stove upstairs, one in the kitchen, and one in the living room. Our dining room heated from the kitchen and the living room cause we never used it only on Sundays or holidays.

Q. With all those coal stoves were there any fires?

A. Oh yeah we had not too many, we had some but not too many.

Q. What happened when you had a fire, everybody ran like everything, volunteer department \_\_\_\_\_ everybody help everybody out.

A. Cause you had to draw water see so it was kind of rough. They had a little old, what that little old thing had a horse pulling that little old tank looking thing?

#I don't know, I don't remember seeing that.

They had a little old tank looking thing they'd get out there and pull \_\_\_\_\_

Q. Oh I remember those, yeah. Remember we saw them up in

A. 3 or 4 men be up

Q. 3 or 4 guys pumping and then you got a hose running off to the side.

A. But it wouldn't too many fires that I could remember. I'll say one thing about the \_\_\_\_\_ back in those days. The kids you know you jump out of bed and you put your long johns on and you run downstairs and stand behind the stove to dress.

Q. You bet, I remember that.

\*I sure do too. We had to do that too.

A. Go out there and chop a hole in the barrel and get your soft water.

# \_\_\_\_\_ the quilts would be so heavy you couldn't  
Couldn't turn over.

Q. \*You'd be tired from the heavy blanket..

A. #And I don't think they changed beds like they do now. I don't think they changed that winter blankets you slept in, double blanket \_\_\_\_\_

We done a lot of gardening, we gardened a lot. We raised practically everything.

Q. Raised most of what you had, and bought fresh milk from people you knew.

A. A lot of them had their own cows out there in the yard, chickens, hogs and things like that. We had chickens and we raised cabbage and tomatoes and potatoes and

*Good*  
A. beans. Let the beans dry, so many of them had dry beans and sweet potatoes raised all that stuff and corn.

Q. \*Did your mother do any work outside the house, taking any boarders or?

A. Oh no, she was at home all the time.

*Prime*  
Q. Well it sounds like it was, you mentioned something I hadn't even thought of before. You could leave your house open and go to town or go downtown and come back. I gather there wasn't much burglary or you didn't have to worry much.

A. I don't know of any. Now they might have had some, I don't know of any,  
#I don't ever remember seeing a key.

Q. In the whole county.

A. #No I don't remember a key.

Q. Shut the door and people would respect you.

A. #I can remember the black lock that sit kind of on the top of the door but I don't remember mama ever using a key.

Some of us, me and my cousin, see his dad was a night watchman down at the store course he was in the mine but in the summertime they wouldn't work in the mine, he was a night watchman there so his boy had a chance to drive a grocery wagon, him and I worked together. People order grocery, we'd got to their house. Take 5 gallon kerosene sitting on the porch outdoors. Carry the groceries in, take them out of the crates and sit them on the table and go on about our business, wouldn't be nobody there.

Q. Wouldn't be anybody there?

\*You mean just walk in the house and put them down and leave them?

A. They had them crates, them wood crates where they could fold them together see and we'd go in there and sit the stuff on the table and go on about our business.

Q. And the night watchman was mainly for fire or something like that? He wouldn't there because somebody was gonna break in or break the place apart?

A. No.

Q. Sure different today.

\*It sure is.

A. If somebody get drunk or drunk like that he'd send him home but \_\_\_\_\_ went down and put him in the calley group till the next morning he sober up and then they'd let him go home. *CALLY GROUP*

Q. And there wouldn't be any court or any of that kind of thing?

A. Oh no.

Q. You'd put him in there and keep him, let him sober it up.

\*Do you remember oh not violence really but oh very much roudiness or a lot of loud parties or oh some of the things that's been written about Buxton being applied that it was a wild community and a lot of fights and a lot of brawls and things like that. Do you remember much of that?

*mine*  
A. There were quite a few fights but they wouldn't like they was today. They was fist fights and **when the best man win** they shake hands and go on to drinking.

Q. And go back in the mine if that's what they're doing?

A. Yeah. But there was some killings down there but not too much. It was mostly over women or something like that. There was several killings down there by a man about his wife or something like that. I remember about 3 down there during my time. A guy got stabbed not too far from where we lived. A guy was waiting for him and told him to leave his wife alone and he wouldn't and so he \_\_\_\_\_ the guy was drunk going down through a little ravine and he come out of the tree and stabbed him. He fell on a rock and died. Then there was, you might remember, a guy got killed in the company store. Told this man \_\_\_\_\_ what he was gone to do him, found out his \_\_\_\_\_ went to the company store and bought him a brand new 12 gauged shotgun and a box of shells and put them in there and walked up and called the man's name and blowed him away. But like I said now it wouldn't too much of that but that was 3 or 4 of things like that. But mostly it was just fights. The best man win and they go ahead on.

Q. The kids got along, there wouldn't all kinds of. Was there a high school, well grade school teams or anything? Now you get East High fighting West High. Did you have any of that kind of?

