Recollections: Life in South Carolina Mill Villages

Thomas Hudson Cartledge
*Clemson University, tcartledge417@gmail.com*

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all_theses

**Recommended Citation**

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.
RECOLLECTIONS: LIFE IN SOUTH CAROLINA MILL VILLAGES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
Thomas Hudson Cartledge III
December 2019

Accepted by:
Dr. H. Roger Grant, Committee Chair
Dr. Pamela Mack
Dr. Alan Grubb
ABSTRACT

The rise of the textile industry in the 20th century was a significant contributor to the economy of South Carolina. In order to attract and retain critically needed labor, mill owners provided affordable housing by building villages in which workers and their families could live and from which workers could easily reach the mills. The physical conditions of these villages is well documented; however, there has been little or no documentation of the daily lives of the people who inhabited those villages. Since most of the residents are reaching advanced age, this gap must be filled promptly.

This research involved a series of eighteen interviews with individuals who had lived in the villages associated with four Anderson County, South Carolina, mills. Ten were mill employees, and eight were children or other relatives of mill workers. Interviews were based on a set of standard questions to promote consistency. Participants described their recollections of family life, food, clothing, religion, health care, education, discipline, and other topics.

The research found that, despite physically demanding work, hardship conditions, and material scarcity, the village residents were happy. Several said that it had been the happiest time of their lives. They expressed gratitude that they had lived there at that time. The research also found that, while there were observable physical differences between the two rural-area mills and the two town-based mills, location had little impact on the experience of the survey participants as far as contentment, family life, food, clothing, and other factors. In the mill villages, they made more than textiles—they made a strong, mutually supportive, emotionally rewarding community.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family—especially to Lesbeth Hitt Cartledge, my wife of 55 years and my friend for at least 63—and my two daughters, Shell Cartledge Roufail and Megan Cartledge Tarbert.

It is also dedicated to Nell Sigman, who said: “You don’t have to be famous for your life to be history.”

—Nell Sigman to Jacqueline Hall, et al., quoted in Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton World, 1979

Thomas H. Cartledge III
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the time and contributions of the eighteen people who agreed to meet with me and share their recollections. This research would be an empty vessel without their memories.

I also acknowledge and thank my faculty advisors H. Roger Grant, PhD, Pamela E. Mack, Ph.D., and C. Alan Grubb, Ph.D., for their advice and support throughout my studies, as well as Paul Christopher Anderson, Ph.D., for allowing me to be a part of Clemson University.

Finally, I thank my wife Les for her forbearance in reading several drafts; my good friends and confidants Kathleen M. Bennett (whose advice and assistance was immeasurable) and Jim Ramsey (for technical support), as well as Stacey Pydynkowski, who transcribed well over twenty hours of interviews, and Allie R. Cobb, for her assistance in formatting and preparation of the final manuscript. And I thank my extended family for their constant support and well wishes.

T. H. C.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the Southern Textile Industry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of the Industry into the United States</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers of Industry Migration to the South</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Availability and Treatment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges in the South</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Method</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. MILL VILLAGE LIFE: FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Life</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mill Village</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FOOD AND CLOTHING</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. EDUCATION AND DISCIPLINE</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RELIGION</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. HOUSING</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CITY VILLAGES AND COUNTRY VILLAGES</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguishing Factors</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. DECLINE OF THE INDUSTRY—AND OF THE MILL VILLAGES</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY THE AUTHOR.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHED MATERIALS</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Description of the Mills</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: List of Interview Subjects</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: List of Questions Asked</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Sample Page Showing Data Sort</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Interview Transcripts</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe E. Atkin and Annie Mae Knox</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby McCullough Brown</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly Keasler Crawford</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos Calvin Daniel</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Marshal Daniel</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurman Arthur Higgins</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Gary Jordan</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Barrett Metcalfe, Ann Yeargin Roberts, Marie Partain</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earl Lollis Meyers</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roxie Juliette Rollins Moore</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margene Cole Murdock</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscoe Melvin Powell</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claud Eugene (Smiley) Powell</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Marsell Shaw</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Floyd Stansell, Jr.</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Interview Consent and Release Forms</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Numerous books have been written about why and how the textile industry came to the southern Piedmont area and about how mill villages were built to house workers and what those villages contained. The book *Like a Family*, a collaborative effort by five University of North Carolina students headed by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, has long been considered the “Bible” of life in a mill village. As well researched as it is, it leaves short the voices of those who lived there as far as their home life is concerned. *Like a Family* and most mill literature focuses on the physical aspects of life in a mill community—its churches, schools, sports venues and working conditions. It leaves a large gap in documenting the everyday life of people whose labor and families were critical to the development of the Southern Piedmont area.

This research will begin to fill that gap through the primary source of the oral history of those who lived it. The purpose of this thesis is to create a micro-history describing everyday life in four textile mill villages in Anderson County, South Carolina. This research allows the residents to tell their stories of how they lived, where they came from, what they ate, what clothing they wore, where they slept—what their lives were really like, expressed in their own vernacular and dialect.

This study focuses on village life in different sites within the boundaries of Anderson County South Carolina: Appleton Mill (in the city limits of Anderson); Gluck Mill (on the outskirts of Anderson in an unincorporated township called Homeland Park);

---

and two rural mills—Jackson Mill in Iva, and Chiquola Mill in Honea Path. Two city mills and two rural mills were chosen to determine whether there were differences and similarities in the experiences of their respective village inhabitants.

These people built the southern textile-based economy and shaped the Southern culture as it developed in the 20th century. By now, most of the mill workers have died; only a few remain. They and their children are the last witnesses to this important contribution to the development of South Carolina. It is important to capture their witness before it is no longer accessible.

**Development of the Southern Textile Industry**

**Introduction of the Industry into the United States**

Textiles have been in use for millennia. Industrialization of the industry occurred during the 18th century, A.D. In 1764, Thorp Mill, the first water-powered cotton mill in the world, was constructed along both sides of the Pennines River in Lancashire, England. Great Britain became world-famous for its thriving textile industry in which the American South later played a major role. Great Britain was also famous for its proprietary laws and went to extreme measures to protect its mill operations, designs and techniques. It was against the law for a textile developer to leave the country without permission. Anyone caught stealing trade secrets would be placed in the darkest dungeon, never to be seen again. In spite of the penalty if caught, a British textile apprentice named Samuel Slater committed mill techniques to memory, disguised himself as a deckhand,

---

slipped past port authorities, and sailed to America to seek fame and fortune. He is reported to be one of America’s most famous intellectual property pirates. However, according to his biographer, the American factory system that emerged under his guidance represented an adaptation, not a carbon-copy of his British experience. He is considered to be the father of the American textile industry and began production in 1790.

Slater constructed the first U.S. textile mill on the banks of the Pawtucket River in Rhode Island using a renewable power source: kinetic energy from falling water. Even though his early efforts were modest, by the early 1900s New England had developed into one of the most successful textile manufacturing centers in the country. America’s first large-scale textile complex was built in Lowell, Massachusetts, along the 30-foot falls of the Merrimack River. Numerous textile mills sprouted in the Northeastern states for three primary reasons: abundant financial capital that could be invested in mills; numerous rivers and streams with fast-flowing water that could be harnessed for power; and easy access to the ocean to facilitate trade. Textile manufacturing became the most important industry in America during the pre-Civil War period.

Shortage of labor was a challenge at this time. Lowell addressed the problem by hiring primarily young, single women, ages 15-35, whom he fed and housed in

---

7 Green, *The Company Town*, 9-10.
dormitories he constructed on site, with a matron placed in charge of each. This became known as the Lowell System. It provided a weekly cash paycheck, free room and board, and an opportunity to experience life in the city.\textsuperscript{8} The Lowell System was perhaps the inspiration of the creation of company housing when the industry later moved to the South.

\textit{Drivers of Industry Migration to the South}

After years of operation, New England mill owners faced several daunting problems: outdated machinery, dwindling workforce, lack of expansion possibilities, high cost of shipping product and—most challenging of all—textile unions. New England textile mills were almost totally unionized by the mid-1940s. As a result, high wages, constant union conflicts, and outdated equipment spawned a slow migration of the northern textile mills southward. Savvy entrepreneurs quickly caught on to the idea that building mills in the South made more economic sense.

The slogan “Bring the Cotton Mills to the Cotton Fields” sparked a generation of mill-builders and ignited progression to the South. An ideal southern location would provide the availability of four primary resources: raw materials, water, railroads and labor. The southern Piedmont area (the part of the Piedmont plateau that runs between the Appalachian Mountains and the coastal Atlantic plains and extends from New York to northeastern Alabama) met all four criteria. Numerous rivers and streams crisscrossed the

area; existing railroads could be lengthened; labor and raw materials were virtually next door.9

Railroads played a major part in the development of textile mills in upstate South Carolina. Expanded railroads combined with better roads mitigated the necessity of building mills adjacent to flowing water, for they could be placed practically anywhere. No longer were mills dependent on flowing rivers to create hydropower. Coal from the Appalachian Mountains was transported to mills for steam generation. Railroads rather than watercraft brought raw materials to the mills and facilitated shipment of finished product to wider cotton markets in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.10

Labor Availability and Treatment

The South was slow to unionize—not until the early 1900s were unions a factor in that part of the country. Textile mills easily exploited the abundant supply of relatively

9 Green, The Company Town, 96.
10 Southern Labor Archives: Work in Progress-Lessons and Stories: Part III: The Southern Textile Industry, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta, Georgia.
low-wage labor as workers drifted in from agriculture to industry. Many farmers as well as “mountain folk” from Southern Appalachia succumbed to the allure of steady wages. They viewed mill work as a means of keeping their families intact.

The Southern textile industry relied in large part on the labor of children. Between 1880 and 1910, roughly a quarter of all textile workers were under the age of 16. Even after the passage of child labor laws early in the 20th century, 12- and 13-year-olds continued to work in the mills. Entering the factory on or just after one’s 14th birthday (according to law) was a boy’s or girl’s principal rite of passage in the Piedmont mill villages.11

I was eleven years old when I went to work in the mill. They learnt me to knit. Well, I was so little that they had to build me a box to get up on to put the sock in the machine. I worked in the hosiery mill for a long time and, well, then we finally moved back to the country. But me and my sister Molly finally went back up there in 1910 and I went to work in the silk mill. Molly went to work in the hosiery mill. We worked twelve hours a day for fifty cents. When paydays come around, I drawed three dollars. That was for six days, seventy-two hours. I remember I lacked fifty cents having enough to pay my board.12

— Bertha Miller, Thomasville, North Carolina

The typical young operative was a dependent of adults who came to the mill village because they needed to put members of the family to work to make ends meet. To ensure a steady supply of labor, some mills required employment contracts to be signed by the whole family rather than by individuals. Workers (who preferred to be called operatives) were paid weekly with company coins redeemable only at the company store.

At the turn of the century, ninety-two percent of all mill workers lived in company housing. Villages with housing and other amenities were crucial to attract and retain workers, especially when mills were located in isolated areas.

The textile industry of the South became a “white domain”; laws in some states did not allow blacks and whites to work in the same room. Black women were not allowed to work in the mill at all. Black men, however, did perform the heavy lifting

---

outdoors and only janitorial services indoors. Housing for blacks, if available at all, was usually on the other side of the tracks.\textsuperscript{14}

Most operatives worked 10 to 12 hours per day, 6 days per week. The 40-hour work week was not implemented until 1940. Jobs held by white men paid the most, followed by white women, blacks, and then children. An average rate of pay was between four and seven dollars a week. In an effort to curb costs and preserve profits during the declining economic conditions of the 1920s, mill superintendents tried to get more work out of fewer workers, resulting in a phenomenon that workers called the “stretch-out.” Conditions deteriorated as mill owners opted to discontinue funding community improvements. Housing and other facilities were allowed to deteriorate.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Challenges in the South}

A major problem facing otherwise ideal mill locations was isolation. The ideal locations were mostly rural, making procurement of manpower a serious challenge. The solution was to locate the mill in a choice location and build housing for potential workers. As in the baseball movie \textit{Field of Dreams} (“Build it and They Will Come”), owners built housing and laborers came. Labor poured in from three primary sources: farmers (both tenant and sharecroppers); Sand Hillers (considered to be local “white trash”); and coal miners from southern Appalachia (considered to be “lawless” individuals”). All were seeking a steady paycheck, a roof over their head, three meals a

\textsuperscript{14} Hall, \textit{Like a Family}, 98.
day, and a better life for their families. It had been all they could do to eke out an existence for themselves and their loved ones, so they went to the cotton mills where they would receive pay with clock-like regularity. When southern farmers left behind their mules and plows and independence to earn an hourly cash wage in a cotton mill, they called it “public work.”

William Gregg built the first South Carolina cotton mill in 1849, at Graniteville in Aiken County. He had toured the large-scale textile mills of New England and became inspired to develop similar mills in the South. When completed, Graniteville mill had a village with a school, a store, and a church. The mill survived the Civil War, the Great Depression and numerous owners, continuing operation until 2006. It had operated for over 150 years, only to fall prey to foreign competition.

Following Gregg’s impetus, cotton mills began to spring up all over Upstate South Carolina in the early twentieth century. The early mills were naturally built adjacent to rivers or streams but, as railroads expanded and better roads were built, mills could be placed practically anywhere. Railroads brought coal from the Appalachian Mountains to mills for steam generation, negating the necessity of abutting flowing water.

Retaining and enabling labor was a significant concern. Workers needed affordable housing and lacked public or private vehicles for transportation. Accordingly, mill owners

built villages of homes so that workers and their families would have a place to live and a means to reach the mills. It is life in these villages that this research project has addressed.

**Research Method**

The textile mill workers and their family members who lived in the mill villages are now of advanced age, so obtaining their first-person recollections while they are still able to provide them is a matter of some urgency.

An initial challenge was to locate such residents of the mill community. I began by attending meetings of the “Linheads,” a group of local people who have lived in mill villages. The name “Linhead” was originally a pejorative term but was later enthusiastically adopted by people proud to be living and working there. According to an article by Jennifer Crossley Howard in the *Anderson Independent-Mail*, April 14, 2012, J. L. Gaillard, long-time employee of Courtenay Manufacturing Company and resident of Newry near Seneca, S.C., said, “The President of the United States could call me a Linhead. I wouldn’t care.” Today, a group of Linheads meets on the first Tuesday of every month.

---

Photo by Lew Wickes Hines, Library of Congress.

The Linthead roster just a few years ago included 65 people. The meeting I attended in October 2019 showed just 17. Since most of the workers—happily, not quite all—are now deceased, I included the children of workers who grew up in the villages. The average age of survey participants is 80 years.

Through word of mouth, the Linheads as well as friends and neighbors helped to put me in touch with surviving mill villagers and their family members. Armed with the first name from each village, I was able to grow the list. I chose village residents from four mill communities—two in towns, and two in rural areas, all in Anderson County.

The mills are Appleton Mill in Anderson; Chiquola Mill in Honea Path; Gluck Mill in Homeland Park; and Jackson Mill in Iva. Please see Appendix A for a brief description of the four mills.
Eventually, I was able to conduct 18 interviews, comprised of eleven men and seven women—ten mill workers and eight family members. Meetings took place in their homes, in churches, and restaurants, or wherever people felt comfortable. In most cases, they were individual interviews; in some cases, more than one resident participated. Each person interviewed signed a Consent for Participation form allowing their comments to be recorded, transcribed, and archived at Clemson University libraries (Appendix F).

![Anderson County map showing mill locations, railroads, and rivers](image)

[Note: The Abney Mill was formerly known as Appleton Mill]. *Diagram by T. H. Cartledge, based on ArcGIS.*

To promote consistency, I conducted each interview using a standard set of questions (Appendix C). Interviews were recorded on location, using a Zoom H1n recording device. They were then transcribed, and the transcripts are appended (Appendix E). Results were reviewed to select the most significant or vivid comments.
These were then categorized by topic, entered into an Excel spreadsheet, and reviewed as a body (see a sample of this method at Appendix D).
CHAPTER ONE
MILL VILLAGE LIFE: FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

Mill Life

*The Mill Village*

Mill owners desperately needed workers. Workers needed three things: A roof over their heads, three meals a day, and a steady paycheck. With these things they could be together and survive as families. The mills provided those requirements.

Mom said the second year, it was bad. So she had an uncle that lived on the mill village in Iva. Well, he came to Royston and moved them here, so my granny and my aunt could get a job at Jackson Mill, so the family would have a way to survive.21 – *Shelby McCullough Brown, Jackson Mill*

My dad had no education. He never went to school. My mom had a 4th-grade education, and I remember her reading the paper to him every morning. Mother worked at the mill. My dad’s dad was a sharecropper. That’s the reason they came to the mill village—to make money.22

– *Calvin Daniel, Appleton Mill*

My mother’s daddy, he was raised in Rabbittown [near Gainesville], Georgia, and he walked out of Georgia all the way over to South Carolina when he was about 14-15 years old wanting a job. There wasn’t no textile mill or nothing then.23

– *Tommy Shaw, Chiquola Mill*

Mill owners created the villages as a way of providing affordable housing to sustain their workforces.

---

21 Shelby McCullough Brown (Jackson Mill worker), in an interview with the author, July 16, 2019, Appendix E, 99.
22 Amos Calvin Daniel (Appleton Mill worker), in an interview with the author, October 1, 2019, Appendix E, 125.
23 Tommy Marsell Shaw (Chiquola Mill worker), in an interview with the author, August 15, 2019, Appendix E, 278.
As a result, there was a symbiotic relationship between the mill and the mill village. The mill and the village were inseparable in that way, and both benefited from the other.

Being on the mill village, I loved living right in front of the mill because it was always running, except for one week of the year, and that week it was so quiet, I could actually hear crickets and other things that I don’t normally hear, so that whole week I didn’t sleep very well because that would just lull me to sleep every night. And just seeing the people, just seeing them go in and out of the doors and sitting on those large steps that they had. Eating their lunch. Leaving for one shift to the other. It was just always busy. It was just a fun time there. I just loved living on the mill village. I loved my neighbors, I loved my friends, and we just had a wonderful life there. I won’t ever forget it. It was a special time in my life.24

– Beverly Crawford, Chiquola Mill villager

Villages were a family of families—people who learned to enjoy each other, work with each other, creating the mutual caring that is the true essence of a community. They had come from the cotton fields, farms and mines seeking basic security, but found much more than that. In the process, they formed a supportive, sustaining network that enabled them to find happiness—joy, even—despite deprivation. They found and fostered a larger family that they would not have known existed.

24Beverly Keasler Crawford (Chiquola Mill villager), in an interview with the author, August 7, 2019, Appendix E, 108.
I loved it. I loved it. It was like everybody was kin to you, and it’s hard to explain if you never lived it. It was like a commune or something. I mean, you could go to anybody’s house and get something to eat if you wanted. If they were eating and you were there, you’d just sit down and eat with them. They’d ask you to sit down. I thought it was magical.25 – Margene Murdock, Appleton Mill

Residents felt blessed to have been there. Asked whether mill village life had prepared them for life, they were unanimous. “It prepared you for hard knocks and things that was coming down the road. Because it was a hard life,” commented Tommy Shaw, Chiquola mill.26

[Most valuable lesson I ever learned?] Maybe just accepting life the way it is instead of ... You know, because back then, like I said, we were poor, and we didn't know it. ... We didn't blame somebody else because we were living in the mill.27 – Roscoe Powell, Jackson Mill

26 Interview with Tommy Marsell Shaw, 289.
27 Roscoe Melvin Powell (Jackson Mill villager), in an interview with the author, July 16, 2019, Appendix E, 254.
Family

As mentioned above, one of the primary reasons that workers came from the cotton fields and the coal mines was to keep their families together under one roof. The family was the most important aspect of life in the mill village. They didn’t have much, but they had each other, and they counted on each other.

[An important lesson I learned?] That no matter what you have, no matter how small, no matter what you have, family and the love of family is the most important and the most valuable thing that you can take with you the rest of your life. The work ethic, the knowing that your father worked hard for your family. Your mom. Knowing that there are people around that you can call on anytime you need to. Your neighbors.28 – Beverly Crawford, Chiquola Mill villager

Interview subjects recognized and appreciated the challenges their parents had faced and were typically proud of them. For example, here is what Margene Murdock said about her father: “He was a loom fixer, and then he was, I guess you call it, a millwright, although he only had a third-grade education. He went through third grade, but he could out-figure you and me.”

A number of women reported particular closeness to their fathers. Not a single person said that there was conflict in the family. The closeness of daughters to their fathers, and sons for their mothers, was noticeable and touching. Floyd (“Frog”) Stansell always helped support his mother and the rest of the 12 children; he commented that, though his brother never paid as much, he never resented that. “As long as my mother’s satisfied, I’m happy,” he said.29

28 Interview with Beverly Keasler Crawford, 122.
29 Joe Floyd Stansell, Jr. (Gluck Mill worker), in an interview with the author, September 17, 2019, Appendix E, 308.
Daddy, he would get up and he would cook our breakfast while mother got ready for work. He would get us ready for school, brush our hair, tie our shoes, make sure we brushed our teeth, and tie our sashes, and sent us out the door. We had a wonderful Daddy.30 – Shelby Brown, Jackson Mill

Asked who the most influential characters in their lives were, the most common response offered was the mother (or mother-figure). Arthur Higgins described the grandmother who raised him.

She would tell me stories [about] back when she was a girl. She went to work in the mill when she was nine years old. … She had a little box that she stepped up on to put that roving up, and she complained all the time about her arms and neck hurting, and I can understand why. Yeah. Matter of fact, … she took early retirement at 62 because her health was getting bad. She was born in 1898, and I think she retired in January or February of ’61. She raised me my entire life. Absolutely. I called her Mama.31 – Arthur Higgins, Appleton Mill

Ministers and coaches, especially for boys, were also highly important influences, according to the testimony during the interviews.

The preacher Frank Gillespie, who was at First Baptist in Iva, who played football, baseball, and basketball at Clemson. We got saved out there and baptized by Frank Gillespie.32 – Roscoe Powell, Jackson Mill villager

What is striking about the body of interviews is that, despite the hardships and challenges, the survey participants described a happy life. Listen to Roscoe Powell:

I could go back, I don’t know if I’d change anything or not. My mother came from a family of 16 young’uns….. they were the happiest people I’ve ever seen in my life. I mean they still, some of them, there’s about three or four of them still alive. And every one of them is happy. They never sulked. Never one of them ever said a bad thing about anybody. And, like my mother, she was always happy. And never complained about nothing. And never had nothing. They need more people like that.33 – Roscoe Powell, Jackson Mill Villager

30 Interview with Shelby McCullough Brown, 101.
32 Interview with Roscoe Melvin Powell, 253.
33 Interview with Roscoe Melvin Powell, 255.
Neighborhood

Fully half of the interview subjects described their neighborhoods as “like a family.” Several said their neighbors were like their brothers and sisters. They knew everyone; they were taught to get along with everyone. “It was one big family,” recalled Tommy Shaw. “Nobody ever locked the door. If you were playing in the yard at suppertime in somebody else’s yard, you went in and ate with them. I mean. It was just one big family.”

And then, the porches were always nice, and you would always see someone in the summertime, usually in the evenings, sitting on the porch talking about the day. You could hear the people inside cooking. You could smell what they were cooking. You could hear them taking ice out of the freezer and doing them and dropping them into the glasses. 34

— Beverly Crawford, Chiquola Mill villager

Tommy Shaw remembers another illustrative incident.

Miss Cleo Hammack come out one night after dark. She said, “Aunt Tho, have you made a bed check yet?” And she said, “No.” So we go, and Momma went in there, and she come back out. She said, “I’m missing one.” She said, “Well, I got one extra.” Momma said, “I’ll go get her.” She said, “No, just let her spend the night. I just wanted you to know why I had an extra one.” 35

— Tommy Shaw, Chiquola Mill

People were always willing to help. “If you need anything else, give me a holler,” said Arthur Higgins.

Well, everybody was friends, let’s put it like that. We loved each other. We all studied together. If anybody needed help, the other people around would pitch in to help them. … It was really great how they loved each other and stuck together. 36

— Shelby McCullough Brown, Jackson Mill

34 Interview with Beverly Keasler Crawford, 109.
35 Interview with Tommy Marsell Shaw, 269.
36 Interview with Shelby McCullough Brown, 96.
That’s the keyword right there. Hillary Clinton wrote the book, but we lived it. It takes a village to raise a child, and this village raised every one of us. We could walk up and down the street and everybody knew who we were.37 – Marie Partain, Gluck Mill villager

Teams

A very important aspect about mill life was sports. Textile baseball was extremely competitive. Gary Jordan’s dad was recruited to play baseball at Gluck mill. Fred (“Shag”) Knox, husband of Annie Mae Knox, was recruited to play for the Chiquola Chicks, and later signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates. Mills were known to recruit players from other mills. Arthur Higgins was recruited to play basketball with another mill. Frog Stansell played baseball in high school under an alias because his father had prohibited his participation on religious grounds. “I played under the name of Joe Smith from the midgets on up until I made the C-team at Gluck Mill,” he said. “With Anderson mill, I played as Joe Smith. Then I had a very good game one night and they put my name in the Anderson Independent and they used my right name. It said, ‘Frog Stansell Leads Team to Victory Over Appleton.’”38

Frog learned later that his mom knew, and had kept his secret.

Researcher G. C. Waldrep notes that “textile league baseball…provided mill villagers—all mill villagers—with a secular communion of sorts…By the 1920’s, the

37 Sandra Barrett Metcalf, Ann Yeargin Roberts, and Marie Golden Partain (Gluck Mill Villagers), in an interview with the author, September 13, 2019, Appendix E, 197.
38 Interview with Joe Floyd Stansell, Jr., 309.
southern textile belt supported hundreds of mill teams in dozens of privately operated leagues.”39

CHAPTER TWO

FOOD AND CLOTHING

Food

Food supply tended to be meager. Variety may have been limited, but food was nutritious. The most frequent source of protein was beans. Meat was rarely available during the week. It was usually provided on Sunday and was most often fried chicken. Hog meat was apparently available at times, for fatback could be bought at the company store. It was often used with flour and milk to make “thick’n’ gravy” to pour over biscuits, which were eaten with a fork.

The rural mills had pastures for cows and pens for hogs. Since there were no home refrigerators prior to 1920, and they were not common until decades later, preserving meat in quantity could be challenging. It tended to be smoked or salt-cured. At Gluck mill, a community mule and plow were available to prepare the gardens; mill managers and owners sometimes provided seeds. In towns, houses were built close to the street and might have back yards large enough for gardens. Focus was on nutrition; pies and cakes were an event. Thanksgiving, birthdays, family gatherings were the only time such items appeared. Otherwise, there were very few sweet items other than molasses.

Most people today refer to three daily meals eaten each day as breakfast, lunch and dinner. In the mill villages, the meals were called breakfast, dinner, and supper (which usually consisted of leftovers from the midday meal). The most common breakfast was biscuits, gravy, grits, eggs, and perhaps molasses. Dinner, the midday meal, was usually dried beans of numerous kinds and cornbread.
Clothing

Monday was washday, and children generally wore their clothes for a week. In the early years, boys wore overalls. “What I wore to school was overalls and union suits under the overalls with the trap door. If my dad caught the trap door down, I got it. ‘Put the trap door back up when you get through,’” commented Floyd Stansell of Gluck Mill.40 Later, there was a shift to jeans and T-shirts.

She [grandmother] would usually get me two pairs of blue jeans, some underwear. I wore T-shirts all the time. White T-shirts, and she’d usually buy me a pack of white T-shirts and some socks, and that was to last all year.41– Arthur Higgins, Appleton Mill

John Marshall Daniel, age 88, said that every man wore overalls. Smiley Powell, age 74, reported that custom had changed to a preference for blue jeans.

Shoes were a seasonal item.

In the summer, Mom would let us take our shoes off in April, and we’d go barefooted all summer. Never put them back on till school started. We wore shoes to school. They required that.42 – Marshall Daniel, Appleton Mill

...Summertime, you went barefooted. You couldn't go barefoot until the first day of May, and then you took your shoes off.43 – Tommy Shaw, Chiquola Mill

All of the women interviewed wore dresses. They were not allowed to wear pants (always long; no shorts) until they were in the seventh grade. Annie May Knox, age 101 in 2019, wore dresses made from flour sacks (as did most village girls) and was age 18 and married when she acquired her first store-bought dress.

40 Interview with Joe Floyd Stansell, Jr., 304.
41 Interview with Arthur Higgins, 164.
43 Interview with Tommy Marsell Shaw, 277.
Do you know what we wore a lot of? Stuff made out of flour sacks. Flour used to come in cloth sacks. Miss Met Warner lived right here on Georgia St. If it hadn't been for her, there would had been a lot of kids naked around the village.44

–*Tommy Shaw, Chiquola Mill*

…Because somebody, some genius, thought of the way to really sell flour was to make pretty sacks, and people would bite.45 –*Margene Murdock, Appleton Mill*

Not all of the dresses came from flour sacks:

Lots of times, we slept on pallets with quilts down on the floor. And, see, you took your old clothes, and that’s what they made quilts out of. You could look at the quilts and you could think, “Well, I wore that. That was my dress.”46

–*Margene Murdock, Appleton Mill*

By the time Beverly Crawford, the youngest interview subject, came along, girls were wearing store-bought dresses.

Every fall we went to Belk-Simpson in town when we used to have the building here, and I would get plaid dresses. They were dresses. They had little ties in the back, you know, little sashes in the back, and they were full, and they would just be all different kind of plaids. All colors and all, so we did not wear pants to school, so it would be a dress of some kind.47 –*Beverly Crawford, Chiquola Mill villager*

44 Interview with Tommy Marsell Shaw, 276.
45 Interview with Margene Murdock, 233.
46 Interview with Margene Murdock, 233.
47 Interview with Beverly Keasler Crawford, 113.
CHAPTER THREE
EDUCATION AND DISCIPLINE

Education

David Carlton in his book *Mills and Towns in South Carolina – 1880-1920* notes that there was resistance and resentment to the fact that companies were providing the schooling for the children of mill families. The concern was that the practice led to uneven allocation of resources and sharply varying standards. 48

By the mid-twentieth century, this attitude seems to have disappeared, at least in the communities surrounding the four mills in this study. School was important in every household, in every village. In most cases, the teachers were provided by Anderson County. The outstanding exception was Gluck Mill, which took no money or other assistance and made tailored education its own priority. Gluck built its own schoolhouse and hired and paid its own teachers, who were believed to be of a higher caliber.

We had a two-story brick schoolhouse with six nice classrooms. The bathrooms were downstairs. There were no lunches; students got 30 minutes for lunch. You could go to Miss Piece’s store next door or somewhere else for lunch, or you could brown-bag your lunch. Let’s see, the first three grades were downstairs, and the next three grades were upstairs. Before I started first grade, they built a wooden classroom onto the two-story brick building for the 7th grade, so we had seven grades and excellent teachers, strong discipline. They weren’t afraid to use a switch and had no trouble in school. I later learned that the mill supplemented the payment for the teachers at Gluck Mill to attract the better teachers. I think we were very fortunate that the mill contributed to things like that. 49 – Gary Jordan, *Gluck Mill worker*

---

49 Gary Jordan (Gluck Mill worker), in an interview with the author, September 23, 2019, Appendix E, 174.
Annie Mae Knox dropped out in sixth grade to go to work in the mill, a bit ahead of the usual dropping-out age of 14 or after eighth grade. Joe Atkin finished high school. At least three people were the first in their families to graduate from high school. One earned a PhD. Three earned college degrees; at least two gained diplomas from technical colleges. Two women became registered nurses.

Well, some of them were good to me, now, what I remember. Some of them were good. Some of them were strict, and some of them wanted you to learn. I was very fortunate. I had some very good teachers. I didn't want to fail. I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school. I got a granddaughter. She was the first person to graduate college. I try to instill in my children and my grandchildren. There's nothing like education.50 – Arthur Higgins, Appleton Mill

50 Interview with Arthur Higgins, 160.
Sports were a unifying factor. At the high school level, students enjoyed team sports and the experience was described as washing away differences of farm boys, city boys, mill boys. Sports participation was an equalizer.

**Discipline**

Physical discipline was universal. Everyone without exception stated that, if they needed it, they would be switched. Some reported preferring their mothers to their fathers as the administrator when it came to that.

Neighbors could also get involved with disciplining neighborhood children—no lawyers involved.

When we were kids, if we went up the street and misbehaved, our neighbors would pull out a belt and spank us [laughs], and there weren’t any lawsuits involved. You just lived there because you were happy. You didn’t know any better, and all the people around our neighborhood, we knew everybody.51 —Roscoe Powell, Jackson Mill villager

In the schools, it could range from a smack with a ruler on the hand to a paddle to the seat by the principal. Discipline at church for children usually was done with a stare or a pinch, or a twist of the ear.

Several participants reported that discipline at work involved a visit to the corner office and could sometimes mean dismissal—a harsh outcome, since it would also mean loss of a house in the village.

---

51 Interview with Roscoe Melvin Powell, 244.
CHAPTER FOUR
RELIGION

Religion played an important role in the life of the village community and in the lives of the villagers. In some villages, church membership included both workers and management, which fostered friendlier employer-employee relationships. No one interviewed observed that churches were being used as tools by which management attempted to control workers.

Everybody in the neighborhood went to church. Almost everybody. And you would see some of them went to the Methodist. Some of them went to the Church of God. The Pentecostal. Some went to the First Baptist, but there would be people walking up to church. I mean, nobody used a car to drive to church, hardly, because it was only maybe four or five blocks. There would be a line of people walking and each one going to their own church. — Smiley Powell, Jackson Mill villager

It was common for mill villages to have more than one denomination. Joining sects such as the Church of God, Pentecostal Holiness or Wesleyan Methodists emphasized workers’ independence from the mainstream religion of owners who lived outside the village and considered themselves socially and morally superior to the mill worker. Belonging to a sect became one way in which the mill workers forged an autonomous culture. In the late 1920s to early 1930s, mill villages turned away from traditional denominations toward emerging sects where preachers were often fellow workers. Sect churches were filled with warmth, enthusiastic preaching and emotional

52 Simpson, Life in Mill Communities, 25-31.
53 Claude Eugene (Smiley) Powell (Jackson Mill villager), in an interview with the author, July 16, 2019, Appendix E, 265.
messages which proved compelling to mill folks. Some mill owners accepted sect churches, commonly known as “Holy Rollers,” while others discouraged them and banned itinerant revivalists.54

![Church begun by John Marshall Daniel. Photo by T. H. Cartledge, 2019.](image)

By far, the most common church denominations in mill villages were Baptist and then Methodist.

My mother was a Baptist, my father was a Methodist. Marshall Methodist Church was within sight of our mill house, so as long as I can remember, we went to the Methodist Church and did it religiously. We would be in church on Sunday morning and stay for Sunday school. I guess the most favorite memories I have are the Sunday school teachers I had. Mrs. Blackstone was my favorite. I currently attend and am very involved in the First Baptist Church of Iva.55 – Gary Jordan, Jackson Mill

I don’t know if you know too much about the Holiness or not, but they’re a little noisy folk. The windows were raised, you had two flop fans and services went on kinda late. So old man John Will Shaw went in one time on Monday morning and told the superintendent of the mill, “You gotta do something about them Holiness people. They’re keeping me awake.” The superintendent said, “Let me tell you something. Them Holiness people come in here sober and ready to work. A bunch of y’all come in here drunk and hanged over.”56 – Tommy Shaw, Chiquola

55 Interview with Gary Jordan, 178.
56 Interview with Tommy Marsell Shaw, 274.
The village residents interviewed also reported that, besides the impacts exerted by the churches on the communities, religion and church participation was very important to their individual lives. Roxie Moore, a Jackson mill villager, said, “I have always been a regular at church. We went Sunday mornings, Wednesday night, if they had it in any other night, we went to that service too. That was just what we did.” She attends a Wesleyan church to this day.

Many reported “being saved” or their parents (usually fathers) being saved and acknowledged that this brought them better lives. Here is Floyd (“Frog”) Stansell on that subject:

On Thursday night of that revival, I started like I done all week, but got back to about the fourth pew from the back, Tom. And the tug and the feeling I had was so strong I thought I was going to pop out. I just be honest and tell you how was. I fell on my knees bawling. Crying for the longest time. I finally said, “Lord if you help me, I’ll do the best I can.” I knew he had called me to preach at that time. So, things began to get better. I mean, if you put the Lord first, Tom, he’s going to take care of the rest of it.57 – Floyd (“Frog”) Stansell, Gluck Mill

Arthur Higgins also felt that he was saved and, like Frog Stansell, became a pastor.

There was a Fire Baptized Holiness Church not too far from us and I went there some. I went with a buddy of mine to Taylor Memorial a few times, but I went there to drink. It took me a long time to understand I was throwing my money away. My philosophy, it even remained after I got married, was live fast, love hard, die young. I never thought I’d live past 30, but the Lord save me when I was 29, and have been serving him ever since. Thank God. Been through a lot. Lord brought me out of everything. I pastored my own church in Townville until I retired.58 – Arthur Higgins, Appleton Mill

I had an experience. Boy, I came there. I teach Sunday school now since I’ve retired. Pastor. I tell them, “Anybody who's ever been through the process of the

57 Interview with Joe Floyd Stansell, Jr., 312.
58 Interview with Arthur Higgins, 167.
new birth, they can't never doubt the power of God.”  

Marshall Daniel, Appleton Mill

And Margene Murdock had this to say:

My mother was a Golden Rule Baptist. All of her family were all made up by Baptist preachers. But church was very, very important, and my daddy got saved and started attending church. It was, let me see. I was still there because I was a teenager.  

Margene Murdock, Appleton

Three of the eighteen people interviewed became pastors.

People reported that religious values were important in those who served as models. Marshall Daniel, Appleton, provided a moving tribute to his mother as a person and as a formative influence in his life.

Mother [was the most positive influence on my life.] Her principle. Her Godly principles. Right was right. If it’s me or whoever it was. And she didn’t do it in no ugly way. She practiced what she preached. She was strong. When I took the message on to Daddy that she died in the hospital, he was at the house. I went in and told him. I said, “Well, Mamma passed away.” First words come out of his mouth, he said, “There weren’t a crooked bone in her.” That’s the kind of woman that she was. And anybody who knew her would tell you the same thing.  

Marshall Daniel, Appleton

Smiley Powell looked to his pastor, not to his parents, as the most influential person in his life. “[The most influential person in my life] was the first preacher that we had at First Baptist that I had a lot in common with was Rev. Frank Gillespie,” observed Smiley Powell, Jackson Mill.

---

59 Interview with John Marshal Daniel, 140.
60 Interview with Margene Murdock, 239.
61 Interview with John Marshal Daniel, 149.
62 For more about the many achievements of the Reverend Frank Gillespie, please see “Former Clemson great Frank Gillespie passes away,” by Anna Hickey (www.CBSSports.com, March 9, 2017).
CHAPTER FIVE

HOUSING

Construction

Mill houses were clustered around the mill and typically included a superintendent’s house plus numerous identical wood frame houses for workers. Southern mill owners rejected the New England-style apartments and boarding houses for their workers. They preferred cheaply built “cottages” (small 2, 3, and 4-room houses for a single-family) or duplexes (6 to 8 rooms) that could be used for either one or two families depending upon family size and need. Company housing generally provided only the most basic needs of shelter, and the residential aesthetics of most mill villages were few. These houses were not designed by professionals but were constructed by local carpenters in the local vernacular. They were built off the ground, had no continuous footing and were placed on brick columns. At the turn of the century, 95% of Southern textile families lived in mill houses. Typically, houses were built close to the roads with a backyard large enough to accommodate a garden and perhaps chicken coops. No livestock was allowed in the village proper, but most rural mills had a community pasture for the villagers’ cows as well as a pen for hogs.

The most common mill house was a four-room frame house with a central fireplace (sometimes double-sided); the four rooms were usually of equal size and

63 Waldrep, Southern Workers, 16
each house had both front and back porches usually constructed with ordinary two-by-four supports. Paint was usually white or brown with perhaps some variation on the outside trim. For the sake of economy, mill village houses were built to the same plan, similar in design, same color paint when painted; uniformity throughout was the rule.65

In a typical 4-room house, one of the front rooms was considered the “family room” which had a guest bed for in-laws or visitors, as well as the family radio. This is also the room where the older children did their courting. The room behind was the parent’s bedroom and also slept the smaller children. The adjacent back room was the kitchen/dining area which often doubled as sleeping quarters. Older children slept in the other front room, often several to a single bed depending on family size.

Well, I had three sisters and three brothers…I’m the youngest out of the bunch…There were seven of us, and we lived in that four-room house, and you heard that song, “Sleeping at the Foot of the Bed?” I can tell you, that’s where I were. I was the youngest. I slept at the foot of the bed with my other three brothers.66 — Roscoe Powell, Jackson Mill Villager

Uniformity and size of dwellings did have a decided compensating attraction to the tenants, for no one felt a sense of inferiority about his home. “My mom and dad actually had column posts put up [on the porch], which made it look a little fancier,” said Beverly Crawford.

Even though these homes tended to be cookie-cutter, identical houses, built from scratch for the first renters, we can visit them today—100 years later—and find

65 Simpson, Life in Mill Communities, 22.
66 Interview with Roscoe Melvin Powell, 245.
them largely habitable, if in varying stages of disrepair. Those that were well maintained remain quite attractive.

![Gary Jordan's former home. Photo by T.H. Cartledge, 2019.](image)

**Electricity**

Originally, neither electricity nor indoor plumbing was included. By the 1920’s, almost all houses had electric lights; the number of light bulbs a house burned determine the rent paid by that household. Prior to electrical service, rent was based on the number of rooms, normally $0.25 per week per room. Once electricity was installed, rent was raised to $0.50 per lightbulb. “We had electricity”, reported John Marshal Daniel. “We didn’t have no wall plug-ins. There was a socket there. We plugged in up in the ceiling. Single drop.”

Renters called each lightbulb a “drop,” which meant a single bulb suspended from the middle of the ceiling with a drop cord switch. A 4-room house with a “drop” in each room at $0.50 per “drop” paid $2.00 per week rent, which was deducted from the worker’s pay envelope each week. This included all utilities as well as coal for the

---

fireplaces and stoves. Porches were not lighted, for it would have required the renter to pay for an additional “drop.” Renters paid no taxes and the company provided all maintenance.68

**Plumbing**

Few houses had running water at first. Each house had a hand-pumped well in the kitchen as well as the backyard. Sometimes the pumps were shared between two houses. Indoor plumbing, which typically included only a commode in a closet built on the back porch and running water in the kitchen, was installed about the same time that electricity was provided.69

“When I was little, we didn’t have this bathroom down the hall,” said Tommy Shaw. “It was on the back porch. Wasn’t nothing but a commode. You sit down on it wintertime, your hinny stuck to the seat.” Outdoor privvies were common.

Bathtubs were often #3 tin tubs. Tommy Shaw recounted the situation this way: “We had a big wood stove. Back when we was little, you had to keep turning in that tub while you were bathing so this side didn’t bake. And we always joked, when they wanted to know had you bathed, then they said, ‘Pull them britches down.’ I got the print of a #3 tin tub on my hinny.”

And the way we had a bath, we had a # 3 tin tub and, in the summertime, we’d put it out in the sun with water in it and then towed in it the house. Rough. I was so glad when I got a bathtub, I didn’t know what to do. I was so glad when I got a bathtub.70 – Annie Mae Knox, Chiquola Mill

---

68 Judkins, “The Evolution.”
69 Judkins, “The Evolution.”
70 Joe Atkin and Annie Mae Knox (Chiquola Mill workers), in an interview with the author, October 15, 2019, Appendix E, 70.
Appliances

Ovens, stoves, refrigerators and furnaces were far from typical in these homes.

“One little grate we heated with coal,” observed John Marshal Daniel. “Mama cooked on a wood stove with wood, but that little grate—we’d go to bed at night in the winter…and you could see your breath. Yeah, that’s true.”

Margene Murdock noted how they handled refrigeration. “The city ice plant had a truck,” she remembered. “The back of it was full of ice, and this man would come out. Mr. Hugh would come by and ring a bell as it came up the street, and you had a sign that went on the front door outside, and it would say, 25, 50, or 100 pounds. And you turned that sign so it would point up to how much ice you will need that day.”

71 Interview with Margene Murdock, 226.
CHAPTER SIX
CITY VILLAGES AND COUNTRY VILLAGES

My initial thought had been to choose two rural mills and two town mills to
determine whether location made any difference to village life. Based on my observations
of the four mills, I find it striking that the differences are largely physical—the people
and their lives and experiences were surprisingly similar in all four communities.

Similarities

Regardless of location, interview subjects reported eating the same food: Beans,
biscuits, fatback gravy, cornbread. The scarcity of meat in both locations caused a
reliance on plant-based protein, which was apparently sustaining enough to support
strenuous ten-hour shift work. All reported that their parents came home exhausted,
wringing wet—yet some had other jobs after their mill shifts (one, for example, as a
cotton-picker).

Another similarity was how seldom anyone ever had the benefit of professional
medical care. Home remedies such as herbs and plasters, supplemented with rudimentary
first-aid techniques, was about it. There were individuals who seemed to have the power
to “draw fire out” and to stop bleeding—skills that were said to be heritable but only by
one person of the same sex (a male fire-drawer could pass the ability to a son, but not to a
daughter).

I got scalded on my arm one time. Boy, I cried like a baby. Momma took me over
to some old woman, Miss Balkel. She could talk fire out of you. And I walked
across that mill hill with her, and she talked fire out of me, and that thing quit just
like that. Then, some guy could stop blood. He could read something about the Bible. He could stop blood.72 – Joe Atkin, Chiquola Mill

So I propped my feet up to the door and [my brother] said, “If you don't move, I’ll pour this hot water on you.” I said, “You ain’t gonna do it.” He poured it on me. Boiling. Down my chest. I was just skin and bones, then, and I jumped up and ran out the door barefoot, no shirt on, freezing wet, and run in the front door of Lonnie Nana’s house since nobody locked the doors. She picked me up, running there and set me in her daddy's lap, and said, “Dad, this young ‘un’s scalded or something. And he started with his thumb, and he's saying stuff to himself and blowing. When he got done, my chest wasn’t even red. You think I'm shooting some bull now?73 – Tommy Shaw, Chiquola Mill

Professional health care was generally not common in either town or rural mill-village location until the 1940’s or later, when doctors sometimes were available to make house calls.

Housing was similar across all four mills. All tended to have single-drop lighting and rudimentary plumbing, commodes on the back porches being the most common sanitary facility.

Clothing was similar across all mills. Girls wore dresses; boys wore jeans. No child wore shoes from May 1 through September.

Residents of all four villages, both girls and boys, enjoyed sports—baseball, basketball, football—and sometimes changed mills to play for a more competitive team.

72 Interview with Joe Atkin and Annie Mae Knox, 79.
73 Interview with Tommy Marsell Shaw, 293.
Citified or countrified, everyone interviewed in these mill villages was affiliated with a church and regarded the practice and values of religion to be of primary importance in their lives (to be sure, some came later than others to that conclusion).

Quite a few people in both types of mills mentioned having relatives working at other mills. “All my kinfolk worked in the mills,” several said. Many respondents stated that their families had been sharecroppers in Georgia and other surrounding areas prior to obtaining work in the mills. They regarded it as a lifeboat in a stormy sea.

All described life as “happy”, despite modest accommodations, only basic means to meet their needs, and overall scarcity. They shared the faith that, somehow, God would see them through.

**Distinguishing Factors**

From my observations during visits to all four villages, there are certain physical factors that differentiate the rural mill villages from those nearer towns.

Populations in city villages became more racially and culturally diverse, less unified in outlook, background and shared values. Rural villages had the use of community pastures and hog pens, providing more frequent and less expensive access to meat. City villages did not offer that amenity.