A. 11th Street and 5th Street used to fight quite a bit.

*Schools*  
Q. \*These were the two schools?

A. Yeah, 11th and 5th. My mine was 11th and 5th Street was down by the water tank. We used to fight quite a bit. In fact if we went down to the Y we had to have them out numbered or fight going down there.

Q. \*How many years did you go to school then?

A. Well I went to school until I was, I got kicked out.

Q. Oh dear.

A. I got kicked out when I was 14. At White City Seven, what I had did, we had a \_\_\_\_\_ arguing, I don't know what he said let's do, I had no better sense than go and do it. So we went and killed a great big old bull snake, it must have been about 5 or 6 foot long. Took this bull snake to the door and wrapped it around like that and layed his head over like that with his fang out and knocked on the door.

Q. \*You put this in the door of the school?

A. Yeah, the teacher come out there you see and seen it and passed out and it took three hours to bring her to.

Q. \*And you were about 8th grade then?

A. Yeah, that was in the 8th

Q. \*And took three hours to bring her back.

A. So I got messed my dad told me if you don't go to school you go to work. Dad went and got me a job working in the mine.

Q. Were you there when the high school burned?

A. Yeah.

Q. It was only there for about a year or so and then it burned down?

A. #You remember when it burned, the high school?

A. Yeah.

#I can't remember. I can remember a fire but I do remember the boiler room in the back. It stayed there I guess until Buxton moved out.

Yeah it did. But see at Buxton we had a whole lot of different, you probably heard all that. We had East Swede, you got Swedetown, East Swedetown, you had Coopertown, you had Gainestown, you had the Sharpe End, you heard about all that hadn't you?

Q. We've heard some about it yeah.

\*Just that they were there, not too much about them.

A. Well at one time Buxton was known as a little race horse town too. What I mean you know, what they call them two wheelers.

Q. Oh sulky

A. Now Emory Green and there was Ruben Gaines, I know Emory Green was one and another fellow, B.F. Cooper, they used to Albia with them horses to run races.

Q. \*I was reading just the other day in some newspaper article on Albia that there was an innerurban between Albia and Buxton, an inner urban train. You remember that?

A. I can't remember that.

#My cousin has a postcard with a streetcar on Main Street but then there was no streetcar in Buxton. She said as long as she can remember, and she's 80, you know Jeanette, she said she don't ever remember seeing a streetcar but they were talking about running a track. She said she never remember it.

Q. Doesn't remember it?

A. #That was just a picture, I think she showed it to you.

Q. Yeah.

A. They run a hack.

#Yeah Ross had a hack.

They run a hack from Buxton to Albia.

Q. \*That wouldn't have been too many miles would it?

A. I think Albia was 13 miles from Buxton.

#Well how far was Hamilton from Buxton?

Couldn't be over 5 or 6 miles at the most.

#Well I know we went from Buxton in the hack to Hamilton to catch a train to come to Des Moines.

A. Hamilton ain't that far, it's only. It was 6 miles to Lavilla. Hamilton was way beside Lavilla.

#It seems so far you know.

Coming to Des Moines from Buxton you went to Hamilton, no Bussey, a little town called Bussey. But Hamilton was oh maybe one or 2 houses there but Bussey was a pretty good little town yet.

#We went from Buxton to Hamilton, the hack had a stove in the middle, a little stove and the seats were on the side. Things like that now is dangerous.

Q. \*Yeah you really wonder.

You tip it over or then it was probably a kerosene stove on top of it and all that.

A. #A little coal stove.

We had about 2 big shots there in Buxton, Ruben Gaines and B.F. Cooper. Both of them drove cadillacs.

Q. Oh really?

A. They drove them old timers where they had the top built there \_\_\_\_\_ had the brass radiators on it and your gear sit right on the fender.

Q. \*Did most other families have cars in Buxton?

A. \_\_\_\_\_ you count all the people that had, now Reasby had a car, the Smith boys had cars and Armstrong, old man White and all them big shots like that.

#Mr. Rivers, do you remember Mr. Rivers? And Sam Taylor, he had a car. Wouldn't too many black had cars around there at that time.

Q. \*And they wouldn't drive their cars to work at all, they'd still take the train?

A. They'd take the train yeah.

Q. \*And the car was maybe for social hour?

A. That old Model T was what they had, \_\_\_\_\_ Model T.

Q. \*One other question Hucey I'd like to ask you. It might sound like kind of a strange question but one of the things when people look at Buxton, they always express surprise that at that time that there was a community where there wasn't racial discrimination. I mean you know in most places in the United States in 1910, and 1915 and 1920, it was all segregated. You know blacks lived in one part and whites lived in another part and Elmer and I in talking to a lot of people you know and mentioning this, our impression has been that discrimination didn't exist in Buxton and this is your remembrance that whites and blacks were intermingled and that you attended activities at the Y together and worked in the mine together. That there wasn't this conscious effort to separate.