Houses were more compact and closer together, and neighborhoods denser, in the city villages than in the rural ones. Streets were narrower, perhaps due to the cost of land and relative population density.
Today, the conditions in city villages are worse than the rural ones. City-village houses are now more often broken down, dilapidated, burned. The Gluck mill village is in the best condition of the four studied. This is surprising (see Chapter 7 below); the neighborhood now has the second-lowest family income in the State of South Carolina.74

Summary

It turned out not to make very much difference to the lives of residents whether the mill was rural- or town-based.
CHAPTER SEVEN

DECLINE OF THE INDUSTRY—AND OF THE MILL VILLAGES

The textile industry began to slip into recession in 1927. It then experienced the tumult of the Great Depression and the sweeping changes of the New Deal. Sales of mill villages began in 1934, when investors began to buy mills. As soon as a mill sale was finalized, the village was sold. The exact point in time at which village sales began is difficult to pinpoint. Harriet Herring’s extensive study of mills and mill villages found that, in the Spring of 1940, 17 mills were selling their villages and by fall of that same year 35 mills were selling houses. By 1941, 54 of 67 villages in South Carolina had sold.75

Sales were suspended during the war and then regained momentum when war ended. It was estimated that, by 1949, nearly half of Southern mill houses had been sold. The sales trend peaked in 1950 and by 1958, 75 percent of mill housing had been sold. Few villages remained by 1970; however, home ownership across the country had increased dramatically and the dream of home ownership had hastened the end of the village system. Hundreds of Piedmont textile mills sold their villages for different reasons and at different times76.

In 1996, total employment in the US textile industry dropped to 4% of all industrial workers nationwide. In South Carolina, 15% of industrial workers remained in

76 Herring, Passing of the Mill Village, 16.
the textile industry, a drop of more than 50% from 1950. During the mid-1920s, textile manufacturing peaked in the Carolinas. By 1997, South Carolina had lost 92 mills. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other agreements led to a vast increase in textile and apparel imports to the United States and, as a consequence, numerous plant closings in the Carolinas. After 1997, the process of decline accelerated and by 2001 the industry was approaching collapse, the century-old brick mills not only abandoned, but increasingly dismantled. By 2002, only 39,648 people were employed in textile manufacturing—a 73% drop. The last cotton mill in South Carolina closed in 2007. Tens of thousands of workers had nowhere to utilize the skills that they had obtained after decades of mill work and were too old to be retrained in new skills.

During the 2008 recession, already unemployed mill workers took a double hit. When workers left, they did not long for the old model of low wages, child labor and owner surveillance of their private lives. They were forced to find new jobs, to learn new skills, to take advantage of new technologies and education. Those too old to adapt to the new world without textile mills were at the mercy of family and friends.

According to a front-page article in the Anderson Independent-Mail, Homeland Park—formerly home to the Gluck Mill—now reports the second-lowest per capita income in the State of South Carolina. (And yet, as noted in the previous chapter, the

79 Carlton, “Textile Industry.”
80 Pierre, "Anderson’s Forgotten Area."
houses in that village are in better condition that those in the other three locations studied.)

Textile loom materials at the former Gluck Mill site, October 21, 2019.
*Photo by Ken Ruinard, Anderson Independent-Mail Staff, by permission of USA Today.*

With increased industrialization in the 20th century, locally owned mills often sold out to out-of-state investors, changing the nature of mill communities. What was once considered a paternalistic relationship between owner and worker changed so that mills hired independent workers who no longer rented mill-village houses. Mill villages were never meant to be a source of profit—but with changing times, they actually became a liability. Many mill owners concluded that workers would be more likely to remain in the community if they invested in it as homeowners, so they began selling the houses off, giving first option to purchase to current occupants. Ultimately this led to sale of mill houses which were first offered to workers at a discounted price, and then to the public. Once mill houses were sold, the mill was no longer responsible for maintenance which inevitably led to poor upkeep and village deterioration.
Villages were dismantled for a number of reasons—the automobile had become more affordable, thereby allowing workers to commute rather than live in mill villages; tough child labor laws reduced the number of workers per village house and reduced family income; intense competition forced owners to examine cost, resulting in “scientific management” which in workers’ terms resulted in the “stretch-out” (fewer workers producing more product in less time for the same pay). Pay did not go up and work did not go down. Workers recognized that owners had reneged on “fair pay for a fair day’s work.”

The “stretch-out” and a series of bitter strikes undermined worker’s acceptance of existing conditions and exposed the shortcomings of the highly publicized paternalism of mill owners. Workers were cautious and worried as to what was to come next. When the mills closed, the music stopped. The folks of the mills were caught with no place to sit down. As villages were sold off and institutions supported by the mills declined, the

81 Simon, A Fabric of Defeat, 47.
sense of community declined, leaving behind only the physical remains of the mill village in the shadow of an empty mill building.82

The Great Depression and the New Deal prompted widespread social and economic changes. Due to a variety of job choices for spouses and tougher child laws, the number of workers the mills could draw from each village house fell dramatically, making it more difficult for mills to employ families. Mill owners at most mills needed a minimum of three workers per four-room house to break even. As the workforce aged, the elderly still needing housing, so the number of able workers from each house was reduced even though occupancy remained the same.

Many houses had aged and often needed extensive renovation. Housing codes had toughened and national awareness of substandard housing increased. FHA inspectors found numerous problems, chief among them leaking roofs and raw sewage systems. Mill owners, already under competitive pressure, had little desire to spend scarce capital on village repairs when it was needed to modernize outdated manufacturing equipment.83

The villages had been erected on land that was once farmlands, but was later sold as city lots, greatly increasing the land value.84

83 Simon, A Fabric of Defeat, 238.
84 Kohn, The Cotton Mills, 185.
Mills operated under changing ownerships, from single-mill owner to integrated corporations headquartered out-of-state, even out of the country. More than half of the 120 mill operations in South Carolina changed hands before 1950. Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA) president Emit Rieve stated, “Textile workers in South Carolina can no longer claim a neighborhood relationship with their fellow workers; the average mill is in the hands of owners whose homes are elsewhere and whose interests spread far beyond the confines of the state.” The increasing distance between the villages and the men who controlled their future made villages easier to sell. Distant mill owners saw the villages, and the cost of running them, as negative numbers on a balance sheet.

Sunshine might be breaking through the dark clouds that hang over the textile industry in America. Rising wages in China and other countries, combined with higher transportation cost and especially tariffs, have prompted foreign and domestic companies to consider the Piedmont area for new manufacturing sites. Also, more and more customers are looking for the “Made in the USA” label. Southern states continually woo textile companies with tax breaks, reliable utilities, modern ports and airports plus a
dependable non-union workforce. Who knows? Textile mills may rise from their ashes; mill villages will not. The paternalistic system mill owners used to attract and house workers, like the mule-drawn plow, was useful in its time but that time has passed.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Several things stand out to this researcher after studying this set of interviews:

*The participants felt fortunate.* To a person, the interviewed subjects felt lucky to have had the experience of living in these villages. Nearly everyone said “We were happy,” in so many words.

*MONEY does not buy happiness—LOVE does.* Family, community, and church groups all contributed to the participants’ feelings of importance, self-worth, value. These relationships overcame the hardships of poverty, scarcity, and toil.

*Discipline* was enforced in every family, neighborhood and school—switches, spankings, belts—but no participant reported ever being beaten. Even neighbors were involved in corrective action of the community children—yet the children understood the reason for it and still understood the love it represented. The success of these people in adulthood suggests that the behavioral norms they were taught served them well (setting aside whether the methods would be condoned today).

*Religion (belief in God) was important.* The interview subjects practiced different denominations, and all were respected, and all remain connected to their churches today. Three of the eleven men interviewed became pastors.

*Food and clothing* were minimal and rudimentary, yet the children felt they were adequately cared for.

*Location* (rural area or town) seemed to make less difference to the experience of life in a mill village than anticipated.
A final point: There is considerable discussion in the literature about whether or not owners were truly paternalistic or were in fact motivated by the desire for profit and viability at the expense of the workers. It is undeniable that the work was difficult and the conditions harsh. The research indicates that, whatever their attitudes about working conditions, whatever their employers’ attitudes or motivations toward the workers, the village residents were happy with the lives they led in those communities.

Conclusions

This story is not about clapboard houses without indoor plumbing and electricity—it is about people.

For those who worked in the noise, clatter, heat and lint of the mills, it was like a beehive; they could put their hands against the brick walls and feel the hum and know the satisfaction of doing something worthwhile. They were not “low-lifes.” The adaptation of a primarily agricultural workforce to a textile mill team took time but, once mill procedures were learned, those who had worked hard in the fields worked just as hard in the mills. Textile mills in the southern Piedmont offered sharecroppers and coal miners good work, steady pay, education, religion and a sense of community. When they came, they owned little and had nothing to sell but their labor. For many, this was the first time in their lives that they had a real chance for a better life for themselves and their family.

The people interviewed were grateful for the fact that they had a roof over their heads and three meals in their belly, and that they would be paid every week. There was a symbiotic relationship between mill owners and mill operatives (which is what they preferred to be called) in that mill owners needed workers and workers needed jobs. It
was a win/win relationship. The work was hot, and hard, and exhausting. What was the alternative—to go back and try to eke out a living in the cotton fields or coal mines? At least they had their families together, with them. They were in a village community where neighbors shared the same problems; where they were allowed to be human and to care about each other, to help and support each other, to enjoy each other, to be a community.

Every person interviewed said it was a good life, if not a wonderful life. Without an exception, all said they were grateful that they had lived, in that time, at that place, in their lives, because it taught them compassion, to believe in each other, to respect each other, to feel the good feeling of accomplishment, to understand the importance of teamwork. None said how terrible it was, and all said they were grateful to have experienced life in their mill villages. “If I could change it, I would not change a thing, it was the happiest time of my life,” said Roscoe Powell.

Many of the original mill workers were illiterate, but their children are high school and college graduates—and several had achieved graduate degrees. They wanted something better for their children and their children’s children. The textile mills afforded them that opportunity, to better themselves and their families. One studying their lives has to be touched by the closeness of their families and by how much they loved each other.

The comment that most typifies the attitudes of the people who lived in mill villages—not just Anderson County villages but likely mill villages throughout the South—was often the last sentence of the interview after the individual had been thanked
for participating. They’d say, “If you need anything, give us a holler.” It was particularly notable that they tended to use the plural form “us,” not “me,” meaning that the participants felt they were speaking for more than just themselves and as part of the “community.” This is the bond that ties together those who lived it. There is a kinship there that is undeniable.

This research project interviewed 18 individuals ranging from 63 to 101 years of age. The four mill villages existed from the construction of Appleton mill in 1902 until the closure of Gluck Mill in 2007. One can hardly describe all that transpired during that 105-year period—technologically, socially, morally.

These mill villagers made more than fabric. They made a living legacy, living today, that developed into school teachers, doctors, architects, engineers, civic leaders, and pastors—in short, all the elements of strong communities.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
Interviews Conducted by the Author


Published Materials


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Brief Description of the Mills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Mill</th>
<th># Employees</th>
<th>Village Population*</th>
<th># Spindles*</th>
<th># Looms*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appleton</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiquola</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>40,320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gluck</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>20,600</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These figures are from *The Cotton Mills of South Carolina, 1907* by August Kohn. Data are from 1907.

*Jackson Mill* was started in 1905 without the benefit of electricity. It was built entirely with hand tools. At the height of production, the mill had 150 houses that housed 1500 workers. The mill made 36-inch sheeting for domestic use and export. Production commenced in 1906 and ceased in 1995.

*Gluck Mill* began operation in 1903 and employed 300 workers; it later became the Wellington Mill and even later Glen Borden Mill. Gluck received its water supply from an artesian well and owned its own cotton farm and gin. It was known for its production of fine cloth such as sateen. The Gluck mill invested heavily in education, recruiting and paying its own teachers. The mill closed in 2010.

*Chiquola Mill* operated from 1903 to 2003. Its products were coarse sheeting and later both wide and narrow print cloth. The mill village housed the mill president as well as the mill superintendent. The mill owners built a public library. It is best known for the “massacre of 1934” when 7 mill workers were killed and over 20 wounded when a general strike took place.

*Appleton Mill* first opened as Brogan Mill in Anderson in 1902. It was adjacent to both the Anderson Mill and Equinox Mill. In 1927, owners of what was then the Anderson Mill in Lowell, Massachusetts, announced the intent to move all the supplies and equipment to the Anderson site. The mill produced flannels and dress goods. It ceased operation in 2009.
## Appendix B

### List of Interview Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MILL</th>
<th>MILL WORKER?</th>
<th>BIRTH YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPLETON MILL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel, Amos Calvin</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel, John Marshall</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higgins, Thurman McArthur</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdock, Margene Cole</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHIQUOLA MILL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atkin, Joe E.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford, Beverly Keasler</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox, Ann Mae</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyers, Earl Lollis</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaw, Tommy Marcell</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLUCK MILL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan, Kenneth Gary</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metcalfe, Sandra Barrett</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partain, Marie Golden</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts, Ann Yeargin</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stansell, Joe Floyd, Jr.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JACKSON MILL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, Shelby McCullough</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore, Roxie Juliette</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell, Claude Eugene (Smiley)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell, Roscoe Melvin</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

List of Questions Asked

To maintain consistency, each interview was based on a standard set of questions, which follows.

1. Please state your full name and date of birth.
2. Give me a general idea of your life in your mill village.
3. What was the address of your house?
4. Is it currently occupied?
5. If so, by whom?
6. Describe your neighborhood.
7. At what ages did you live there?
8. Describe your family. Where had your parents originally come from?
9. Tell me about yourself and your relationships with parents, siblings and friends.
10. Describe in detail your mill house – rented or owned, painted, number of rooms, furnishings, bathroom facilities, heat, electricity, kitchen, walls, ceiling.
11. Describe typical meals in your home—what you ate, drank, where you sat, and who cooked the meals (breakfast, lunch and supper).
12. Describe your waking up in the morning routine.
13. Describe your typical, everyday dress—clothes, shoes, etc.
14. Describe your school, teachers, class size, grades, conduct, teacher/student ratio, highest level of education obtained.
15. Describe your after-school activities, summertime activities.
16. Did you ever work at the mill yourself, or perhaps outside the mill?
17. Did you ever date someone from your mill village, or another village, or perhaps marry a villager?
18. Discuss after-school and weekend entertainment and what you were personally involved in and what you did together as a family.
19. How were health issues resolved? Sickness, injury, even death?
20. How were discipline issues resolved? Family, school, village?
21. Was the subject of family finances discussed openly? Explain.
22. Was it necessary for your family ever to receive the benefits of “pounding?”
23. To your knowledge, did your family ever receive financial support, of any kind, from the US government?
24. Describe your personal church experiences and the influence churches had on your village.
25. Describe the physical condition of your family members when returning from work, was “stretch-out” involved? What were their jobs in the mill?
26. Were there relatives who were mill operatives? Same mill? Where had they originally come from?
27. During your village years, how aware or concerned were you with United States politics and world events? Explain.
28. Did your family discuss national or local governmental issues? If so, which were the most frequently mentioned? NAFTA?
29. Did you or any immediate family members serve in the Military? Explain.
30. What was the most challenging experience you faced while living in your village and how did you respond?
31. Were you ever called a derogatory or unkind name by non-mill folks? If so, what was your response and how did you feel?
32. Who or what had the most positive influence on you while you lived in your village? Negative influence?
33. Who was the person you could go to for help in resolving personal issues? Explain.
34. What would you consider to be the most valuable lesson learned by living in your mill village?
35. Did living in your mill village prepare you for life beyond the village?
Appendix D

Sample Page Showing Data Sort

Vivid or significant comments were chosen from each interview and entered into an Excel database, which could then be sorted by mill, by subject’s age, or by topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appleton</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>All the people that lived around us. I’d eat breakfast with them, eat lunch with them, and eat supper with them. You never realized that most of all the mill hill folks, as they were called, was poor. On some occasions, where a husband and wife both worked, they got by a whole lot better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleton</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>Living on a mill hill, it's sort of like a great big family to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleton</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>We all lived close together, you know? I don't know how to explain it. It’s like we were kin people, you know? It wasn’t anything for me to go to one of their houses, and, why, they'd be eating. I’d sit down in the living room or the bedroom or maybe go sit down on the front porch or back porch, you know, somewhere, till they'd say, “Arthur, you want to eat? Go on in.” I'd go in and eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>Well, everybody was friends, let's put it like that. We loved each other. We all studied together. If anybody needed help, the other people around would pitch in to help them. … It was really great how they loved each other and stuck together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gluck</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>I think growing up on the mill village was the most wonderful thing any anybody ever did because nobody was ever judgmental towards you. No family was any better off than the other families. Even though the supervisors may have lived in a bigger house than we did, they were all in the same boat. So there was no class situation here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Interview Transcripts
Interview with Joe E. Atkin and Annie Mae Knox

October 15, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom Cartledge here out on Highway 252, on the outskirts of Honea Path, on October 15th, at the home of Mae Knox. Mae, give me your full name and date of birth.

Mae: Annie Mae Knox. September the 8th, 1918.

Tom: We also have Joe Atkin here with us, and that’s A-T-K-I-N-S? How do you spell Atkins?

Joe: A-T-K-I-N.


Joe: The rich people put the “S” on.

Tom: Okay, the rich folks added the “S.”

Okay. Give me your full name, Joe, and your date of birth.


Tom: All right. Mae, if you would, give me just a general idea of what your life was like when you lived at the mill village.

Mae: When I lived at the mill, well, we had a good life. We had three meals a day until, sometimes, it got rough. In the wintertime, we’d probably run out of coal that we heated with, but other than that, we had a good life at the textile plant.

Tom: Did the mill furnish the coal?

Mae: Oh, no.

Tom: You had to purchase the coal?

Mae: We had to purchase it from the mill.

Joe: They’d take it out of your check.

Tom: They would take it?
Joe: The rent, the lights, the wood, and the coal.

Tom: They would take it out of your paycheck?

Joe: Your paycheck, yeah.

Tom: Okay. Do you remember your house that you lived in? What was the street name?

Mae: Hammett.

Tom: Hammett?

Mae: There was a section of the village that was named for people, and then there was a section named for towns, states.

Joe: Where you lived was named Old Town, and then across the creek where they built them houses last was New Town. That’s where you lived at the house.

Tom: Well, let me ask Joe, just give me a general idea of what you thought life on the mill village was like.

Joe: Well, most of the time, you tried to get three meals a day, and where we lived, we had, I guess you’d call, there was two kinds of poor people. One of I call “rich” and the other I call “real poor.” But the rich ones was like, they had a cow and a hog, and they’d tend to it and all that. Well, they got a little better to eat, but the main thing was trying to eat three meals a day. A lot of them would go hungry that didn’t have that.

Tom: Which one were you?

Joe: I guess you’d call it “rich.” I had cows and hogs, but we had to tend to them.

Tom: Were the cows and the hog in the community pasture?

Joe: Yeah, up at the community pasture. Built a barn for about four or five cows and hogs. Just two or three people had cows and hogs there.

Tom: Tell me the street that you lived on.

Joe: 54 Chiquola Avenue.
Tom: 54 Chiquola Avenue. Very good. Is the house still there?

Joe: Yep.

Tom: Is it occupied?

Joe: I think somebody’s in it. Yeah.

Tom: Is your house on Hammett still there?

Mae: Oh, yes.

Tom: Is it occupied?

Mae: I would think so.

Tom: Do you know the house number?

Joe: I had an aunt live on Hammett St. after her, but it was 118 Hammett St.

Tom: Okay, so it was close to Mae?

Joe: Oh, yeah.

Tom: Okay. Very good, describe your neighborhood.

Mae: Well, they were all mill people that lived there. They used to, sometimes, men would drink and be out on the street. That really was new to me. Joe, you know what I am talking about. We had some men that would drink. They’d be on the street, and they couldn’t walk straight.

Tom: Were they drinking moonshine?

Mae: What was it, Joe?

Joe: A lot of them made bootleg. Some of them made bootleg. That was the only way they had to make a living.

Tom: So that subsidized their paycheck from the mill?

Joe: That’s the ones that didn’t work at all.

Tom: Oh. All right. At what ages did you live at the mill village?
Mae: 12 years old.

Tom: You started living there when you were 12?

Mae: Did I do what?

Tom: How old were you when you left?

Mae: Well, there were two sections of the mill village. Old Town and New Town. When we first come to Honea Path, we moved in Old Town in two rooms with a family. They lived in two rooms, and we lived in two rooms. They had three boys, and Momma and Daddy had five children in that four-room house. Now, can you imagine?

Tom: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mae: Two brothers and two sisters.

Tom: Two brothers and two sisters. Were you the oldest or the youngest or in the middle?

Mae: I’m the oldest girl.

Tom: The oldest girl.

Mae: Of three.

Tom: Go ahead and tell me about your house. Did you have just two rooms?

Mae: Two rooms.

Tom: Where did you sleep?

Mae: In the bed with two sisters.

Tom: So, all three of you slept in the same bed

Mae: Yeah, and when one turned, they all turned. All three turned.

Tom: So, what was in the other room? The kitchen?

Mae: Well, the kitchen and the bedroom. That’s what we had. Mom and dad slept in one bed and us three girls in the other bed.
Tom: Where did the boys sleep?

Mae: They had a pallet. Do you know what a pallet is?

Tom: Sure.

Mae: A pallet on the floor.

Tom: And they slept in the same room as the girls?

Mae: Because just had two rooms. The kitchen and the bedroom when we first moved there. It was rough.

Joe: Rough as a cob.

Tom: Did you have bathroom facilities?

Mae: We didn’t have no bathroom. We just had a commode on the back porch.

Tom: Just had a commode on the back porch?

Mae: And the way we had a bath, we had a # 3 tin tub, and in the summertime we’d put it out in the sun with water in it and then towed in it the house. Rough. Rough. I was so glad when I got a bathtub, I didn’t know what to do. I was so glad when I got a bathtub.

Tom: Let me ask Joe a second. Joe, tell me about your house.

Joe: I was born on Georgia Street in New Town, and there was two families, actually settled in there, and there were four of us boys and Momma and Daddy.

Tom: How many rooms?

Joe: I guess it’d be a four-room house.

Tom: Okay, but there were two families in it?

Joe: Yes. They had the hall that kind of divided, and I was born there. When I was about six months old, and they moved over to Old Town in a three-room house. There was five of us boys and Momma and Daddy with only three rooms.

Tom: And your second house, it only had three rooms?
Joe: That’s right.

Tom: So, one room was the kitchen and one room was the bedroom. What was the third room?

Joe: Well, mostly, where your momma and daddy would sleep in, and all of us boys slept in one. We had an aunt that was crippled. She slept in the room with us. There was a bed just for her.

Tom: So, there were four boys or five boys?

Joe: There were five, but one of them died pretty young. About seven years old.

Tom: Oh, okay.

Joe: All of us slept in one bed.

Tom: All four slept in one bed. Was it a king-sized bed or just a regular-sized bed?

Joe: Nah, just a regular, old bed probably made for two.

Tom: And your crippled aunt slept on another bed in the same room?

Joe: Yeah.

Tom: Did you have a commode on the back porch?

Joe: On the back porch.

Tom: Running water?

Joe: We just had a spigot.

Tom: A spigot in the kitchen?

Joe: Right there in the kitchen where we washed dishes and all. In the wintertime, they had an old, black kettle on the stove, and they’d heat the water and pour it in this wash pan they’d call it. A little wash pan. Daddy and them would shave in that with hot water.

Tom: Tell me about your relationship with your parents. Were they loving parents?
Mae: They were loving. You could buy flour that you made biscuits out of in a cloth sack. Sometimes that sack would have flowers on it or maybe birds or some kind of print on the sack. After Momma would empty that flour into the flour bin, she’d wash them sacks out and make our dresses out of those sacks. Never had a store-bought dress until I was grown.

Tom: Really. How old were you when you got your first store-bought dress?


Tom: 18 years old.

Annie: 18 years old when I got a store-bought dress.

Tom: Tell me: What kind of shoes did you wear?

Mae: Most of them was tennis shoes.

Tom: Tennis shoes.

Mae: And if they got a hole in them, if you wore a hole in that shoe, Daddy would put a piece of paste-board in there. Well, you know when it rained, that paste-board was going to get wet. And it did.

Tom: All right. Tell me about the electricity in your house.

Mae: I don’t remember using lamps, you know, oil lamps. I don’t remember using oil lamps. Always, where we lived, we always had the… even though you just had to reach up there and turn it on-

Joe: We had a cord you’d pull.

Mae: It had a string on it.

Tom: It had a string. A lot of people call that a drop.

Joe: Drop cord. We just got it in one room. You just got it in one room where your momma and daddy slept.

Tom: Really? Did you had one in your room with you and the boys?

Joe: No.

Tom: You only had one light in the whole house?
Joe: They hooked them lights from one house to the other. Just one line that comes to the other. You had one drop cord, and they’d tie a string to their bedpost, and when they got ready to get up, they’d pull it.

Tom: So, you didn't have a light in your bedroom?

Joe: No, and no heat. No nothing.

Tom: No kind of light at all?

Joe: No light.

Mae: I wonder if the children could cope with those kinds of things today. I wonder.

Joe: No. They couldn’t. They’d kill themselves.

Tom: Too spoiled.

Joe: Yeah, they got everything handed to them.

Tom: All right. What did you eat for breakfast?

Mae: Most of the time, buttered bread, butter biscuits.

Tom: Butter and biscuits.

Mae: And jelly. Or syrup. It wasn't how it is.

Tom: No meat of any kind?

Mae: No meat of any kind.

Tom: Joe, what about you?

Joe: Well, we generally, in the wintertime we generally had a hog, and you had chickens running out. Those chickens make their own living out in the country, eating insects. I mean out at the edge of the woods. And that's what we had.

Tom: That was good. What would you have for lunch?
Mae: Most of the time, it was dried beans that Momma had cooked. She put them in to soak overnight, so it wouldn't take so long to cook them, and that's what we had. Dried beans and cornbread. Never had no meat.

Tom: Well, Joe was more fortunate because his family had a cow and a hog, but what was for lunch?

Joe: Lunch was dried beans. Dried beans and cornbread.

Tom: Yeah, that was pretty standard.

Joe: Yeah. That's where you got all of your protein on the mill hill.

Mae: Joe was better off than I.

Tom: How about supper? What did you eat for supper?

Mae: What was left over from dinner. What was the leftover. Momma would cook enough to have enough that night for supper.

Tom: Okay, so it was more beans?

Mae: More beans, more cornbread. Bigger cornbread. A big pot of cornbread. It was rough. It was rough.

Tom: Tell me about your school.

Mae: Well, I went to the eighth grade, and then I went to work at the plant over there at 16.

Tom: You started working at Chiquola Mill when you were 16 years old?

Mae: Went to work at 14, but I had to come out because on a count of Roosevelt raising the working age. I had to come out. And the strike that they had at Chiquola, the strike was maybe on Thursday, and my birthday was on Sunday, and I got to go back to work on Monday because I was 16 years old.

Tom: How old were you when you first worked in the mill?

Joe: I went to work when I was 16.

Tom: How many years did you work at Chiquola mill?
Joe: 47, same place.

Tom: 47 in the same place?

Tom: What jobs did you have in the mill?

Joe: Well, for the last 15 years, I had a maintenance job. Straighten all them machines out, speed them up, and everything. Then, they sold it to China. It went overseas to somewhere, and they closed the mill down.

Tom: Mae, what was your job in the mill?

Mae: What did I do in the mill? Well, they called it the winding department. You'd have to know something about textile to know what winding meant.

Tom: Was that on the spool?

Mae: Yeah, you put yarn onto another type of spool to go to another department. It was just a form of transferring what you do to the next department so they can just keep on moving until it gets to the weaving.

Tom: Right.

Mae: Till it gets to weaving.

Tom: Did you do that the entire time you worked in the mill?

Mae: Yes.

Tom: So you never had another job in the mill?

Mae: No, that's all I ever knew.

Tom: How many years total did you work in the mill?

Mae: Well, from 16 until I retired when I was 62 years old. How long would that be?

Tom: So you worked from 16 to 62 years of age?

Mae: How long?

Tom: Well, I’ll have to do some math.
Mae: How long did I struggle?

Tom: That’s close to 50 years, because you actually worked there when you were 14 for a while.

Mae: Yeah.

Tom: For a year and a half.

Mae: Correct.

Joe: The youngest man I saw at work, talking to over there, he was nine years old. And they’d inspect them. Insurance or something would come around. Well, they’d put them in these big old drawing bins when they’d go through, and then they would pull them out.

Tom: What were they doing? Mostly sweeping and just cleaning up?

Joe: No, they had them running regular jobs. I mean, they had all those machines low for those people.

Tom: So when the inspectors came by, they hid the children?

Joe: They had to hide them on account of that’s before Roosevelt took over.

Tom: How high did you go in school?

Mae: Eighth grade.

Tom: Well, you can read and write very nicely. Did you learn that in elementary school?

Mae: In elementary school. Mm-hmm. (Affirmative) That’s where town hall is now. That’s where I went to school.

Tom: Yeah, I’ve been there.

Tom: Joe what grade did you finish? The highest grade?

Joe: I finished the 12th.

Tom: You did finish the 12th grade, that’s good.
Joe: That’s after the Second World War. That’s when things were picking up. But before then, if you got to 16 years old, you had to go to work in a mill, or they would run you out of those houses.

Tom: It was mandatory that you worked?

Joe: You worked. Yeah. And them guys that went to school a little bit, by the time they got to 16, they had to quit and go to work. They’d generally go to about seventh, eighth grade.

Tom: What did you do after school? What did you do for fun?

Mae: For fun. Well, when I was a teenager, we played ball in the middle of the road. You can imagine on the village how the houses are just jammed up. We played. Get out in the middle of the road and play ball. Then, when a car come along, you had to clear that road. Everybody had to get out of the road. Didn’t have no ball field and no big place where we could play. It was in the middle of the road, and if you knocked it over in somebody’s yard, they had a fence around it, and they wouldn’t let you get your ball.

Tom: They wouldn’t?

Mae: They wouldn’t let you get your ball.

Tom: Joe, what about your after-school activities?

Joe: In the summertime, mostly, we stayed in the woods all the time. Hunting. Had a wash-hole built. Going swimming, pick blackberries. Everything like that, but we played ball. We’d make an old ball out of thread and sewed it up. Bunch of boys get out there. Didn’t have no glove. No bat. We cut this old stick out of the woods. Hickory stick. A straight stick.

Tom: And that was your bat?

Joe: Yeah.

Tom: Did you date mill boys? Did you have a date with mill boys?

Mae: I didn’t date till I was about 17 years old.

Joe: With that shape?

Mae: Joe.
Tom: Well, I think you were a very pretty young lady. I'm sure that you had a lot of people that would like to have dated you.

Mae: Well, I'll tell you. When they had the strike at the plant and that, they had this National Guard from the lower part of the state to come up to protect the mill and the people. And I got to date one of them.

Tom: Oh, a soldier boy, huh?

Mae: A soldier boy, I got to date one of them boys.

Tom: Joe, did you date somebody from the mill?

Joe: Nah. Back then, boys didn't mess with girls. Girl stayed in one place and the boys in the other.

Tom: That's great.

How did you deal with sickness? If you were sick, what would you do?

Mae: When I was sick? Well, Momma would let us stay in bed when I was sick. If I got sick, she'd let us stay in the bed. We enjoyed it because she'd bring our meal to the bed.

Tom: Did you ever see the doctor?

Mae: I don't believe I was ever at a doctor until after I married. I really don't think I was ever at a doctor until I was married.

Tom: You never saw a doctor until after you were married?

Joe: You never did see a doctor. They had all kinds of remedies for everything. Cuts, anything to take, and everything. You didn’t see a doctor.

Tom: Home remedies?

Joe: Yeah. And the only doctors you saw… As a woman once you'd have a baby, they'd come by, and that was it. But as far as kids and all getting sick growing up, you didn't do that.

Tom: How about broken bones, how would they be dealt with?

Joe: Well, I never did see no broken bones, but they would heal their own selves, I guess.
Tom: Did you have someone in the village that was a healer?

Joe: They had people that could talk fire out of you. I got scalded on my arm one time. Boy, I cried like a baby. Momma took me over to some old woman, Miss Balkel. She could talk fire out of you. And I walked across that mill hill with her, and she talked fire out of me, and that thing quit just like that. Then, some guy could stop blood. He could read something about the Bible. He could stop blood. Some of them people, they see blood, they'd pass out. They had a remedy for everything. You didn't go to no doctor. And if you went for like, a baby or something, you had to give him a dog or some chickens or eggs or something like that.

Tom: What about discipline in your house? Were you ever spanked?

Mae: No. My momma was pretty tough. Mom and Daddy was pretty tough. We knew to walk the chalk line. We knew it.

Tom: So were you never spanked at home?

Mae: No.

Tom: You were always a good girl?

Mae: I was always afraid of that switch. Afraid of that switch.

Tom: How about your sisters? Did they get switched?

Mae: Yeah.

Tom: They did, but you didn't?

Mae: I didn’t. No. They was younger than me. I was a little older than them two, and I knew to be better. I knew to be better.

Tom: How about the boys?

Mae: They got more than we did. They got more than the girls did?

Mae: They got switched.

Tom: Who switched them? Momma? Daddy?

Mae: Momma, mostly.
Tom: How about you, Joe? With five boys in a family, there had to be a lot of ruckus going on.

Joe: Oh, yeah. You’d get a whupping. I mean, but I was raised up in the church. My momma and daddy, and they’d let you know if you get out of line. They’d straighten you up, whup you, and then pray for you. That was worser than the whupping. They made you walk the chalk line.

Tom: What would they whip you with, a switch or a belt?

Joe: A switch or belt, something like that.

Tom: And after they switched you, they'd pray for you?

Joe: That’s right.

Tom: And that was worse than the switching?

Joe: That’s right.

Mae: You had a good momma and daddy. He had a good momma and daddy.

Joe: They prayed for us boys morning and night, and I never have heard them say a cuss-word or anything bad about each other. I guess they had their problems, but you didn't know it. They were good people. Not because they were my Momma and Daddy, but yeah, I guess that's the reason our health was pretty good.

Tom: Did both of your parents work in the mill?

Joe: Yup.

Tom: Did they work the same shift or different shifts?

Joe: Same shift.

Tom: Okay, what shift was that?

Joe: Second.

Tom: Second shift started at what time?

Joe: All my life, I reckon. Two o’clock, 11 hours a day, ’til about 1 o’clock at night.
Tom: From two o'clock in the afternoon to one o'clock at night?

Joe: Yes.

Tom: That's more than seven hours.

Joe: 11 hours.

Tom: They worked 11-hour shifts?

Joe: They worked 11-hour shifts until President Roosevelt got in. He said they was going to pay them the same thing to work eight hours. And they said that that was crazy. But that was after the strike.

Tom: But, at one time, they worked 11-hour shifts?

Joe: Yeah, they worked 11 hours.

Tom: So, who took care of you boys? I mean, if they were working?

Joe: We had that aunt on those crutches, and she could get around on them crutches. And she'd tell on us if something gone wrong, and then we'd get a whoopping when we got out of line.

Tom: What kind of physical shape were your parents in when they came home?

Joe: Why, they was tired and all.

Tom: Sweaty? Wet?

Joe: Oh, yeah.

Tom: So they both worked the same shift. That's pretty amazing. Who did the cooking in your family? Your aunt?

Joe: My aunt. My mother. My mother, she’d cook between there. She’d cook dinner enough for supper. We had cornbread and milk about every night. Rich-poor people.

Tom: You are rich-poor people?

Joe: Yeah, we had cornbread.
Tom: Okay, Mae, who cooked in your house?

Mae: My momma cooked, and the girls when they got older. Say, 15, 16, that's when we learned to cook helping mama. But. Mama did—

Tom: Most of the cooking?

Mae: Because she didn't have no hired help or anything.

Tom: Were you a good cook?

Mae: Was I a good cook? I don't know, but we had to eat it.

Joe: There wasn't nothing left.

Mae: We just had to eat it.

Tom: Did your mother work in the mill?

Mae: Uh-huh. (Affirmative)

Tom: What shift did she work?

Mae: Mostly on the second from, what was it, Joe? From 2:00 to 10:00?

Joe: Yeah. That's how they changed it. Eight hours there.

Mae: 2:00 till 10:00 o’clock.

Joe: That’s after Roosevelt took over.

Tom: What shift did your father work?

Mae: They both worked on the same shift, and us five kids had to stay by ourselves. If we was playing ball out in the middle of the road, which we had to do. We didn't have no field. They had to play ball in the middle of the road. And if we did something wrong out there playing that ball, Mama would know about it. We always wondered, “Momma, how did you know that we did such a thing?” They could look out the window. They could look out the window of the plant, and see where your kids were.

Tom: Oh really! They could keep an eye on you, huh?

Mae: Keep an eye on them kids.
Tom: Did your family ever sit around and talk about finances?

Mae: Oh, no.

Tom: No finances? You never discussed? Who took care of the money in your family? Who handled the money?

Mae: Daddy, most of the time, Momma just turned her ticket. They paid in cash and a ticket. And Momma would just give it to Daddy, and Daddy handled it.

Tom: Is that the same in your family Joe? Your dad actually handled the money?

Joe: Yeah. Sure would, but there weren’t none left because by the time he’d go up there and pay the grocery bill and maybe have a little to pay on some clothes or something, you had to charge that. So, you never did get out of debt. All you wanted was three meals a day.

Tom: Basically, you never got out of debt?

Joe: No, no, no. You never was out of debt until after the Second World War.

Tom: Did you ever receive a pounding? You know what a pounding is?

Mae: A pounding.

Joe: The government.

Tom: Did you ever receive any help from the government? You know, other people told me that if somebody got sick and couldn’t go to work, that the neighborhood would collect food for them.

Mae: We never had nobody to bring us anything.

Tom: Nobody ever brought you anything?

Joe: I don’t think so. People you knew that couldn’t work or nothing, they’d get it from the state or something. Powdered milk, powdered eggs, and that’s all they’d have. A lot of gravy.

Tom: Okay. Tell me about your church experiences. Did you go to church?

Mae: Un-huh (affirmative).
Tom: Where did you go to church?
Mae: Chiquola Baptist.
Tom: Are you still a member at Chiquola Baptist.
Mae: Chiquola Baptist. I’m still a member there.
Tom: So, you've been a member there since you were a child.
Mae: 14.
Tom: So you were 14 years old when you joined the church?
Mae: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
Tom: Did you go to Chiquola Baptist Joe?
Joe: I went to Church of God.
Mae: He had two of the best parents God ever put on this earth. They were at the Church of God. Good people, good people.
Joe: They lived their religion seven days a week.
Tom: They did?
Joe: That’s right. That's the way it was.
Tom: Do you still go to the Church of God?
Joe: Nah, I done moved out in country.
Mae: I've known Joe all of his life, and he's always been a good boy.
Tom: He is. How old are you now?
Joe: 88.
Tom: 88.
Mae: You 88? I wondered about that the other day. I wondered. I've known him near all of his life. You 88, Joe?
Tom: Did you have relatives, kinfolks, that worked at the mill?

Mae: Yeah, I did have relatives. All of my folks were textile folks. John C. Taylor was about the richest kinfolk I had.

Tom: Oh really! He was a rich man?

Joe: Oh yeah. He was a rich man.

Mae: He was about the richest kinfolk I had, and it was Momma's cousin.

Tom: Did he work at the mill?

Joe: He worked over in the courthouse.

Mae: He was a—

Joe: Tax collector.

Mae: He was a Congressman, wasn’t he, Joe?

Tom: I saw up the road where Olin Johnson was buried by the church.

Mae: Buried up there at Barker’s Creek Baptist Church. You know how they used to have little country schools out in the rural areas? Well, he attended Barker's Creek School, and that's the reason they brought him back to Barker’s Creek, and he's buried out there.

Tom: Joe, did your family ever discuss finances or politics? How about politics?

Joe: No, no, no. Daddy done all the financing. We didn't even know nothing. We didn't have no money or nothing, so we didn't have no problem there. All we wanted was to get three meals a day.

Tom: Did your family have a radio at home?

Joe: We didn't have one.

Tom: Did your family have a radio, Mae?

Mae: I can't remember us ever having a radio until, maybe, I was 15 or 16 years old.

Tom: Did any of your brothers go into the army or the military?
Mae: I had one brother that served in the Navy.

Tom: Was he working at the mill?

Mae: Yes, he worked at the plant.

Tom: So, all of your brothers and sisters worked at the plant?

Mae: All of them, I had two brothers and two sisters, and that's all we ever knew.

Tom: Ok, Joe, all four of you boys worked at the mill?

Joe: Yeah.

Tom: How about military?

Joe: Well, my oldest brother, he went in the Second World War, and my next older brother—

Tom: What branch of service?

Joe: Army. My next brother, he went in the Army. He was in the Korean Conflict, and I was in the Korea Conflict. I was in the Marines, and my twin brother, he was in the Army.

Tom: Oh, that’s right, I forgot, you are a twin, right?

Joe: Yeah.

Tom: So, you were in the Marines and your brother was in the Army?

Joe: Yeah.

Tom: And you served in Korea. Did you actually go?

Joe: I didn't say I was in Korea, I was in during the Korea Conflict. I was stationed in California.

Tom: But you did not go to Korea, that's a good thing.

Joe: My brother went in during the Second World War. He was somewhere in Japan when they dropped the hydrogen bombs.
Tom: So he was in the service when they dropped the atomic bombs.

Mae, did anybody ever call you a Linthead or anything that was a negative term? Did they tease you about anything?

Mae: Uh-uh. (Negative)

Tom: Nope, Joe, how about you?

Joe: Yeah, they called us Lintheads.

Tom: Who? Just the town folks?

Joe: No.

Tom: Or just the other mill people?

Joe: Yes, maybe a cousin or something from another town or something. When they’d meet or something, they’d say, “You all are Lintheads,” or something like that. But we didn’t mess around up town. We didn’t cross that railroad track, I mean, we stayed in our own place.

Tom: If you had a personal problem, who would you go to for help?

Mae: When I was growing up or now?

Tom: When you were growing up.

Mae: When I was growing up, I would say I went to my parents because they would listen. They would listen. Somebody else, if I went to somebody, they wouldn't care.

Tom: How about you, Joe. Same thing, you'd go to your parents?

Joe: Same. Yeah, you couldn't trust a buddy or nothing back then, because the devil’s eyes didn't have nothing. You can't trust nobody except your parents.

Mae: You know, we had pretty good people that lived on the mill village. You could just fasten your screen door at night, but now you have to lock it up and lock your door and be afraid they’re going to—

Tom: Break in or something.
Tell me about your husband. How old were you when you got married?
Mae: 18. Had a good life. Had a good life. Joe could tell you a lot about him, couldn't you, Joe?

Joe: Oh, yeah. He was a good man.

Tom: Tell me about your husband.

Joe: Well, he came to Chiquola to play one ball game. He belonged to the Pittsburgh Pirates, and he was on his way to a farm team. Mr. Hammett, president of the mill got him. Chiquola was playing Orr Mill in a series, and they happened to lose the ball game. That didn't suit Mr. Hammett at all, so Mr. Hammett goes to Greenville and gets him to come play one ball game, and he stayed. How long, Joe?

Tom: He got married. He saw you, didn't he, and never went back.

Mae: He never went back. He didn’t go no further. But he was happy. I wish you could have known him. Joe could tell you

Tom: And his nickname was “Shag” because he was such a good fielder.

Mae: His name was Fred.

Joe: He was the number-one shortstop.

Tom: He could shag those balls, huh?

Joe: He could get them. Yeah.

Tom: Did you play ball, Joe?

Joe: Yeah.

Tom: Did you play on the mill team?

Joe: Yeah, I played on the mill team.

Tom: I bet you were a good ballplayer. You got big hands and long arms. I bet you were good ballplayer. How long were you married, Mae?

Mae: From ‘37 until, I believe he died in ‘61. I believe he had his heart attack in ‘61.
Tom: Your husband died of a heart attack?

Mae: Uh-huh. It was in January, and he went out, we always rode to work at Chiquola in the truck. He always went out and warmed the truck up for me in cold weather. When I went out, about 20 minutes after seven that morning, I found him in the truck. A heart attack.

Tom: He had a heart attack in the truck?

Mae: He went out like a light.

Tom: How old was he?

Mae: He was lacked three months being 62.

Tom: Three months of being 62.

Mae: And he loved Honea Path. He loved Honea Path. He come to just… Mr. Hammett got him to come play one ball game against Orr Mill. But Honea Path, being we didn't have much entertainment anywhere else, and baseball was their outlet. Every time the gates was opened, the stands was full. But anyway, that was their entertainment, and he fell in love with the town, and the town and me fell in love with him.

Tom: I bet he fell in love with you, first. I can see that twinkle in your eye, Mae. I'm sure you didn't have any problem catching him. He didn't like to play under the lights at night, right? And that's why he came back to Honea Path. He went to try out for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Mae: Pittsburgh Pirates. He belonged to them. When he come here, he had been up in Portsmouth, Ohio, and he had a picture of him and some girl and showed me. I took that off. I cut half of that off.

Tom: Was he working in the mill? Had he worked in the mill before he came here?

Mae: Yeah. He worked in Bleachery in Greenville, somewhere in Greenville, but he had worked in public work.

Tom: Public work means mill? That’s what you all call it “Public work.”

Joe: After the mill, he built these houses and all. He’d wire them up. The electricity.
Tom: Oh, really? So, he actually didn't work inside the mill.

Joe: Yeah, he got off at two o'clock. I believe that’s what it was. Went in at two and worked to 10. I think that’s what it was. He worked as an electrician.

Tom: Oh, he would? He had another job, two jobs?

Mae: We met in ’37, and the mill and the townspeople made up money to give to him, and it took about two pages with names on it to give us $25. That was rough, you know, back in ’37. Names on two pages.

Joe: That was all in nickels and dimes.

Tom: That’s when people were giving nickels, dimes and quarters. It took two pages of names to make $25. Did you go on a honeymoon?

Mae: Took two pages, and I've still got it. I still got those names. Even today.

Tom: Oh, do you?

Mae: I still got those names even today. Maybe 25 cents or something like that.

Joe: Not over 25 cents.

Mae: And one summer, Joe, one summer, the mill shut down for a couple of weeks. People didn't have money to go to the ballgame. Well, it cost 25 cents to get in the gate. Well, few had the 25 cents to get in the gate? They gave the ball players, each player got $5. That was the gate receipt. Well, he gave me the $5 to pay the grocery bill. Well, the grocery bill, for that week, was $5 and 50 cents. Well, I just had $5. Well, we already owed 50 cents, but we started eating next week.

Joe: You stayed in the hole all the time.

Tom: Stayed it in the hole, huh. What would you say was the most valuable lesson that you learned living in the mill village?

Mae: To learn how to manage your money. It taught me a lesson, because you could see how some people lived and others lived, and you knew which one was the best. You just learned a lesson from them. You wanted to do better. Just like Joe and his wife, now. They've got a marvelous home and everything. Joe learned the same lesson.
Tom: That’s good. What else? Joe? Anything else that you learned? What did working in the mill prepare you for?

Joe: Well, most everybody loved or liked everybody in the mill. I mean, we were together and your attitude and all was good. You’d go fishing a lot with all of them. You just lived together as a family and all of them went to the same church in there, and it was just happy.

Tom: It was happy. Mae, were you happy as a child?

Mae: I was happy. I didn't have a whole lot like other children did. Store-bought dresses. Mama made our dresses out of the flour sacks, and I never had a store-bought dress till I was grown.

Tom: Was your family happy? Did you all laugh a lot?

Mae: Yeah, we were happy. We had three meals a day. Beans and cornbread, but we were happy.

Tom: Well, there's a lot of protein in beans.

Mae: Well, maybe that's what brought me where I'm at today.

Tom: Let's see. I'm trying to think of something else to say.

Mae: You know, some of those things that he's talked about, Joe, just seems like yesterday.