A. We went to school together, we played together, we swim together and back in those days we swim just like we come in the world.

Q. \*You what?

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ccc

A. Swim just like we come in the world, swim in the nude. That's the way we'd do. All the girls would turn their back till we'd get in. We'd turn our back till they get in. That's the way we used to do.

Q. \*I see.

RR

A. And where I lived on 13th Street, there was a Slavish kid lived next door to me and I slept at his house and ate and he slept and ate at mine. We were mixed up different. It wouldn't just black and white, we were all mixed up like that.

Q. \*Through the houses?

A. #And children the same.

Yeah and everywhere we went.

Q. Dances?

A. Wouldn't no segregation there at all. Everybody was the same.

Q. Then that leads to the next question. With that kind of mixture was very different as Dorothy, was there a lot of dating of whites and blacks when they got up into the teens?

mmmm

A. I don't think so.

Q. You played together and lived together and interacted together but when it came to dating and getting serious then it didn't happen?

A. I had a girl that sat in front of me, Elsie Joevide, you know we used to call her boyfriend and she was my girlfriend and things like that but it didn't go no further than that you know. I'd walk her home and carry her books. She lived on a little folk no further than that you know, we wouldn't serious or nothing. And I don't think it was too much intermarrying at the time.

#That's why I don't remember.

I don't remember.

#I don't remember in those days either.

Q. We haven't heard about a lot of them.

A. Now there might have been but I don't know of any.

#I can't name of anyone I know in Buxton.

Yes I do know one. A tall white fellow married a short black woman by the name of Spike, Sally, and Spike or something like that. They moved to Cedar Rapids.

#I knew there was quite a bit when we were in Cedar Rapids.

This was in the later years. This was as Buxton was closing up they did but during the early part of Buxton I don't remember anything like that.

Have to move

Q. \*I know, one other question I can ask and maybe you mentioned this earlier and I didn't catch it when they moved a lot of these houses out of Buxton to Haydak, about what year was that?

A. It was in the 20's. I'd say between, now just roughly guessing around somewhere between 1919 and 21 I think, just roughly guessing now I don't know.

#It must have been a little after in 1919 cause grandma was living. She died in 1919 and Buxton was still camp then but later on when I go back to visit Aunt Mary they were moving. I don't know about the houses but they were working on Haydah. They had a high school or something out there they was building.

See I had moved and living in 19 I know they was moving them out there because I knew a fellow, a great big old fellow he never worked before in his life, he used to gamble all the time, Daddy Red you heard of him.

#Yeah I remember him.

Cause I know he was working on helping unload and like I say they moved them in sections. They was putting them up like flies. That's the reason why a lot of them was so cold.

Q. \*They put them on the flat bed of the railroad cars then to move ' them?

A. Sat them inside of a car, boxcar.

Q. \*Boxcar. And what kind of a foundation would they put on them?

A. Just a regular foundation, there's no basement just a regular foundation. Some places they had your back oh I imagine sat about 4 or 5 feet up in the air.

#What was on the foundations then?

Q. Brick, or rock?

A. I think they had bricks.

#I didn't remember if our back door went level with the ground and the front door you had to go down the steps and we went under the house on the side.

Ours was the same way \_\_\_\_\_ brick or rock I forgot what it was. Brick I believe it was. And there was some places that didn't have nothing but just timber on them, just posts. Put a house anywhere you wanted and people themselves bought straw, balls of straw and put around them for the winter you know. Then summer come they'd take them out and stack them up. Now that's I said out to Haydah.

Q. \*Somebody was telling me the other day about company housing, not in Iowa but for I think a steel company back in Pennsylvania and they said that one of the things that people hated so was that every house had a big number on it. But I've never heard that. I take it that they didn't have that in Buxton, they didn't number the houses as such or not paint the number on the side of the house.

A. #They were numbered but I don't remember seeing the number \_\_\_\_\_

Q. You all went to the post office for your mail?

A. #Un huh,

Some of those houses were moved by tractors too, them old time tractors. Some of them were moved by tractors. But they just get right up in the \_\_\_\_\_ was 2 or 3 tractors. But they moved the most of them by train.

#You know you asked me something about one night that the Y was turned over to the white people, was that what you asked me?

Yeah.

CC  
A. #Well I've been thinking, I don't ever, myself I don't remember unless it could have been the lodge meeting cause that's one thing that the white and blacks didn't mix in lodges.

Q. The churches would gather separately too, the churches and lodges.

A. #Well some of them come to the churches but they usually had their own churches. But I don't remember unless it was lodge meeting cause everything we went to they were you know be all together.

Would you say there was more black in Buxton than there was white?

#I think so, I would say so.

Just a few more, not no whole lot, I believe it was a few.

PP  
#Because the more that you'd see out but I don't know. Some people didn't you know go out too much like it is now. But there was more blacks out than there was white when you go out.

And some of them had their own places

Q. \*They owned their own?

A. Brown's and \_\_\_\_\_