Joe: Exactly right.

Mae: And I know it does to you because I knew his family well.

Tom: Was your family happy? I mean, those were rough times.

Joe: Oh, yeah. They were happy. Momma and Daddy kept you happy. I mean, my momma and daddy, they were just like that all the time. It wasn't no bad life, but you were just poor, and you went through that cycle. The main thing back then is getting three meals a day to eat. We never did go hungry or nothing. That is, but we didn't have nothing.

Tom: What was your typical Sunday meal?

Mae: A roast. That's the only time we knew what… We loved to eat on Sunday, because we knew. And banana pudding. That was it.
Tom: How about you Joe? What was your typical Sunday evening?

Joe: Mostly fried chicken. Well, you'd get a banana pudding every once in a while. A macaroni pie, sometimes. That's about it. Sometimes, mom would make a cake around Christmas.

Mae: And very few cars on the village. Very few. The grocery man had a truck. He would deliver your groceries to you. Say, milk or meats of any kind. That delivery man would put it in your refrigerator for you if you happened not to be home. He put it in your refrigerator.

But you know, I can just see it right now. When we first moved to Honea Path over on Hammett Street, there was a family that they lived off of the village. Lived right in front of us. He owned a grocery store. Mr. Dave Moon, remember him, Joe? Mr. David Moon. Well, in his store, now, maybe this week he put some benches in that store, and we'd have Church of God meetings in that building.

Maybe the next week, Mr. David would get in his truck and go off somewhere, and the next thing you know, them two boys of his, Carl Moon and Paul Moon, would be bringing their daddy home drunk in the back of that truck.

And, then, maybe next week he’s put them benches back in the store. And we’d have a meeting, again.

Tom: And have church with you.

Mae: And have a meeting.

Joe: I’ve seen it. If you’re talking about the mill, he worked up there when I first went to work. Dave Moon, he wore a pair glasses and kept them all the way out on his nose all the time. And he didn't have no teeth, and he’d chew chewing gum all the time.

Tom: With no teeth.

Joe: Yeah, he’d just gum it, I reckon. And, then, he had a boy, you know, very rough. I mean, had these old mules. They’d last maybe one season. He put that youngest boy out there in the field plowing, and we was up there one day, and we got on the back of that mule riding it while they were plowing. Well, he saw us out the mill window. He come home and he tore that boy up.
Tom: For riding that mule?

Joe: For riding that old, poor mule. You can’t hardly feed him much less ride him. But he was something else. And he them old glasses and I asked him one time, “Where did you get them glasses?” He said, “I got them at the dime store.” I said, “Well, how much it cost?” He said, “It cost a dime.”

Mae: Can you visualize our childhood? You know, I mean, you sitting here. Can you visualize our childhood and the things that we have talked about today, like Mr. Dave Moon, having church meetings at his grocery store one week and the next week they’re bringing him home drunk.

Tom: Did the mill have a grocery store?

Mae: It was local men that owned the grocery store. We had no supermarkets.

Tom: Because some mills have a mill store.

Joe: They had a company store over there at the mill, but this there was over across the mill here at the edge of it.

Tom: So they did not have a company store?

Joe: No, but like you were talking about when you moved off of Hammett. Now, when I was growing up, I had an aunt move in that house on Hammett Street, and them girls from Mr. Moon, they didn't have no water over there. And they towed it from my house when they washed clothes. Drank water, and she let them do that for I guess five, six years.

Tom: You were living on Georgia street, and then you moved?

Joe: To Chiquola Ave.

Tom: Do you remember the street number?

Joe: 54.

Mae: I mean, and just visualizing in your own mind the kind of life that Joe and myself had being brought up on the mill village, but the mill was good to us. They were good to us. They gave us a living.

Tom: Were your kinfolks sharecroppers?

Mae: They were sharecroppers.
Tom: Your family, before they came to the mill, were sharecroppers. How about you, Joe?

Joe: Let’s see. My daddy and them, they farmed up there above Honea Path. Out there near the ballpark and all of that. They’d come down from Sandy Spring and farmed about 300 acres. They already had 12 kids, and when that depression come, they lost it all.

Tom: Lost everything. Lost the farm. Everything.

Joe: And the boys, they just scattered. And the women, they just scattered, but Daddy stayed there. He fell in love, and he stayed there.

Tom: How long have you been married?

Joe: 67 years.

Tom: 67. I've been married 55 years.

Mae: You've been married 55 years. Isn’t that wonderful. Oh, my soul. That is wonderful.

Tom: My wife deserves a medal for putting up with me for 55 years. She's a good girl.

Joe: How long did you live in Mississippi?

Tom: I was born and raised in Mississippi, but I left when I was in college. My wife and I were childhood sweethearts.

Mae: Oh, well, how wonderful.

Tom: I told her that when she was 16 that I was going to marry her and she told me I was crazy.

Mae: How sweet. Congratulations.

Tom: Yeah. And I didn't marry until she was 22, because I waited until she could get out of college so then she could support me and send me to school.

Mae: She could make a living. You rascal. You rascal, you.

Tom: She was a school teacher, and she helped pay for my dental education my last year.
Mae: That’s wonderful, that’s wonderful.

Tom: Yeah, she's a good girl. I'm planning on keeping her.

Mae: Well, Joe and me are so glad that we met you even with all of our about ups and downs at Chiquola.

Tom: Well, my parents were… my father was born in 1905, and my mother was born in 1914, so there was nine years difference, but there were just two children in my family. I have a sister that's three years older than I am, and she still lives in our hometown in Mississippi. I go back to visit her every once in a while, but that's pretty much it. The town’s in bad shape.

Mae: Well Joe and me are so glad that we've met you even if we had to unload on you with our upbringing.

Tom: No, it was good. It was very good.
Interview with Shelby McCullough Brown, Jackson Mill

July 16, 2019

Tom: Okay. This is my third interview, and I'm interviewing-

Shelby: Shelby McCullough Brown.

Tom: Shelby McCullough Brown, and I'm at a first Baptist Church, Iva South Carolina, and this is July the 16th. She's already given me her full name. Shelby, how do you spell? B-Y?

Shelby: Right.

Tom: And what was your middle name?


Tom: Brown. B-R-O-W-N?

Shelby: Right.

Tom: Date of birth?

Shelby: March the 7th of 1939.

Tom: Give me a general idea of life in the mill village.

Shelby: Well, everybody was friends, let's put it like that. We loved each other. We all studied together. If anybody needed help, the other people around would pitch in to help them. Back then, see, they burned coal. Fire. So there's a lot of house fires, so when that happened, all the people would pitch in and help them get started back again. It was really great how they loved each other and sort of stuck together.

Tom: Did you have a fire department?

Shelby: No, they had the hoses that came from the mill. They had the big mill pond, and then they would have the hoses that would come from there and reach.

Tom: Really?

Shelby: To put out the fires. Yes.
Tom: What was the address of the house that you lived in?

Shelby: We lived on New Street, but I don't know the number of the house.

Tom: How do you spell “u”?

Shelby: N-E-W. New Street.

Tom: Oh, New.

Shelby: We called it New Town back then, but they call it New Street now.

Tom: Okay. Do you know if the house is still there?

Shelby: It is not. It was sold. It was a big seven-room house, and it was sold. I don't know when, but Mama was telling me about it after we all married and moved away. Whoever bought it moved it down to the lake, but now where? I don't know. There’s a double-wide mobile home sitting on that lot now.

Tom: Describe your neighborhood. You've already told me that everybody pitched in.

Shelby: Yeah, we kids played together, but we didn't visit our neighbors, and they didn't visit us unless we had permission from both families. Kids didn't run wild and go and stay at somebody's house all day or them stay at your house. You had to have permission from both families before you could do that.

Tom: How old were you when you left your house there on New Street?

Shelby: I was 18 years old. It was after I graduated from high school and married. I lived in that same house all of my life.

Tom: You were born, came home. Were you born in the house?

Shelby: No. I was born in a little house in Longsville. My daddy lived there, but we moved to Iva pretty soon, and then that's where we lived. Well, there’s three girls, and we lived there until we all married.

Tom: Where do you line up with the girls? Are you older? The middle?

Shelby: I’m the oldest, yes.
Tom: Are your sister's still alive?

Shelby: One of them is. The baby passed away about 20… She passed away in ’98. She had brain tumors. Yes.

Tom: Describe your relationship with your parents?

Shelby: We had a wonderful relationship. I mean, we could talk to them, and they directed us in the right direction, and it weren’t like pulling against each other. We were family, and we still are.

Tom: Still are.

Shelby: Still today. We still family.

Tom: Who's still alive in your family now?

Shelby: I got a sister that’s still living. And then I've got… We have a cousins’ reunion every year. Still got several cousins living. Now, we’ve lost a lot of them along the way, but every 2nd Saturday in October, we have a cousin’s reunion, usually down at the place in Elberton. The Lighthouse. Is that what they call it? The fish place.

Tom: In Elberton?

Shelby: Yes.

Tom: Describe your mill house.

Shelby: It was a seven-room house. Really, two families could live there. My grandmother lived in one side, and we lived in one side. There was three rooms on the upper side, and then on the bottom side there was four rooms, and ours was straight through like this. Granny’s come straight through. Then it went out to an “L” shape. That was the kitchen, there. And, then, on the back was a great big porch all the way across, and there was a bathroom here and a bathroom here on each side. And, then, on our front, we had a big cement porch that went all the way across. Then, where my Granny lived on the bottom side, there was a porch to the side there. Every evening after supper, we all congregated on one of those porches, and we sat and listened to the old folks talk. One night, we were sitting on the porch and my baby sister was laying on the porch looking up and she said, “Twinkle, twinkle little star, how you wonder what I am.”

Tom: So, it was a loving family?
Shelby: Yes, very much so.

Tom: How did you rent a seven-room house? Was your father working at Jackson Mill?

Shelby: Yes, he was. He was a doffer at Jackson Mill. My Mama worked in the spinning department. Well, they both worked in the spinning room, but daddy doffed and my momma was a spinner.

Tom: So, both of your parents worked at Jackson Mill?

Shelby: Yes, they did.

Tom: Did you ever work in Jackson?

Shelby: I worked five years after I married out there in the weaving room. I did unifills.

Tom: Did your husband work in Jackson Mill?

Shelby: Yes, he did. He worked in the card room.

Tom: Did any of your other relatives… Did your sister work at the Jackson Mill?

Shelby: No, neither one of them did, but I'll tell you this. My mother’s dad died when my momma was two. My grandmother lived in Royston, Georgia. That's where they lived. They were sharecroppers. Well, my granny was pregnant with Momma’s baby sister. The first year they did fine, and Mom said the second year, it was bad. So she had an uncle that lived on the mill village on Iva. Well, he came to Royston and moved them here, so my granny and my aunt could get a job at Jackson Mill, so the family would have a way to survive. My aunt was 12 or 13 when she went to work out there. Her name was Geneva Green. Then, I had an Uncle Major. He worked out there. I reckon the whole family did on my mom’s side. Now, my daddy's side they didn’t. They weren’t from here. They lived down in Abbeville County.

Tom: Describe your house.

Shelby: It was warm.

Tom: Warm?

Shelby: And a lot of fun.
Tom: How did it warm? How did you heat your house?

Shelby: To start with, when we were real small, they used a coal heater. And, then, later when we got probably about 10 or 11 or 12, that was when they started doing the kerosene. So we had a big kerosene heater in the middle room, and we ran off of kerosene tanks outside.

Tom: You and your sister used the same bedroom?

Shelby: Yes, we did.

Tom: Sleep in the same bed?

Shelby: Me and the middle sister did. The baby sister, she had her own little bed, but we slept together. Yeah.

Tom: Describe your bathroom.

Shelby: Well, when we were growing up, it only had a hole in it. Just a commode. That’s all it was.

Tom: No tub? No shower?

Shelby: No. No.

Tom: So, how did you bathe?

Shelby: In a tin tub.

Tom: In a tin tub.

Shelby: Yes, yes.

Tom: Heated water?

Shelby: Yes. When we were real small, Mom would sit in the yard and let the sun heat it, because she said that was good to do that, so she would do that.

Tom: All right. Interesting. Tell me a typical breakfast.

Shelby: We had grits, eggs, probably gravy. Mom always got up and made a pan of biscuits. When we were growing up and going to school, my mom and Daddy worked, and they worked the same shift. We had a black lady that came and kept us, but mom would get up and she'd make biscuits. And,
Daddy, he would get up and he would cook our breakfast while mother got ready for work. He would get us ready for school, brush your hair, tie our shoes, make sure we brushed our teeth, and tie our sashes, and sent us out the door. We had a wonderful Daddy.

Tom: How long did a black lady work for you?

Shelby: ‘Til we got to be teenagers, and then we was old enough to stay by ourselves.

Tom: She was a close family member?

Shelby: Yes. Here's what they did. She lived down near the Cook’s going toward Elberton. Daddy would go down on Sunday evening and pick her up and bring her to the house, and we had a little rollaway bed she slept on in the kitchen, and she would stay from Sunday to Friday, and when Daddy got off work Friday, he’d carry her home.

Tom: Interesting. What did you do for lunch if both of your parents worked?

Shelby: Well, when we had, before we got to be teenagers and had somebody there, the black lady always fixed us lunch.

Tom: What was her name?

Shelby: Reetie Mae, but I don’t remember her last name. It was Reetie Mae. She would fix something. Maybe some kind of soup or something. And, then, when Mom come home, she would fix supper.

Tom: Your mother would prepare your supper?

Shelby: Right.

Tom: What was your typical supper?

Shelby: Well, we would have a vegetable, usually and some kind of meat. Bread. We did a lot of gravy back then. A lot of dried beans, slaw.

Tom: Roscoe explained to me that there was a community pasture where you could keep a cow.

Shelby: Yes.

Tom: Did you have a cow?
Shelby: No. But, now, behind our house there wasn't a pasture there, but there was the barn, and some of our neighbors had a cow, and they kept them in the little stalls out there. I can remember us going out. We didn't go too close, because they didn't allow us to go close to the animals. They was afraid we’d to get hurt.

Tom: Where did you get your provisions? At the commissary?

Shelby: There was the old store there in town. Mr. Kirkpatrick run it. Oh, let me think, now. There's some way that Jordan is affiliated with T. C. Gray. And T. C. Gray, when he lived on T. C.’s place, well, T. C. Gray was Mr. Kirkpatrick’s son-in-law, so he ran a store there and he lived with T. C.

Tom: Tell me about your everyday dress?

Shelby: When we were growing up, we wore dresses. You couldn’t even wear pants to school. The first time we wore pants to school, I was in the seventh grade, and they passed a code that we could wear pants. But, now, when we were little, we wore the little shorts. Not short-shorts, like they wear today, but down to the knees. That's basically what we wore to play in.

Tom: How about shoes?

Shelby: We had little sandals, and we did a lot of barefoot. The 1st of May, every year, when the 1st of May came around, Mama would take our petticoats off and our shoes would go barefoot, and we wouldn't have to wear a petticoat.

Tom: Tell me about your school.

Shelby: Well, we walked to school, and mom would go every year when we'd start. She’d go with us. There was three of us, to enroll us in school. And we walked to school, even in the 1st-

Tom: That was Iva elementary?

Shelby: Yes. Yes.

Tom: And, then, you went to Crescent high school?

Shelby: I did. The first year. We were the first class to finish at Crescent High School in 1957. That's the first time I ever rode a bus to school.
Tom: Did you have any type of education beyond your high school?

Shelby: I did not. Well, I was married. After I married, I did. I did some floral stuff with Reid Latham. He did the Tri-County-Tech, and then I went to Bible College, and then I did some computer stuff for Clark Schwebel.

Tom: Was your husband a mill worker?

Shelby: Yes. Yes he was.

Tom: Was he a Jackson Mill worker?

Shelby: Yes he was. But now, later, he moved to Clark Schwebel. We both were working at Clark Schwebel. He was my first husband. This one here is my last one. Because they’re dead and all.

Tom: When you were a teenage girl living on mill hill, did you date teenage boys?

Shelby: Yes. Very seldom.

Tom: Very seldom?

Shelby: My daddy was real strict with us, because he only had girls, and so we didn't get to get to go out like a lot of the girls do... get out in a car and go somewhere. We dated in our house in the living room.

Tom: Tell me about after-school activities. What did you do?

Shelby: We had chores we had to do when we’d get home. When we first come in, we had to take our school clothes off and put on play clothes. When we got done with our homework and everything, we could go outside and play in the yard or wherever.

Tom: Did you spend a lot of time outside?

Shelby: Yes, yes we did. We loved it.

Tom: What did you do as a family? What sort of entertainment did you do as a family?

Shelby: Well, we would listen to the radio. We did. Listen to the Grand Old Opera on Saturday night until we got a TV. And then, we’d watch TV, and just,
generally, sit around and talk or play Old Maid or Checkers. Something to that effect.

Tom: How would you deal with a health issue? How did that resolve if somebody got sick or injured, what would you do?

Shelby: Daddy had Dr. Haddock with us. He was the baby’s doctor, and Daddy absolutely every time we’d sneeze, I think, he’d take us to Dr. Haddock.

Tom: He was a local physician here?

Shelby: He was in Anderson. When Melvina, my middle sister, fell out a China Berry Tree, she broke her arm. Well, Daddy was in town then, so one of the neighbors carried her to the doctor, and it scared me so bad, I was the one crying. And they had picked me up and put me in the car to take me and get my arm fixed.

Tom: They got the wrong baby.

Shelby: And my mom was trying to chase them down to make them stop. They had wrong young’un.

Tom: Were family finances ever discussed in your family?

Shelby: Nope. We never a problem with finances.

Tom: So you never were a recipient of a pounding?

Shelby: Nope. Never.

Tom: But you are familiar with the term pounding?

Shelby: Yes, I am, because the churches would do that. You’d bring your canned goods, and they still do, and give them to somebody that needed them.

Tom: To your knowledge, did your family ever receive any financial assistance from the government?

Shelby: No. Never.

Tom: You've already told me about your church experiences. Tell me the condition of your parents when they would come home from work.
Shelby: Well, my daddy would come home. Mom would come in, and she’d sit down because my momma’s was health was never really that good. But my daddy would go out to Mr. Kirkpatrick’s and run the store the rest till night. Or he’d go somewhere and pick cotton.

Tom: Really?

Shelby: Yes.

Tom: He was a hard-working man.

Shelby: He was.

Tom: During your years in the mill village, were you concerned or your family concerned anything about politics at all?

Shelby: Politics were never discussed, as far as I can remember, in our house when we were children growing up. My daddy loved to talk politics. He loved it. But as far as discussing it with us, no.

Tom: Did NAFTA ever come up? Did you know what… North Atlantic Free Trade Association ever mentioned?

Shelby: Mm-mm (negative)

Tom: That’s good. How about the military? Did anybody in your family serve in the military?

Shelby: Well, yes. My mother had three brothers in the military. My granny had a set of twins that was in the military. Melvin, well Major and Melvin both played ball with Jackson Mill. They were already scouting Melvin out, professionally, when he went into the military, but he never got to come back home. Not even on a furlough. He was killed in North Africa in World War II.

Tom: What would you say was the most challenging experience you faced when you lived on Mill Hill?

Shelby: Making sure we stayed at home and told the truth, because if we didn’t, we sure did get a spanking.

Tom: Would you ever call a derogatory name? Linthead?

Shelby: Never knew anything about that until I got grown and was out and about.
Tom: What would you consider to be the most positive influence? Who was most positive influences in your life?

Shelby: My Daddy.

Tom: Your Daddy.

Shelby: He was. My daddy was a family man. His dad was killed when Daddy was only five, and he really had a struggle because he really wanted an education, and he loved family and his family. At that time, my granny had four boys, so the two oldest were sent to an orphanage home, and my daddy’s grandparents took him. And Granny had a baby. Nine months old. But, then, she remarried, and when she did, they all came back together.

Daddy took care of his family very well. He worked, and the money was put at the house. He never went anywhere without my mom. When they had doctor's appointments, they went together. When they went grocery shopping, they went together. And every year at the 4th of July, when they had a week off, we all got together, and we went into the mountains for a week. We were family, and it was wonderful. Daddy took care of us. He took care of my mom. He made sure things was good for us.

Tom: Did living in the mill village prepare you for life outside the village?

Shelby: No, not really, because we were raised so strict. We didn't know anything when it was time for us to get out and fly out of the nest, you know? We had to learn outside on our own what life was all about.

Tom: How did your family choose Shelby? It's an unusual name for somebody your age.

Shelby: I have no idea. I don’t know. They never said. It was really Shelby Sue is what they named me. I don’t know. Momma never said. My Momma's name was unusual, too. Her name was Coalette.

Tom: How do you spell that?

Shelby: C-O-A-L-E-T-T-E, but she said there was a French actress whose name was... They would pronounce her Colette, you know, the actress. That's who she was named for.

Tom: Shelby, it's been very interesting. You did a marvelous job. Sounded like you had a great life.
Shelby: I did. I really did. It was wonderful.

Tom: Is there anything that you can think of that I should have asked about life on a mill village? Anything that I didn't?

Shelby: We didn't bring up about the ballpark. I lived right in front of the ballpark. Well, I mean, we had uncles that played baseball. That was a big thing at our house. Out back, under the house, it was built like this, and they kept their bats and balls and everything there. And they'd have to come and get all the equipment from under the house, and they'd pick at us little old kids. Then, Daddy, he took care of the grounds at the ballpark. He'd take bed springs, put them on back of the car, and round around that ballpark he would go. And, then, he'd line it off. But the ball park and the ball games was a big thing here in town.

Tom: Is a ball park still there?

Shelby: It is, but it's not being used.

Tom: Not well taken care of?

Shelby: No. Well, it was bought by a person. Jerry Dickerson, as a matter of fact, bought it, and they've got, sort of, a fence around it.

Tom: Shelby, you’re a dear. I can’t thank you enough for coming

Shelby: Thank you. I’ve enjoyed it. Thank you.

Tom: That was great. Just reminiscing is perfect.

Shelby: Oh, listen. We talk about it all the time. We love it. My sister lives close to Monetta. It’s her old town, and we talk about what happened. What was going on when we grew up.
Interview with Beverly Keasler Crawford, Chiquola Mill

August 7, 2019

Tom: All right. This is August the 7th, 2019. I’m at the city hall of Honea Path, South Carolina, and I’m interviewing Beverly Crawford. Beverly, if you would, please state your full name and date of birth.

Beverly: My name is Beverly Keasler Crawford. Date of birth, December 22nd, 1955.

Tom: Just give me a general idea of your life in your mill village.

Beverly: Okay. As a child, I remember even when I was very small, being on the mill village was just really a fun time for me. Everyone lived in all the little houses all nearby, so we had a lot of friends around, and I would play every day from sun-up to sun-down unless I had to go in to eat. I had lots and lots of friends. We had a town pool that was just a block away, and the members of the Chiquola Manufacturing Company, or the workers there, they could get a pass for the whole year. So every sunny day, no matter what day it was, if I had time, I would go to that pool, and, oh, I had so much fun. It was a large pool. There was a lot of kids that I knew there, so I would go there every day.

Being on the mill village, I loved living right in front of the mill because it was always running, except for one week of the year, and that week it was so quiet, I could actually hear crickets and other things that I don't normally hear, so that whole week I didn't sleep very well because that would just lull me to sleep every night. And just seeing the people, just seeing them go in and out of the doors and sitting on those large steps that they had. Eating their lunch. Leaving for one shift to the other. It was just always busy. It was just a fun time there. I just loved living on the mill village. I loved my neighbors, I loved my friends, and we just had a wonderful life there. I won't ever forget it. It was a special time in my life.

Tom: What was the address of your house?

Beverly: My address was, first of all, 306 Virginia Avenue, and then we moved to 605 Chiquola Avenue, which was directly in front of the mill, when I was around nine years old.

Tom: Is that house still in existence?

Beverly: Yes, sir. Both houses are still in existence.
Tom: Do you know who lives there? Who it's occupied by?

Beverly: One of the ladies that lives there, her name is Jane Paris. And there is an attorney, a young fella. I can't think of his name right now, but there is a young fella that lives on 306 Virginia Avenue, which is a very small house. There was only three rooms in that house when I lived there. My actual room was in the hallway, but he has added on since, so it doesn't look exactly the same, but at the same time it does, also, at the front part.

Tom: Describe your neighborhood.

Beverly: My neighborhood was very, very neat. Everybody that lived down the street, the ladies that lived there, they always kept their houses very neat. And I say ladies, because they're the ones that would sweep the carpet. I mean, the carpet had to be swept. You had to have all the dirt off the carpet. And then, the porches were always nice, and you would always see someone in the summertime, usually in the evenings, sitting on the porch talking about the day. You could hear the people inside cooking. You could smell what they were cooking. You could hear them taking ice out of the freezer and doing them and dropping them into the glasses. You could actually hear that if you were out playing. You could hear everybody getting ready for dinner, and usually it was around the same time every day for everyone.

We had a lot of kids that lived in the neighborhood. I said there was a lot of bicycles out, skateboards, something that I used to do called, I can't remember what the name of it was, but there was a ball on the end of a rope, and it would... Jingle Jangle. That's what it was called. And Pogo sticks. Those were the days when you were out, and you had Popsicles and ice creams, and you were running around with your friends, and it was just wonderful.

Tom: You lived first at 306 Virginia?

Beverly: Yes, sir.

Tom: How many years did you live there?

Beverly: Until I was nine. I was born there and until I was nine years old. Most of the neighbors that lived there at the time that we did have, they were mostly all boys. I didn't have any little girls to play with. It was all boys. I learned to be kind of tough, I guess, because I had to keep up with them, but we had neighbors that would just baby me because they were older,
and so I was the only little girl in the neighborhood. I was babied a good bit in there except for when I was out playing with those guys.

Tom: You said the house 306 Virginia was just a three-room house?

Beverly: Yes, sir.

Tom: How about the Chiquola? 605 Chiquola?

Beverly: Four rooms.

Tom: Four-room house.

Beverly: Yes.

Tom: Describe your house.

Beverly: My house was made out of siding. It probably has some asbestos in it. I don't know. You know how they talk about that. It was siding. It was blue, gray, had a little tiny bit of pink and white, so it was really cute. The front porch went all the way across, and my mom and dad actually had column posts put up, which made it look a little fancier. The backyard, or the back steps, were very high. There probably was about 10 steps and they had sides on each side that came up high, so if I wanted to go and maybe hide or maybe get away from everything, I’d go sit on the steps at the bottom because I would be covered on both sides. We had a very small front yard. We had a sidewalk that went to the porch and a swing on the front porch that I absolutely adored. I thought the backyard was so big, but when I go by now, it's not big at all, but it was big when I was younger.

Tom: Describe the furnishings in your house.

Beverly: Okay. We had a plain, leather couch, but it probably wasn't real leather. It was a long, leather couch. It was a beige brown. We had a lounge chair and a rocking chair in the living room. In the kitchen, I wish I had that table, now. It had, I guess, chrome around the sides and the chrome legs and the vinyl cover, which was red and yellow. A washer and dryer was in the kitchen, but mother kept it beautiful. That was the best washer and dryer. I mean, you wouldn’t see a scratch on it because she was one of the neatest housekeepers. Then, there was a porch on the back. A long porch, and it was closed in, and that’s where I would do my homework and stuff, and that's where I would actually be the school teacher, and my Chihuahua would be the student. I would dress the Chihuahua up. I had a chalkboard out there. And my bedroom, it was very cozy. We always kept the
windows open in the summer, and we had this big fan that was in the window that was a seafoam green. Whenever it would be summertime, it was wonderful, because it would pull the air through, and then the curtains would flow, and it was just great.

Tom: We haven't talked about siblings. Did you have siblings?

Beverly: I was an only child.

Tom: Only child.

Beverly: No siblings.

Tom: All right. Back to your house, so you had electrical switches on the wall?

Beverly: Yes, we did.

Tom: What did your mother cook on? Was it an electric stove or was it a cold stove? A wood stove or what?

Beverly: No, sir. She had an electric stove. She did. I don't remember when I was really little. I honestly don't remember that, but I do remember she did have an electric range.

Tom: How about bathroom facilities?

Beverly: We have those. It was a very small bathroom, very tiny, but we did have bathroom facilities. We had one bathroom.

Tom: So in the bathroom you had a lavatory and a commode and a bath tub. Did you have a shower?

Beverly: Did not have a shower.

Tom: No shower.

Beverly: Thought that was the most wonderful thing when we got one of those, though. Yes.

Tom: All right. Describe what you would normally have for breakfast. Just a general, normal breakfast.

Beverly: Bacon, eggs. Or sausage and eggs. Or toast and jelly and eggs.
Tom: Biscuits?

Beverly: Yes. Homemade biscuits.

Tom: And what did you have for drink for breakfast?

Beverly: Orange juice.

Tom: Did you have milk delivered to your house?

Beverly: We did. We actually did have milk delivered to our house. I didn't like milk, though. My mom would try to force me to drink it. I just did not care for it, but we did have it delivered to our house. That and cheese.

Tom: What about your typical lunch?

Beverly: During the summertime, a typical lunch would be a sandwich and maybe some chips and then a Reese Cup or some kind of dessert like fruit cocktail with Cool Whip up on top or either Jell-O.

Tom: How about your supper?

Beverly: Supper, my mom always cooked a big supper most of the time. Now, during the week we would have fried bologna, fried Treet, but we'd always have dried beans, pinto beans, black-eyed peas, any kind of dry beans, and some type of potato. She would either mash the potatoes or bake the potatoes. We would usually have a potato of some kind. She also did potato patties that had flour and oil and onion and all that kind of stuff because she had leftovers. During the week, we never had meats other than fried bologna, fried weenies, fried Treet, but on the weekends, we always had a roast or pork chops or chicken.

Tom: Did you raise chickens?

Beverly: We did not. No, sir.

Tom: Did the mill have a community pasture?

Beverly: Yes, they did.

Tom: So if you had a cow, you could keep a cow there?

Beverly: You know, no. A community pasture? I'm sorry, I misunderstood. No, sir. As far as I know, they did not. I know that you could have an animal, but it
had to be 300 feet, or you couldn't have one real close. Our houses were real close, so unless it was out in, maybe, another area that didn't have as many houses close by, they may could have. But no, sir, we didn't. We didn't have a community pasture. I'm sorry, I misunderstood.

Tom: It's okay. That was good. How about waking up in the morning? Did your mom come in and wake you up?

Beverly: She did. She would usually come in whistling, or she might even be vacuuming. We had a vacuum cleaner, and she would turn that on. So, yes, because she was always cleaning. She woke me up every morning, yes. And a lot of times, I'd wake up, especially the summer if I was ready to get out and play. I knew I'd have to eat breakfast first, so I would wake up on my own a lot of times, especially in the summer. It seems like during school time, that's when she had to wake me up.

Tom: All right. Tell me what would be your typical school dress?

Beverly: Oh, yes. Every fall we went to Belk-Simpson in town when we used to have the building here, and I would get plaid dresses. They were dresses. They had little ties in the back, you know, little sashes in the back, and they were full, and they would just be out different kind of plaids. All colors and all, so we did not wear pants to school, so it would be a dress of some kind.

Tom: What about shoes?

Beverly: To be honest with you. I think they were usually just little Mary Jane shoes, because like I said, again, we didn't wear pants to school. Not until I got older, now. Of course, when I got older we were able to, but when I was young. And, then, after I got older in the 70s, we wore bell bottoms and platforms and all that kind of stuff. The styles changed dramatically through the years, but when I was little, it was always dresses.

Tom: Tell me about your school.

Beverly: Okay. We went to school, actually, in the building you're sitting in right now. This is where I started out in first grade. We didn't have kindergarten. There may have been kindergarten, but I did not go to kindergarten. The school was this building here, and I feel so good about knowing that I started out here, and I'm actually going to retire here. The school was wonderful. The students were all close because we're a small town, and we usually ended up about in the same rooms together, all of our friends. Loved the playground. We had the merry-go-round, the monkey bars, the
swings. Everything you'd find in a typical playground, which they don't really have as much of, now. Not the same kind of playground equipment. But the typical school day was just… I enjoyed school for the most part.

Tom: Just a general idea of the class size?

Beverly: Usually around 16 to 20.

Tom: 16 to 20.

Beverly: Yes, sir. Mm-hmm.

Tom: How about the teachers themselves?

Beverly: I can actually remember my first grade teacher. She was beautiful. Her name was Miss Alexander, and I mean, I'm almost 64 years old, and I can still smell her face because we would kiss her on the way out the door. That's how much we loved her. She had a beehive hairdo. It was black as soot, and her skin was real pale, but she was absolutely gorgeous, and I can almost smell her powder or her perfume, whatever it was, when we'd kiss her cheek when we'd leave. Then, we had some that were really tough on us, but you know, now that I look back, I know why. But my first grade teacher, I think she was just always so sweet. So kind.

And, then, I had one, Miss Thelma Callahan. She was really tough on us, and she expected you to come in and working and leave working, so she wasn't the friendly type, but at the same time she was a great teacher. She was interesting.

Then, I had one who, her name was Mrs. Stone, and she was what I would've considered the meanest teacher I ever had. I had an F on a test one time, and she had it. A great, big red F, and she showed it to the entire class. I ran out of the school, went back to the park behind here, which is called Dogwood Park, got behind the tree, and sat there. The principal, Mr. Bishop, and one of my friends, Martin McCoy, which has McCoy Lumber Company here in town now, they both come out to get me because I had ran away, and I don't know if anyone ever got on to the teacher. I know my mother was upset with her for showing it to the class, but at the same time she said, “Maybe you will do better.” I never made an F again.

Tom: Where did you go to middle school and high school?

Beverly: Middle school was over on Brock Avenue here in town, and that was from fifth to eighth. By the time I got to high school, that's when they had
merged the two towns together, which is now Belton-Honea Path High. I think it had been BHP for a few years before I got there. I can't exactly remember how many, but it had not been. Mom and Dad had kind of wished they had not done that, put them together, but that's where I went to high school.

Tom: Did you continue your education after high school?

Beverly: No, sir. I did not. Unfortunately, I did not. I was very, very lazy to a degree, and I did go to the career center, though, and took some courses. You know, like shorthand, typing and all, which thank God I did because that's why I'm where I'm at now because I did at least take some courses. But no, I kept saying, “I'm going back to school, I'm going back to school,” and I got busy with my life, and I never went back. I do regret that. So if anyone is listening to this years from now, I hope you never do that. Everyone should continue education, I think.

Tom: Did you yourself ever actually work in the mill?

Beverly: No, sir. I didn't. I did put in an application for the office, and I did not get that job. No, sir. I did not.

Tom: Did you ever date a boy from the mill village?

Beverly: Oh, yes, sir. Many of them. Some that worked for my dad that would ask my dad could they ask me out. Oh, yes, I did date several boys from the mill village. In fact, we just had so many around, you just got used to them. So, yes, sir.

Tom: Did you marry one of those boys?

Beverly: No, sir. I did not. I married a guy that went to Woodmont High School, and he lived in the country, so nothing to do with the mill.

Tom: After school, you played on the playground. What else was there? Any other thing that you’d do? Did you do anything with your family?

Beverly: Yes, sir. Now, after school I would usually play with neighborhood children. But as far as my family, every weekend my whole family—aunts, uncles, cousins and all—we would go to Little Pigs Barbecue in Anderson. When I said every weekend, I don't mean every single weekend, but that's what we would do. The guys would go bowling, the women would go shopping, and we always had cookouts with our families. They would come to our house, we'd go to their house, we would
do homemade ice cream. Just very simple things. But, yes, we did do a lot with our family. Family was very important at that time. Like I said, aunts and uncles, cousins and all. We all hung out together, so it was very nice.

Tom: Going back to a school, again: How were discipline problems handled at school?

Beverly: You would get a paddling, and you might get your hand smacked with a ruler. The top of your hand. You might get your ear pulled. I never got my ear pulled, but one of my classmates did. Yes, we had discipline, and they would put you out in the hall and sit you there for a while. They would send you to the principal's office, or you would maybe if you was bad enough, get sent home. But I don't remember a whole lot of that growing up other than the ear pulling and the slapping on the hand with the ruler, or even, you might get popped on the leg or something. They might just, you know, and they would tell you, “We're going to contact your parents.” Nothing really major ever happened that I remember, other than those type things.

Tom: How were discipline issues handled in your family?

Beverly: I would get a switch. I would get pop on the behind.

Tom: Who switched you?

Beverly: My mother. My dad never laid a hand on me, but one time in my whole life, but he let her do the discipline. Usually it was by hickory, or I would get grounded. When I got older you just couldn't go out and ride around and drive or anything if you got in trouble as a teenager. I didn't get spanked at that time. I don't remember a spanking maybe past 12 or so.

Tom: Tell me. Other family activities, did you go to ball games and stuff like that?

Beverly: Went to the football games at the high school. I did. I went to the football games, some at the middle school, and we used to hang out at the pharmacy which had an ice cream parlor after school and stuff. A lot of us would get together and just walk there to get us a Cherry Coke or an ice cream or a malt or something that. But, yeah, I'd go to the football games at the high school. I loved the football games at the high school. Not that I care for football that much, but just being out with your friends.

Tom: Was the subject of family finances ever discussed openly in your home?
Beverly: Not until I got older. If they were, I never remember, but when I got older, yes. I mean, “You can't have this right now because we just don't have the money, today.” Or, “We had to put braces on your teeth, so right now there's something that's more important than that outfit that you want,” or whatever. So not to a big degree. No, sir. Not until I got older.

Tom: Are you familiar with the benefits of a pounding? Do you understand what I mean?

Beverly: Yes, sir. I do.

Tom: Did your family ever receive the benefits of it?

Beverly: Not that I know of, but we have done a lot of, we would go and do poundings for others or help with it. Yes, sir. I do remember that. I remember there being sickness in town or maybe someone… We had someone who lost a home by fire. Oh, yes. That was a big thing because I remember that everybody in the neighborhood would get together in our church. Yes, sir.

Tom: All right, since you've mentioned church, tell me about church.

Beverly: Okay. I've been at the same church all my life from the time that my mom and dad carried me up in a blanket at Pentecostal Holiness Church in Honea Path. We were very, very regular at church. We went on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday nights and during revivals, as well. My dad and my grandparents and all went to that same church, and we've just always. It's just been a big part of my life. A huge part of my life, actually. I went there, and then my children, I raised them in church, and now my daughter, she's at our church as well with her three children. My grandchildren. It's just been a big part of our life, and it's been the same one that we have gone to.

Tom: Is the church still active?

Beverly: Yes, sir. It is.

Tom: Describe the physical condition of your dad when he would come home from work.

Beverly: My dad would be tired, and he'd have a little bit of cotton in his hair because he worked at the cotton mill. He worked the second shift a lot, and when he did, that would leave me and Mom there in the evenings. So sometimes, I didn't see him coming in, but when he did work the first, he
was always just “Dad.” He never complained. In fact, my dad never complained. He just wasn’t a complainer, and as I got older, I could hear him come in at midnight, and he would go to a refrigerator, and I can hear him now opening a Hershey candy bar. That's what he ate every night, because he needed to wind down or whatever. I never saw anything other than the time that he hurt his foot extremely bad.

He twisted his ankle, and he worked on it the rest of the day, and our family doctor, Dr. John Tyler, when they would make house calls, he came out. And I could see him taking that shoe off of my dad, and you could see the imprints of the laces because he had worked in an all day. The doctor told him. Said, “You should not have done that. See what you've done to your foot, now?” But, other than that, he just never complained. He never said anything about, “I had to work hard.” He just worked.

Tom: Well, you talked about your aunts and uncles and your family, so you had relatives that also worked in the mill?

Beverly: Yes, sir. I did. Some of them did. My Uncle Furman worked on the mill. I don't think my Uncle Bill, he was in the Air Force, and my Uncle Harold didn't. He did something else, so Uncle Furman, I believe, is the only one that was close to me that worked in the mill. He worked in the mill a long time. Many, many years.

Tom: Speaking of relatives, do you have any idea of where your family actually came from?

Beverly: Well, it's been said that we may be derived from Germany, but I really do not know that for a fact. I have always said I wanted to research that. The only thing... If I put in the name “Keasler,” it says my grandmother on the other side was a Herndon, and then I really would love to know. I have not taken the time or even really had the time to research stuff, so I really do not exactly know. I just feel like that when I look back at the name, they said something about farming, so I don't know.

Tom: Were they ever at one time sharecroppers or anything that you know?

Beverly: My grandfather, actually, worked in the mill too, so I don't know. I wish I could go back, and I need to. You make me really want to research more, now, because to me that's very interesting. It’s just, I haven't had a chance to do all of that.

Tom: During your years that you lived on the mill village and the hill, were politics ever discussed in the family?
Beverly: Well, yes, I guess to a degree. My dad really thought a lot of John F. Kennedy. He just thought he was a wonderful president. He did talk about politics. I didn't understand a lot what they were talking about at the time. He and my Uncle Bill would really get into big discussions. That would be his brother. But John F. Kennedy, I think, is the one I remember most because I remember the very day that he was shot. They sent us home from school, and I remember being very sad about that. Not really understanding why I was that sad. I guess because he was our President and because my daddy thought so highly of him. So, yeah, they did discuss. Just not to an extent where I listened closely because I would usually just go on about my business. But, yes, it was discussed.

Tom: Was NAFTA ever discussed? Did you ever hear that term?

Beverly: No, sir, I didn't.

Tom: You mentioned that one of your uncles served in a military. Did you father ever serve in the military?

Beverly: Yes. He did. He was in the army for about four years, and he was in Germany. That may be why I keep thinking about Germany, because my daddy probably was just joking around that we were from Germany. So, yes, he did. He served in the Army. He was in the Army. My Uncle Bill was in the Air Force.

Tom: Was your father drafted, or did he join?

Beverly: He joined. Yeah.

Tom: Have any idea what year that was?

Beverly: I believe 1952 or 1953.

Tom: So he wasn't involved in the Korean conflict?

Beverly: No, sir. He was not. He actually worked on some vehicles and things. That's pretty much what he did. He was never involved in any type of war.

Tom: What actually was his main job while he worked in the mill?

Beverly: He started out in what they called the card room, and then he became supervisor when I was probably about, I'm trying to think how old I was because, oh, I do know how old because we'd never had a phone before. He was the supervisor in the card room. I don't know if he started out in
the card room. I just always remember that as the job. But, now, he became supervisor when I was 15. The reason I remember that so well is we never had a phone, and because he became supervisor, he was required to have a phone. They never had one before, and I remember that I came home from school, and they had put the phone behind the door, and they had my grandmother call about that not too long after, and the phone rang. You would have thought I had a million dollars when I saw that telephone. So I was 15, and he was the supervisor from the time I was 15 until he retired. I was trying to remember what year he retired. He worked 50 years. He was 16 when he started, so he was 66… No. He was older than that, but he worked 50 years. I do know that.

Tom: 50 years.

Beverly: Well, they gave him a party at 50 years. He may have worked a couple of years after that.

Tom: What would you consider the most challenging experience you faced while you lived in the mill village?

Beverly: I would say that my most challenging, if there was, is the fact that, and I don't mean this because now I realize how blessed I really was, but they were times when, I don't know that I would call it ashamed, but I just wished I had lived in a brick house. I wished I had had a bigger house. I didn't want to invite certain people to the house, because our house was so much smaller, and we were on the mill village. And, really, I never was what I would say ashamed, because my mother had the cleanest house that I had ever been in. I went in some other friends' houses, and they were messy. They lived in big brick houses, but they weren't clean like my mom’s and dad’s.

Then, another thing is some of the kids that lived on the mill village were a lot rougher than myself. They did things that I wouldn't do. I didn't want to drink. I didn't want to smoke. They would call me Miss Goody-Two-Shoes, so I would get made fun of a little bit by some of my peers, and I guess that was about it. Not anything bad ever happened. I had a wonderful childhood, actually, when I stop and think about it, but those were probably the two things I would consider that was a little challenging to me. I never felt poor, really.

Tom: Were you ever called a Linthead?

Beverly: Nobody ever called me that. No, sir. Nobody ever called me that.
Tom: But you're familiar with the term.

Beverly: They called me the Mill Hill Kid. They would call me that. I am familiar with Linthead. Yes, sir, but they would call me the Mill Hill Kid. Yeah. But they did not call me that. Well, one of the other phrases they always used, “You live on the other side of the tracks.” You live on the other side of the tracks, so that's one of the reasons why I didn't want to invite certain ones to my house.

Tom: Did that hurt your feelings?

Beverly: Yes, sir. It did. It made me mad.

Tom: That’s normal. What was the most positive influence that you had if you can point out any one positive thing that made an impact on your life while you lived there?

Beverly: I think the families, the neighbors… the pure sense of just being a family. Of having a normal family life, of getting up in the mornings, somebody working, eating dinner together, playing with your friends. Just being a family.

Tom: Were there any negative influences?

Beverly: Not in my home. No, sir. They were negative influences around the village, sometimes, but they weren't bad. We had a little, I don’t know what you’d call it, a beer joint, and we would have the people that would go up the road in the middle of the day and come back in the evening, and they couldn't hardly walk. But my dad always made… He'd say, “Well, when he comes back he's going to be disheveled.” And he was. But no, sir. Not really.

Tom: You speak very fondly of both of your parents. Did you have a good relationship with both of them?

Beverly: Yes, sir. Very good relationship with both my parents.

Tom: Who is the person that you could go to for help resolving a personal issue?

Beverly: My mother.

Tom: Mother.

Beverly: And my grandmother. So my mom and my grandma.
Tom: What would you consider to be the most valuable lesson you learned by living in your mill village?

Beverly: That no matter what you have, no matter how small, no matter what you have, family and the love of family is the most important and the most valuable thing that you can take with you the rest of your life. The work ethic, the knowing that your father worked hard for your family. Your mom. Knowing that there are people around that you can call on anytime you need. Your friends. To me, we have wonderful people that lived in that area. I think that all areas at that time probably had people you could always go to no matter what you needed. They were there for you, and they would pray for you, and if you needed anything, they would get it to you if they could. It didn't matter how little they had. They would take whatever they had to help you. It was just a wonderful time. I can honestly say that was the happiest time of my life as far as growing up. It's just being there and being around all this wonderful people. Most of them have gone now, but I remember so many of them fondly.

Tom: Did living in your mill village prepare you for life beyond the village?

Beverly: Yes, sir. It certainly did.

Tom: In what way?

Beverly: Well, like I said, just watching people work. You knew that's what you did to make a living. Being satisfied with what you had. Being happy when you were able to acquire something extra that really wasn't something you needed, but you acquired it. Being proud. Being proud of yourself. Loving family. Loving the Lord. It did prepare me, yes, because I feel so blessed now. It's hard to go over there, sometimes, because sometimes it makes me cry because that place that was once such a beautiful, neat area is just crumbling. And it sometimes will make you cry, but it has prepared me. Yes. I just thank God every day that that's where he placed me.

Tom: Was there anything that you think that I should have asked that I haven't asked?

Beverly: I don't think so. I think you covered most everything. I think you covered everything, sir. I don't know of anything else that I could probably say other than I'm just thankful that my life was spent there, and I have many fond memories. I thank God for them.

Tom: What is your current address?
Beverly: It is 2 Latimer Street, and that's here in town.
Tom: L-A-T-I-M-E-R?
Beverly: Yes, sir.
Tom: Number two.
Beverly: Yes, sir.
Tom: And what's the zip here?
Beverly: 29654.
Tom: Okay. It's been great to talk to Beverly this morning. She's been very kind, very sweet to help me with this project, and I'm going to sign off at this time and say, “Thank you again, Beverly.”
Beverly: Thank you. I enjoyed this.
Tom: It was good. It was good. You could be a movie star.
Beverly: Are you serious?
Tom: Yeah.
Beverly: Thank you.
Tom: Did very well. Very well.
Beverly: It’s nice to talk about it.
Tom: It gave you a little time to talk about old times that you enjoyed so much, obviously. It had a very profound impact on you and your life, and it shows in your face that you had a good life.
Beverly: Yes, sir. I did.
Tom: You know, the one word that I keep getting over and over when I talk to you people who have had the mill village experience is the fact that-
Interview with Amos Calvin Daniel, Appleton Mill

October 1, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom. I’m back with my buddy, Calvin, and I’m just making sure this thing is working and my batteries are good. Okay. If you would, Calvin, state your full name and your date of birth.

Calvin: Okay. My full name is Amos Calvin Daniel. October the 11th, 1935.

Tom: Just give me a general idea of your life on the mill village.

Calvin: It was a pleasant life. It seemed like everyone cared for one another. We didn’t have much, to speak of, but as one fellow told me, “We didn’t have anything, but we had everything.” So, that was my life.

Tom: What was the address of your home?

Calvin: When I was born, it was 26 Homewood Ave, and then they moved my house in 1951, and that became 2 Y Street or 2 York Street.

Tom: Is it currently occupied?

Calvin: It’s currently occupied now by renters. A renter is living there.

Tom: Describe your neighborhood.

Calvin: Neighborhood. Fun. Everyone had about the same thing, and we all seemed to get along nicely.

Tom: At what age did you live in that house on York?

Calvin: We moved there in 1951. I was 15 years old.

Tom: And you left when?

Calvin: I left at 19 years old. Went in the service.

Tom: Went in to the service.

Calvin: Mm-hmm. United States Air Force.

Tom: Describe your family.
Calvin: My family, now, on the mill hill or here?

Tom: The mill hill.

Calvin: On the mill hill. I was an only child. My mom and dad, they worked there all of their lives. My dad, he worked there 50 years.

Tom: In Appleton Mill?

Calvin: In Appleton Mill. Yeah, that’s correct. Appleton Mill, and I worked there sometime in the summertime, but I left there in 1958. I left there. I had a full-time job there in ’58, but I left. I joined the service rather than get drafted.

Tom: Did you know if your father or his parents were sharecroppers at one time?

Calvin: My dad’s dad was a sharecropper. Yes, sir. No question about it. That’s the reason why they came to the mill village to make some money.

Tom: What about the educational level of your parents?

Calvin: Oh, educational level. My dad had no education. He never went to school. My mom had a 4th grade education, and I remember her reading the paper to him every morning. Of course, he had a radio. He could listen to his radio.

Tom: Tell me about your relationship with your parents.

Calvin: Oh, they were wonderful, I never heard my mom and dad fuss at one another. Never heard of each one of them cussing. It was wonderful. It was just a joy to have parents like that.

Tom: If you would, describe your mill house there on Y Street. About the electricity and the plumbing and how was it?

Calvin: Well, before we went down to York Street or Y Street, we didn’t have any plumbing. We had running water, but we had no refrigerator. We had no electric stove or anything, but then once we got down there on Y Street in 1951, we did. We had a refrigerator. As a matter of fact, we built a little bathroom on the back, back there. We had a bath. We had 220 electricity. A washer and dryer and so forth.

Tom: Tell me your typical breakfast.
Calvin: Breakfast.

Tom: When you were living on Y Street.

Calvin: Oh, either one, it doesn’t matter. A piece of sausage, maybe. Bacon, egg, butter biscuits, gravy served with it, and grits.

Tom: How about your lunch meal?

Calvin: Lunch, we’d probably have a sandwich, maybe. That’d be about it. And then in the afternoon, that would be the supper meal. That would be beans and greens, beets, what have you.

Tom: Tell me about your typical everyday dress when you were living there.

Calvin: Everyday dress?

Tom: Mm-hmm. Jeans, overalls?

Calvin: Yeah, overalls. Well, not overalls in ’51. Back before we went down to Y Street, yeah, it was overalls. But it was jeans and a dress shirt.

Tom: How about your shoes?

Calvin: Oh, yeah. Shoes. We had dress shoes.

Tom: Were they Brogans?

Calvin: No, no. Not after that. They were before we went down on Y Street, but things began to change when we went down there in ’51. That’s when people began to have cars and so-forth.

Tom: Tell me about your school and your teachers.

Calvin: School, I went to Glenn Street School. Elementary School. Very good teachers. Went there up to 6th grade. Then I transferred there. Then went up to McCants Junior High School. That was 7th, 8th, and 9th. Then went to Boy’s High School. 10th, 11th, and 12th. Finished there in 1953.

Tom: Did you continue your education after that?

Calvin: For a year I didn’t. No, I went in the service in 1958. Stayed there four years. Came out, and I started at Anderson College on GI Bill. Went there
Tom: Did you ever actually work at the mill?

Calvin: Oh, yeah. Like I said, while I go, I worked down there in the summertime, and then I had a full time job in ’58, but I saw I wanted out. You either were going to get drafted or… I wasn’t going to continue to make a life job as a textile.

Tom: Tell me about your after-school activities.

Calvin: After-school activities. Sports. There’s no question about it. That’s all I knew. That’s all I wanted to do. I played basketball, and, of course, in summertime we played baseball.

Tom: How were health issues resolved? If somebody got sick, were there home remedies, or did you go to the doctor?

Calvin: Mostly home remedies, and then the doctor would visit our neighborhood. He’d visit. They’d come around. They had a set date he’d come around and see you, and of course, if you really got sick, your parents could take you to the hospital.

Tom: How were discipline issues resolved in the family? Your family.

Calvin: Well, of course, I rarely got a scolding, but occasionally I’d get a whipping.

Tom: How were discipline issues resolved in school?

Calvin: The same way. Of course, they would warn you first, and then they would discipline you with a paddle, but I didn’t see much of that. We were really good kids in school.

Tom: How were discipline issues dealt with in the mill, itself?

Calvin: In the mill—

Tom: Would they fire you if you—

Calvin: Oh, yeah. They would fire you if you didn’t… If you late out of work or you misbehaved or you get trouble there or didn’t do your job. Sure, they would fire you. Yeah.
Tom: Was the subject of family finances ever discussed openly at home?

Calvin: No, no. Mine wasn’t. We didn’t have much finances. There wasn’t much financing to be discussed.

Tom: Was it ever necessary for your family to receive the benefits of a pounding?

Calvin: No, no. we were fortunate in that respect.

Tom: To your knowledge, did your family ever receive any financial support from The United States Government?

Calvin: No, no.

Tom: All right. Describe your church experiences.

Calvin: Well, church experiences…. Really, I got saved when I was about six or seven years old. My mom took me to a tent meeting. I don’t know what happened. Something. They asked for the people to come down, and all of the sudden, the spirit got a hold of me and went, and I got saved then. That was probably around ’43, ’44.

Tom: Did you ever have other relatives that worked in the mill?

Calvin: Oh, yeah. Just about all of them. Yeah, sure.

Tom: Both sides of the family? Your mother’s and your father’s?


Tom: How many years did your father work in the mill?

Calvin: 50 years. He got a 50-year plaque. I’ve got it at home, now.

Tom: How about your mother?

Calvin: My mom, she was there about 45, maybe 46. Oh, yeah. He was a loom fixer in the weaving room, and my mom was a weaver in the weaving room.

Tom: Did they work the same shift?

Calvin: Yes. First shift. That’s correct.
Tom: So, that’s an eight-hour shift?

Calvin: That’s correct.

Tom: It starts when?

Calvin: That would be about 7:00-3:00.

Tom: 7:00-3:00. Did your family ever discuss national politics?

Calvin: Very rarely. No, no. they never did. No.

Tom: Were any other members, other than yourself, serve in the military? Any family members? Uncles, aunts?


Tom: So you were in the Air Force?

Calvin: That’s correct.

Tom: For how many years?

Calvin: Four years.

Tom: Four years.

Calvin: Yes, sir.

Tom: What was your job in the Air Force?

Calvin: I was an aircraft mechanic and a crew chief. I was crew chief on a B-57-B Bomber.

Tom: Where were you stationed?

Calvin: I was stationed all around. I got discharged in Langley Air Force Base, but I went all over the country. Everywhere that plane went, I had to go ahead the other plane.

Tom: Did you go overseas?

Tom: What was the most challenging experience you faced while living in your mill village?

Calvin: I would say the most challenging was competing against my competitors.

Tom: In your sports?

Calvin: Sports. That’s correct.

Tom: Were you ever called a derogatory name like a Linthead or a Bobbin-Dodger or anything of that nature?

Calvin: No, but we knew. We knew. I never experienced anything like that. Now, others have told me they have experienced it. But we didn’t take that, perse, as a—

Tom: Negative?

Calvin: Negative.

Tom: Who was the most positive influence on you while you lived in your village?

Calvin: I would say the basketball players that played ahead of me. There were several of them. I would hate to say one over another.

Tom: The people that you played sports with?

Calvin: Oh, yeah. They were good mentors to me.

Tom: If you had a personal problem, who would you go to?

Calvin: I would go to one of them. I would go to the athletic director there at the mill.

Tom: What would you consider to be the most valuable lesson that you learned living in the mill village?

Calvin: To respect and honor others. To care for others, because we all had about the same thing, which was nothing to speak of.

Tom: Do you think that living in the mill village prepared you for life?
Calvin: There’s no question about it. No question about it. The camaraderie. The discipline that we respected for us to do, and the caring of one-another.

Tom: All right, my friend. I apologize for making you do this so many times.

Calvin: No, I’d do it any time.

Tom: I’m shaking hands with my friend, Calvin. What a fine person.
Interview with John Marshal Daniel, Appleton Mill

July 29, 2019

Tom: Okay. This is Tom Cartledge. This is Monday, July the 29th, and I'm at the home of Marshal Daniel. Marshal and Joanna Daniel, I'm sitting in their breakfast room. It's about 9:30 in the morning, and we're fixing to get started. Marshal, if you would, please state your full name and date of birth.

Marshal: My name is John Marshal Daniel. My date of birth is 2/28/31.

Tom: All right. If you would, please, give me a general idea of life on a mill village.

Marshal: In what direction, now?

Tom: Just general.

Marshal: Well, if you go back to my day, my early days, I’m 88 and a half years old. That's altogether different than it was later. In my early days, I can't remember more than maybe two cars on the mill village, so everywhere we went, we either had to walk. Hardly any of us at that time had money to even have a bicycle. So wherever we went, we walked. We walked to school, and even after we started going across town to junior high school. It was, roughly, I'd say, three to four miles. You walked. Everybody did.

As far as food, it was very basic in my early days. Every morning, and we all was about in the same bracket. We didn't have variation of choices in our eating. Most all of us, we had what we call thickening gravy every morning and biscuits and either syrup or jelly. Fat back meat. It wasn't until a few years later, I was born right on the tail-end of the depression, but after a few years, the way I can remember things must be, it started picking up economically. We'd have a little bacon once in a while, but most everybody, the only meat we ever had through the week was chicken on Sunday. But we were happy. I mean, other amazing things, especially those of us that worked the textile mill. That’s back before air conditioning. And the thing that's most outstanding to me, it was hard labor, but I can't never remember people grumbling or griping and complaining. We were just glad to have a job.

Tom: Thankful.
Marshal: The pay was very minimum, but everything was cheap. I go back when hotdogs was a nickel, drinks were six cents, cigarettes was 20 cents a pack, and on and on I could go. But the main interest, especially among men, was ball. Oh, it was competitive. Those mill hills. I mean, highly competitive, and they were some outstanding ball players. It wasn't nothing unusual that I could name a few that left the textile mill hill here, and they went straight to the Big Leagues. Of course, back then, they didn't have farm clubs. I could name a few that went. It was very good. Very competitive. And on Saturday, especially baseball, I remember one particular Saturday there at Appleton, they said there's 3000 people there in a particular ball field. I don't know what else you want.

Tom: All right, let me ask you, what was your address on the mill? What street did you live on?

Marshal: I told you the other day that it was 12 P Street, but I was born on what back then was Daniel Street. It's Strickland Street, now, and I can't remember the house number.

Tom: And what was the alphabet?

Marshal: I was born down… See, there was Old Town, and years later they built another section they called New Town. I was born in New Town, and I can't remember when we moved up to Old Town, but it was in Old Town on P Street.

Tom: P?

Marshal: P Street.

Tom: Do you remember the address?

Marshal: Yeah. 12th.

Tom: Number 12 P Street.

Marshal: P. The letter P. They called them Alphabet Streets.

Tom: Yeah, because Arthur Higgins lived on J street.

Marshal: Yeah, I heard him say that.

Tom: He lived at 206 J Street, and you lived at number 12 P Street. So you moved into number 12 P Street about what age?
Marshal: I can't remember that. It must've been very early.

Tom: Very early.

Marshal: But my early upbringing, I remember on P Street.

Tom: How long did you live there on the village?

Marshal: Oh, goodness. Up 'til I was grown. 'Til probably, seemed like Mom and them had a house built shortly after the war. I guess I was around, I'd say 18 years old.

Tom: All right. You mentioned your mother. Describe your family to me that you lived with on P Street. Who all lived there?

Marshal: There's my dad and my mother, my sister, and me. I had two brothers. They were born dead. I never did know them, but it was my mother, Daddy, my sister Dorothy, and my brother David. Four.

Tom: So there were only the four of you there.

Marshal: That's right.

Tom: Describe your home. Describe the house.

Marshal: Well, it was a frame house. Back in my early days, there was no refrigeration. Bathroom was on the back porch. What else? Wood stove. Everybody cooked with a wood stove. I'm going back to my early days.

Tom: Go ahead.

Marshal: Let's see. No washing machines or nothing like that. Mama, I've told Jo many times. I remember so well. Every Monday, Momma would have to go out in the yard to get an old big, black washtub. She'd build a fire around it, fill it with water, and she had three tubs on a bench. She'd start off boiling them clothes in that old, black pot, chucking it with a stick. Then, she'd take it out and ring it out. Then start rinsing them. Every Monday. And, then, I'd hang them out on the line with clothespins. Boy, I tell my wife a lot of times. I said, “These women got it made in this day. They just throw them clothes in the washing machine. Walk away.”

Tom: Did you have electricity?
Marshal: Yeah. We didn't have no wall plug-ins. There was a socket there. We plugged in up in the ceiling.

Tom: Single drop?

Marshal: Single drop.

Tom: In each room?

Marshal: Each room.

Tom: Yeah, but no wall lamps or anything like that?

Marshal: No, no. Not in my early days.

Tom: Did your family ultimately buy the house on P Street?

Marshal: No, but later when the mill sold them, I bought one. A different home on Old Street.

Tom: Just as an investment or to move into?

Marshal: Yeah, just as an investment. I was still a single boy at that time.

Tom: What did you pay for that house?

Marshal: That I can't remember, but it was very minimum.

Tom: How did you heat your house?

Marshal: Little grate. One room. Everybody. We was all in the same boat. One little grate we heated with coal. We cooked, Mama cooked on a wood stove with wood, but that little grate. We’d go to bed at night in the winter, and you’d stick your head out from under the cover. You could see your breath. Yeah, that's true.

Tom: All right. You mentioned earlier about your breakfast. Tell me again, what was the most common breakfast that you had?

Marshal: Thickening gravy. Fried out fatback. Get the grease, put flour in it, made it browned up however brown you wanted it. And then pour milk in it. That was the basic breakfast every morning.

Tom: And you ate that with biscuits?
Marshal: Poured the gravy over the biscuits. Ate it with a fork.

Tom: What would you say was a typical lunch?

Marshal: Dried beans. Dried beans every day. Basically, that's what it was. And Mama was pretty strong. And vegetables, you'd have turnip greens quite often.

Tom: And what about your typical supper?

Marshal: Most many times, three-fourths of the time, most everybody had a cow back then. They had to, because they had a cow. They had milk and butter and they could make it. At night, many nights we’d eat cornbread and milk. But Momma would always cook enough for dinner. They’d be what was left over from dinner. She kept it in that wood stove. It had upper sections, and if there was any leftover from there, you could either eat that or milk and cornbread. And I’d eat milk and cornbread many, many, many nights.

Tom: How often do you think you ate meat?

Marshal: Like I said, when I was young, the only meat we had was on Sunday. They’d have fried chicken.

Tom: Fried chicken?

Marshal: Fried chicken.

Tom: Did you sleep in the same room with your sister?

Marshal: Yep. My sister and I slept together. She was about six, seven years older than me. But as little boy, for I don't know how long, we slept together.

Tom: In the same bed?

Marshal: Same bed.

Tom: What was your typical morning routine? Would your mom wake you up?

Marshal: At what age are we talking about?

Tom: Just—
Marshal: Well, when we started school, we’d just get up. Mom would wake us up if she needed to. We’d eat breakfast, put our clothes on—

Tom: And what were your clothes?

Marshal: Overalls.

Tom: Overalls?

Marshal: Overalls. I grew up in overalls. All of the men did in my early days.

Tom: Did you have a shirt underneath it?

Marshal: Yeah. Had a shirt.

Tom: Like a tee shirt or—

Marshal: Just a whatever, regular. Back then, the women had to make a lot of their shirts. Mama made lot of mine. Just a regular shirt.

Tom: Out of flour sacks?

Marshal: Well, I don't ever remember having to do that. Some did, but she’d buy cloth and then make the shirts. We’d wear them.

Tom: And you would walk to school?

Marshal: Oh, yeah.

Tom: What was the name of the school?

Marshal: Well, my grammar school was Glenn Street.

Tom: Glenn Street.

Marshal: Glenn Street.

Tom: It’s the same one Arthur went to.

Marshal: Really? Yeah. Everybody there on them mill hills went to Glenn Street.

Tom: Did the kids from the Anderson Mill go to the same school?
Marshal: Yep. Anderson Mill, Equinox, Appleton. I know all of those did. The lower part of town has a different school.

Tom: Yeah, I know. Around Orr. Tell me about your teachers. Oh, well, let me see. Go back to your dress. Did you wear shoes?

Marshal: Let’s see. In the summer, Mom would let us take our shoes off in April, and we’d go barefooted all summer. Never put them back on ‘til school started. We wore shoes to school. They required that.

Tom: What kind of shoes? Were they Brogans?

Marshal: No, when we was little boys they were not Brogans. Later, when I was working in the mill, that's all I ever wore was Brogans. But they’re just common shoes.

Tom: Describe your teachers.

Marshal: Oh, they were super nice. They understood. Looking back, they understood our, what would I say, lack of professional training. They got down on our level, you know what I mean? And they were very kind. I don't never remember a teacher being harsh and ugly to no one. And, now, looking back, I know that was the reason. They realized our—

Tom: Situation?

Marshal: Situation.

Tom: Did they live in the area?

Marshal: No. None that I knew of did.

Tom: You've already talked about baseball. Was that a main after school activity? What did you do when you were a teenager after school? What would you do?

Marshal: Played ball all of my life till I became a Christian and left home. I mean, that was a main thing on all the mill hills. We had even want they call “Marblesies” shooting marbles. And then we had basketball, football, baseball.

Tom: Oh, you did have football?

Marshal: Well, what would I say? We just got a group together.
Tom: Just a pick-up game?

Marshal: Pick-up teams. We'd go play Orr Mill, Equinox. No helmets. No shoulder pads.

Tom: What about work at the mill? Did you actually work at the mill?

Marshal: Oh, yeah. Went to work at 16 years old.

Tom: You went to work when you were 16 years old?

Marshal: I dropped out of school.

Tom: Dropped out of school?

Marshal: I did when I became a Christian. Got saved Saturday night. Sitting by the little fireplace Monday morning, Mamma said, “Son, would you like to go back to school?” And I thought of many a times. I remember even letting it debate. I said, “Yes, I would.” And I had a good job. By that time, my daddy was a loom fixer and that was one of the highest-paying jobs for common people like us. Daddy took me under his wing, and he was an expert, and everybody knew it. So he helped me, got me established, and I was making for that day, that time, I was making good money. But when I got saved, like I said, we’ll go into that, I was at a dance hall on Saturday night. Never one time ever thought about my need of God. It just never had crossed my mind when I was against it.

Went to the bathroom. Me and two lifetime friends from Appleton. I had a Model-A Ford for work. We'd go every Saturday night to the ballroom in Georgia. Right in the middle of that dance, we went to the bathroom, so I turned to come back up in the little hallway about this wide. Just like that, I turned my face to the wall. Took that finger, I said, “You know what, boys? I feel like there’s a circle around me, and I'm trying to get out.” I said, “But I don't know how to get out.” I caught myself. See, back then I was big, strong and played ball all the time. I said, “What in the world made me say a crazy thing like that?” Never thought about God. Shook it off, went back and danced another hour or so. Came out, and a friend of mine, Frank, his wife comes up there. Frank Marsan. Mary Evans was her name. Frank was under my steering wheel. We were drinking moonshine liquor.

I walked around to the passenger side, stuck my head in. I said, “We got any more whisky?” Said, “It's all gone.” I called the bootlegger’s name. I said, “Stop. We'll get a jar.” When I reached again for that door handle,
here it come, again. Now, I know it was conviction, but before that if somebody said it, I wouldn't know what they was talking about. I got in and sat down. As soon as I sat down, I said, “Boys, I’m not going to let me keep living this way,” I said, “My mother had been praying for me.” And I remember when she went down to a little church over on the mill hill and got her experience and brought it home, and I’d hear her in there praying. And not know how. Lay me down to sleep. She'd be praying, but I didn’t think it was having a big effect on me. I’d just go through the house. Momma’s praying. But, boy, that night, it fell on me.

Frank, pulled off from the car, got about three miles down the road. Boy, he just kept working on me. I turned to him. I said, “If you'll stop, I need to pray.” When I said that, I felt if I didn't get on my knees, my chest was going to burst. I tried to get down in that A-model, but I couldn't. I was too big. He pulled over. That’s before they built 85, stopped, opened the door and bailed, and I rolled down in an embankment and down there in the ditch. I got up on my hands and knees, and I felt the Holy Spirit just subsiding, and I didn't know how to pray. I started talking. I said, “God, why'd you put me down here and leave me?” I said, “You know I don’t know how to pray. And them boys think I’m crazy.” Them were the very words I said. And, boy, the Holy Spirit came back.

Next thing I remember, I stood up, and it felt like God took two gallons of peace, poured it on top of my head. I just spoke. I wouldn't talk to them boys. I said, “This is a very thing I've been looking for all of my life. Didn't have the sense enough to know it. And from that moment, boy, my life radically changed. Like I said, that Monday morning, Mamma said, “Son, would you like to go back to school?” And I said, “Yes.” She knew a teacher that knew about an opportunity in a school in Columbia, and she said, “Let me check.” Leslie Moore was her name. She said, “Let me check with her to find out the details.” She did. I wound up down there running the dishwasher machine for 40 cents an hour. Happy as a jaybird.

Tom: So you had the same experience as Saul had on the road to Damascus?

Marshal: I had an experience. Boy, I came there. I teach Sunday school now since I’ve retired. Pastor. I tell them, “Anybody who's ever been through the process of the new birth, they can't never doubt the power of God.”

Tom: That's for sure.

Marshal: They know it’s real.

Tom: That's for sure. So, you went to work when you were 16 in the mill.
Marshal: 16.

Tom: And, then, you worked how long before you went to Columbia?

Marshal: I was about 21 years old. About five years, I'd say.

Tom: Okay. And, then, you went to school in Columbia?

Marshal: I did.

Tom: Was that a ministerial school or just general education?

Marshal: No, it was just high school. Get your high school diploma. I went in, they tested me the night I went in. 6.9, that’s what my grades were. I stayed down there for about five months. They tested me as 9.6. Came home that summer. And my pastor here in Anderson, they appointed him president of Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee. He came to me, they had a high school there, too, with the college. He introduced me to it and said, “Won’t you go?” And that’s where I wound up. Up at Lee College. I stayed there till I finished college.

Tom: Oh really?

Marshal: Yeah.

Tom: Well, that's a Methodist school, isn’t it?

Marshal: No. The Church of God bought it from, what’s that school in Greenville? The big, strong Baptist school. What’s the name of it?

Tom: I don’t remember the name, but I was thinking I’m familiar with Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee.

Marshal: Are you? Well, they bought the school from Bob Jones. That’s where Bob Jones was before he came to Greenville.

Tom: So you do have a college degree?

Marshal: Yes.

Tom: You said you and Joanna have been married 64 years. Was she a mill girl?

Marshal: No, her dad's a preacher. She's from Pennsylvania. We met there at Lee College.
Tom: Oh, okay. You met your wife at Lee College in college. That's great. So after school, the weekend was pretty much ball, ball, ball, and church?

Marshal: Oh, no. Not in church. This was before I got saved. After I got saved, I come and got away from ball.

Tom: You quit playing ball?

Marshal: Yeah. I put my whole heart and mind and soul into preparing. And, in the beginning I never dreamed that I'd ever wind up as a minister, but I shined backward, which in time, God led me step-by-step.

Tom: When you and your family lived in the mill hill, how were health issues dealt with? I mean if you got sick—

Marshal: Well, if you needed home remedies, there was one little drug store over there on Bleckley Street that I can remember. That's where people would go to get home remedies. The common… Castor Oil. Boy, they’re strong for Castor Oil.

Tom: What about if you get injured or something? I mean, what would your dad, he was loom fixer. What if he got hurt? Was there a doctor?

Marshal: There was a little nurse there at the mill, but she didn't practice that kind of work. Broken bones or nothing, but they did have a nurse. If you got a little cut or something, you could go out there.

Tom: What would you have done if you had broken a bone?

Marshal: That I don't know. I really don't know. Because back then, I don't think people carried injuries as much, and they may have and I didn’t know it.

Tom: Was discipline ever a problem in school?

Marshal: Yeah, I got my share of those before I got saved. I remember, they caught me laying out of school one time. Everybody called him Frog Reams. He's the principal there at the Boys’ High school. Me and my friend laid out. They called him and told them I was waiting. Mr. Reams called me down to his office. I've told this man y times. It’s before I knew anything about God. I didn't know nothing about the Bible. Nothing. I didn't know there was an Old and New Testament. He called me in there, and he called me Marshal. He said, “Marshal, did you let out of school early with Alexander?” That’s one thing. I never was a liar. I really wasn't. I said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “Well, you know I'm going to have to whip you, don't
you? I said, “Yes, sir.” He turned his Bible in on the stand over there. He said, “Marshal, if you lay your hand on that bible and swear to me you won't do that no more,” he said, “I won't whip you.” And I'm so glad I had… I looked at him. I said, “Mr. Ream, I’m not going to swear on that Bible.” He said, “I’m going to have to whip you.” I said, “Well, do what you got to do.” And back then, they'd bend you over a chair, and he had a big, old paddle. Wham! But I would not lie about it. I never was a liar.

Tom: Were you ever disciplined by your father or your mom?

Marshal: Mother.

Tom: Mother?

Marshal: The only thing is when she’d find out I was laying out of school, she whipped me with a belt. I remember one night, she came in there and threw the covers back, boy. A boy could not have had a better mother. I know that every boy says that. I say that in life. Her principles. If we were right, she’s 100%, but if we were wrong I’d tell them, guess who would show up and know first? Mama.

I mean, she had it right, and boy, the older I get, the more I appreciate it. The more I've pastored and gotten older. That’s where it’s all at. If they don't get it in the home, if kids don't get it at the home, not by what they say but watching my mother's principle. Yeah, everybody says it, but I had a wonderful mother.

Tom: If there were any discipline problems in the mill, itself, how was that handled?

Marshal: They’d usually fire you.

Tom: Oh, really?

Marshal: They’d just fire you. I don't ever remember them disciplining you. If you're doing something and it was wrong, I don't mean first-level mishap, but if you wouldn't listen to their advice and do what was right, they'd fire you back then.

Tom: What was your relationship with your father?

Marshal: Well, we had good days My Dad drank every weekend that God ever sinned. He got drunk every Friday, but there was never a harder worker than my daddy. Never, never remember him missing a day’s work in his
life, and I worked down there in the weaving room with him. I've told my wife that. I don't never remember my daddy sitting down. When his job got caught up, back then, they had to go outside to smoke. The men. And they'd sit out there and shoot the bull and talk, and Daddy smoked. He went out, but back on that job. And I mean, he walked ten miles. Every minute. I never saw him go down there and sit down. He had the reputation. I mean, everybody knew all around. There wasn’t a better loom fixer than my daddy.

Tom: How was he when he died?

Marshal: He was 86. He lived a long time.

Tom: How old was your mother when she passed away?

Marshal: She was young. I think she was, I'm thinking somewhere around 70.

Tom: Did she ever work at the mill?

Marshal: Yes, she worked at the mill.

Tom: So you had both parents working at the mill.

Marshal: That’s right.

Tom: How about your sister?

Marshal: Worked in the mill.

Tom: How about your brother?

Marshal: No, he never did. He went on. He was in the Marine Corps. When he come out, he went back to Clemson, and from there he worked in other plants, but it wasn't textile.

Tom: Did you ever serve in the military?

Marshal: Never did. I would have been in the Korean War, but they found out. It was an act of God. I believe that. I didn't know that I didn't have one kidney. Before the war broke out, you still had to register, and when the war broke out I said, “Oh, hell. Surely they’ll call. They’ll call me and at least examine me.” But they never did, and I got curious because they were grabbing my boys. I was at the ripe age. I went to this doctor. I wet the bed a long time as a boy, kind of longer than usual, so I went to the
kidney doctor. Never had no trouble with it. He x-rayed me, come in there and throw that thing on the wall. “Marshal, you only got one kidney?” I said, “You're kidding me.” He said, “There it is.” But it's never given me a minute’s trouble. But if I hadn’t of had, when that war broke out, like I said, and they had me on before that, I said, “I know they'll at least call me somewhere and exam, you know, test me.” But they never did. That's true.

Tom: Was the subject of money or financial issues discussed among your family?

Marshal: No. My mother managed the money, and we never did have an abundant amount, but I don't never remember going hungry. Don't never remember no financial stress.

Tom: Do you ever remember what a typical paycheck was or did they pay you in cash?

Marshal: Cash. Starting off, they paid us in cash. Sure did.

Tom: And they didn't use coins or Loonies or anything like that?

Marshal: No. Now, in the company store, if you worked in the mill, you could go up there during the week and what they call checks. You could checkout and they put it on record, and they take it out of your paycheck come Friday. But most everybody had you buy stuff on credit. Our clothes and all that. But back then, there wasn't no cars hardly, and I could remember the collectors, they weren't down on people. They were doing them a favor. They'd be there at the gate when we'd come out on Friday in church in whatever clothes. And that's the one thing that I was strong in and still am. I pay my bills first thing I do before I ever spend a penny. I did that back then, and then what I had left, I just threwed it to the wind.

Tom: Did your family ever receive the benefits of a pounding? You know what a pounding is?

Marshal: Yeah, I know what a pounding is.

Tom: Never?

Marshal: Not our immediate family.

Tom: None.
Marshal: I've seen my grandmother. They lived down there on the street where I was born. She lived down there. I've seen her and a lady called Miss Smith. I've seen them get a #3 washtub. When somebody be out of work two or three weeks, they’d go up and down the street. Say, “So-and-so has been out sick. Would you like to donate any kind of food?” I’d see, there was a welfare program back then. I've seen that with my eyes. Their reward will be great.

Tom: That’s right. Did the government ever give your family any kind of financial assistance?

Marshal: No. We were proud people. The Mill Hill folks, they took pride in being self-sufficient.

Tom: Describe the physical condition of your dad when he’d get off of work and come home.

Marshal: Strong man. My daddy was strong. He’d come home and, during in the summer, he’d always have a big garden. And guess how he plowed it? He didn’t have no plow. I've seen him with a shovel. Break it up, move the shovel. The whole garden. He was a worker, and he was raised on the farm, so he knew how to raise a garden.

Tom: Originally, where did your family come from? Where they sharecroppers or were they mill workers, coal miners, or what?

Marshal: Most all of the people from the textiles, I've read over the years, most of them were sharecroppers coming out from Georgia. My folks came from over here in Rock Branch. Charlie Daniel, I don’t know where you ever heard of him? He was a huge contractor. Full time. That’s where he came. Our folks came from over there.


Marshal: Daniel Construction. Well, we're distant. Real distant. Calvin, you know? He let me have a book one time that a president of one of the colleges wrote about Charlie Daniel, and he let me read it. He came over here. There's a little lumber company here when I was a boy called Townsend. And Charlie Daniel came over, built little wooden boxes at ten cents an hour. Ten cents an hour! I read that. It wasn’t written by him, but anyway, in the end, they have given millions and millions of dollars to colleges. And he died nine years before his wife did. When they died, I forget how many millions of dollars they gave to colleges. If I remember right, and I
think I'm right, I don't think they had any children. But, our folk, they were sharecroppers.

Tom: I know Sandra Daniel.

Marshal: Sandra.

Tom: Is she related?

Marshal: My cousin.

Tom: She's your cousin?

Marshal: Yeah. Her daddy and I, boy, we were like brothers. She had good parents.

Tom: Now, is her husband… did he pass away?

Marshal: He died.

Tom: He did pass away. And that's recently?

Marshal: Just a few months ago.

Tom: Yeah, that's what I was thinking. I tried to get in touch with her. But I knew, because she had missed a couple of Linthead meetings, and I knew that he was ill.

Marshal: Yeah. He worked at David Pebbles. Good man.

Tom: Were politics ever discussed at home?

Marshal: Not in our home. I imagine they were in some, but Daddy never was. Mamma, I don't never remember them discussing politics.

Tom: You talked about your dad coming in on the weekend and drinking. Was moonshining popular?

Marshal: That's what most all of the men… Not all, but most all the men drank.

Tom: Really?

Marshal: Me and who was it was talking up there one day. Two or three fellows. And we all kind of concluded it was a form of recreation for them. They didn't have money to take trips and all that kind of stuff, and that’s not no
excuse for them, but I believe they did it kind of just for recreation. They’d get drunk. I mean, boy, you don’t know where our church is. Right at the corner. God sent me back here. How many years ago? 50-something years ago. God led me back home. I didn’t have no desire. I won’t go into the details of how he led me back, and I searched for property all over. You know, where to start my church. And God spoke to me one day.

I had pulled up to a stop sign. Of course, me and my wife, we had been on a 14 day fast to get searching, and we didn’t have money back then. We didn’t have nothing really. And God… Stopped at a stop sign after I’d been looking for a week. He spoke and said, “Check on that property.” Well, anyway, to make a long story short, we finally wound up with it. Right at the corner of what they call, “Little Texas.” Little Texas Road. Our church is right here. I mean, I was talking to one of the ladies that lived there. She was wild as she could be when she was young, but she got saved. She told me one day, said, ‘Marshal, I don’t know whether you know or not, but everybody on Queen Street sold bootleg liquor but Mom and Daddy.” I wasn’t surprised. That’s where God led me to start a church.

Tom: So is the church still there?

Marshal: Our church, yeah.

Tom: What is the name of the church?

Marshal: Church of God. West Anderson.

Tom: Where is it?

Marshal: You know where Bleckley Street is? If you’re coming up Murray Avenue and turn on Bleckley, you know where that is? Just follow it. Follow it all around. Four way stop sign over the hill. Another four way stop sign. We’re over there in the corner on the left. Oh, God has been good to us. We started out in an old ragged tent. And now when I look at it, I can’t believe—

Tom: And it’s on Bleckley.

Marshal: No, if you’re on Bleckley at that stop sign, the railroad track runs here. Our church is to the left on Rogers Street. And we have probably the largest daycare center in Anderson.

Tom: Really?
Marshal: Yeah.

Tom: So the church is on Rogers Street.

Marshal: Rogers Street.

Tom: Okay, good. Were you ever called a derogatory name? Linthead? Or Bobbin Dodger? Or anything?

Marshal: You know what I tell everybody? We call one-another Lintheads, but we didn’t let nobody on Main Street call us Lintheads. The fur would go flying. That’s the truth.

Tom: Well, I talked to a couple of brothers, Powell’s down in Iva, because I'm doing that Jackson Mill, as well. And they said, “Oh yeah, we called each other Lintheads, but we didn't let anybody else call us Lintheads.”

Marshal: That’s right. That's true, too. We were poor but proud.

Tom: Who would you say was the most positive influence in your life?

Marshal: It had to be my mother.

Tom: Your mother was—

Marshal: My mother. Boy, her principles.

Tom: The principles of your mother.

Marshal: Her Godly principles. Right was right. If it’s me or whoever it was. And she didn’t do it in no ugly way. She practiced what she preached. She was strong. When I took the message on to Daddy that she died in the hospital, he was at the house. I went in and told him. I said, “Well, Mamma passed away.” First words come out of his mouth, he said, “There weren’t a crooked bone in her.” That’s the kind of woman that she was. And anybody who knew her would tell you the same thing.

Tom: What was the most valuable lesson that you learned living on the mill hill?

Marshal: Those people, they were poor. Very few I knew back then were Christians, but as far as being fair and honest, hard-working, I don't know all the adjectives I could add. I told them up there one day. They was talking about what they remember about the mill hill. I said, “The thing I
remember the most was the people.” And that's true. I don't say everybody was that way. There's always a crook in every crowd, but by and far more, they believed, and they were proud. Proud they made a living. They worked hard. They treated one another with respect.

Tom: Would you say that living in a mill village prepared you for life?

Marshal: Yeah. Yes, sir. I agree with that 100%. It taught me how to mix and get along with people.

Tom: That seems to be a common theme when I talk to people because I ask everybody the same question and they say, “It teaches me how to respect everybody else and how to get along with people.”

Marshal: That’s the truth.

Tom: So you would think respect is the most valuable lesson you learned?

Marshal: Yeah.

Tom: Was there anything, I’m about to wrap this up. Was there any question that you think I should have asked about life on a mill village?

Marshal: No, I can’t think of anything right off. I can’t. I'm just proud that I was raised on a mill hill in that area of time. They were good people. Very good people. Solid, hard working. True, true, true blues.

Tom: What was your mother's position in the mill?

Marshal: She was a weaver.

Tom: Weaver?

Marshal: Uh-huh (affirmative). My sister was a weaver, too.

Tom: How long did your mom work in the mill?

Marshal: Well, she kind of worked off and on. You know, I’d guess, probably when we’d gotten finances straight. She'd probably work. I can't remember exactly, but she didn't work late in life. If you can believe this. Calvin can't believe it. He keeps telling me. He called her a hero. Way up in life, she must’ve been up in her 60s, she wound up with three two-story houses, renting rooms to roomers, and then started a restaurant in one of them.
And, I mean, it was a strong restaurant. Oh, people on Sunday mornings, they just poured in there.

Tom: She was an entrepreneur, huh?

Marshal: She was a go-getter.

Tom: Well, I think that's gonna wrap it up for us. I can’t thank you enough. God bless you. He has already blessed you.

Marshal: I appreciate you coming. He blessed both of us.

Tom: For sure.

Marshal: He blessed you, too. I can see.
Interview with Thurman Arthur Higgins, Appleton Mill

July 26, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom Cartledge. This is July the 26th, and I’m here in Homeland Park to interview Arthur Higgins. He’s agreed to do this. He wants to be a part of history, and he’s signed his consent form, so we’ll go ahead and get started. If you would, please state your full name and your date of birth.


Tom: Arthur, give me a general idea of your life in your mill village.

Arthur: Well, it’s strange, sir, in a sense. I never realized that we were poor ‘til I became, I guess, 16 years old. I went to work in the mill when I was 16. I was going to school and working at night. My first paycheck, I think I drawed $37 or $38. This was in 1959.

Tom: For what period of time?

Arthur: From, well, I went to work January the 1st.

Tom: But, I mean, that check covered how many days a week?

Arthur: Six days. 48 hours.

Tom: Six days?

Arthur: I made, I think it was a dollar. If I remember, $1.31 an hour. I was considered a spare hand, but I worked every day.

Tom: What was it like in the neighborhood?

Arthur: Well, it was a community. Here’s something that you don’t realize as a kid. Growing up, my grandmother raised me. The neighbors, the Johnsons, lived across the street from us. The Fryes live next door on one side, the Wares lived on the other side, and Miss Gilbert lived next door to the Johnsons. They always came over to our house in the morning. Most of these ladies worked the second shift in a mill, and my grandmother would fix coffee, and they’d have cake or something, and they’d sit there and talk and tell us kids, “Go outside and play.” It was a family-oriented type thing that I never realized the essence of what life was all about till I grew up.
I graduated high school in 1960. I graduated one Friday night from high school and went into the Navy the next Friday, so I sort of grew up in a hurry. The mill life, it was family-oriented. I remember, let’s see there…. One, two, three, four cars on our block on J Street. Most everybody walked or rode the bus.

Tom: What was your address on J Street?


Tom: 206 J Street, is it currently occupied?

Arthur: Yes, sir.

Tom: Do you know who lives there?

Arthur: No, sir. I don’t. I don’t know who bought it.

Tom: At what ages did you live in your house on the mill village?

Arthur: Okay. I moved there when I was two years old. My mother was 16 years old. She eloped, and my father was in the Army. They went to North Carolina, and my grandmother got Judge Pruitt who was the county judge, I guess you would say. She went to him and got him to have my mother brought home because she was under age. I was born in Anderson Memorial hospital, and my grandmother took me when I was small. I don’t remember just how old I was, but she raised me.

Tom: And you lived there until you graduated from high school, and then you were gone?

Arthur: Yeah. And when I came home from the service

Tom: You lived back in the house?

Arthur: I lived back there for about a year. My brother had an accident, a car accident, and the man sued him and took the house. I had to find a place to live, so I found me a rental trailer, and I moved in. I was working back in the mill at that time. I was working in the Anderson Mill or Abney, they called it.

Tom: At that time?

Arthur: Yes, sir.
Tom: Describe your family. You mentioned your brother. How many children were in your family?

Arthur: Okay. My mother had remarried, and I had a brother and a sister.

Tom: Younger?

Arthur: Yes, sir. Younger. My brother was killed in 1972, and well, they never did figure out who killed him. Down in Florida. Life on the mill hill, to me, it was like family. I mean, the people that lived around, if they had children, I played with them, grew up with them, went to school with them. I had a close friend. He lived on I Street. His name is Austin Wicker, and he and I grew up together. We joined the Navy together. I mean, people probably don’t understand this, but I’d eat lunch with the Wickers, the Weser’s, the Corns. All the people that lived around us. I’d eat breakfast with them, eat lunch with them, and eat supper with them. You never realized that most of all the mill hill folks, as they were called, was poor. On some occasions, where a husband and wife both worked, they got by a whole lot better.

Tom: You described your relationship with your grandmother. She must’ve been an important person in your life to have raised you.

Arthur: Absolutely. Her name was Maymie Higgins. Actually, she had been married to Duffy Murphy and divorced him because he had got to making moonshine, and the Federal Government arrested him and put him in prison over in Atlanta. She had divorced him and taken her maiden name back, and that’s how my name got to be Higgins.

Tom: Does your birth certificate say Higgins?

Arthur: Absolutely.

Tom: Okay. Did you have any relationship at all with your father?


Tom: Never met your father?

Arthur: Never knew him. His name was… Wait, I’ll tell you this in the minute. Earl, I can’t think of his last name.

Tom: He was not a Higgins?

Arthur: No.
Tom: All right. Describe 206 J Street. Tell me about the house.

Arthur: It was a four-room house. The bathroom was on the back porch.

Tom: And it consisted of what?

Arthur: Just a commode.

Tom: Just a commode?

Arthur: Yeah. If you wanted to take a bath. We had a big… In the wintertime I used a great big, I guess it was what you call a horse tub. About five foot long, probably two feet deep. Most of the time if you took a shower, you took it with a hosepipe hanging over the clothesline.

Tom: How would you heat the water if you took a tub bath?

Arthur: Well, most of the time, you heated it on a.... We had an old, oil stove. A four eye stove with an oven, and you’d sit that tub up on there and light all four eyes. You’d have to get somebody to help you get it off and set it down on the kitchen floor.

Tom: How about electricity? Was it a single drop?

Arthur: That’s right. Just had one. A light would come down from the ceiling in all four rooms.

Tom: Was there any other lighting other than that? Lamps or anything?

Arthur: I’m fixing to say, as a small boy growing up, my great grandmother, she came and lived with us. She was very conservative. She made us use oil lamps. You didn’t cut the light on overhead unless it really was an emergency or something.

Tom: How many people lived in the house on J Street?

Arthur: Well, one time, my great grandmother. Let’s see, there’d be one, two, three, four, five-

Tom: Five people?

Arthur: Yeah.

Tom: Where did you sleep?
Arthur: Me and my brother when he came and lived with us, me and him slept together on the little small, single bed.

Tom: How about your sister?

Arthur: She lived with my mother down in South Georgia. I never spent much time with her.

Tom: Didn’t have a relationship with her?

Arthur: No. I met her when I went down there and stayed a summer or two with my mother and stepfather. He owned a big farm down in Gabriel, Georgia, and he was a paint contractor, too, but he had 20 or 25 black people that lived on the farm that worked the farm for him. See, a little, funny story. I was about 12 or 13 the first time I went down. These black ladies were going to cut okra the next morning, so I told one of them to get me up. I put on a pair of cut-off blue jeans, no shoes, no shirt. One of these black ladies told me, “White boy, you better put you on some shoes and a shirt.” I said, “Nah, I can take it.” We got out there cutting okra. Got out there at about six o’clock. We started cutting it, and by about 7:00 or 7:30, I was stinging and burning so bad. I told them, I said, “I think I want to go home.” I walked all the way home.

Tom: All right. Who cooked the meals in your house? Your grandmother?

Arthur: Well, my grandmother… When her sister divorced her husband, and she moved in with us, she worked the third shift. My grandmother worked the second, so my grandmother would fix my breakfast. If I wasn’t in school, normally I’d eat a sandwich or something. Graham crackers and milk, something like that for lunch. Then, my great aunt that lived with us, my grandma’s sister, she’d fix supper. Sometimes, she’d fix sandwiches. I loved peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I still eat them today. I’m 76 years old.

Tom: I ate one yesterday.

Arthur: She’d usually fix us something light and, usually, some kind of potatoes. Creamed potatoes, mashed potatoes, tater fritters, baked potatoes. Anyway, you can fix up potatoes, you know? Actually, we was poor.

Tom: Describe a typical breakfast.

Arthur: Okay. Every day, grits.
Tom: Grits?

Arthur: We raised chickens, so we had eggs. Matter of fact, this is the gospel truth. When I got up to, I’d say 15, 16, I quit eating grits, and I quit eating eggs. For years I wouldn’t eat eggs or grits.

Tom: You had enough.

Arthur: Usually, I’d say if we had creamed potatoes the night before, they’d fry up them taters. They’d call them tater fritters, like patties. We’d have that, and usually bacon. We had some kin people that we’d swap eggs for slabs of bacon. So, usually, we had bacon, grits, eggs, biscuits.

Tom: Did you keep the chickens under the house or in a pen?

Arthur: Well, we had a pen built in the yard, and we let them loose. We had a fence around the yard, and I had a little black and white Dominicker rooster. He really loved me. He loved to frog me. He would fly up on me and peck me. I was just, like I said, 12, 13. Well, I think the last year we had any, we had a real bad winter, and the temperature dropped real low and it froze all them and killed every one of them, and we didn’t raise any more chickens.

Tom: Speaking of that, how did you heat the house?

Arthur: Coal. We had coal heaters. It’s sort of strange thinking about it now, but I backed up to them many a time and burned a hole in my seat of my britches trying to get warm.

Tom: Tell me about your everyday dress. What did you wear, normally, when you were a youngster?

Arthur: A tee shirt and a pair of blue jeans.

Tom: A tee shirt and blue jeans. How about shoes?

Arthur: Well, for years I wore Brogans. I was real skinny. I don’t know what was wrong with me. I have something wrong with me, because I was real skinny. I’m talking about real skinny. The doctor told me to wear Brogan shoes to protect my ankles, because it was bad for my ankles to turn. The Lord performed a miracle for me. From 12 years old to 13 years old, I gained about 50 pounds.
The reason I remember, I was playing... I call it a junior league football. YMCA football. We had a team there at Appleton, and we met over at the gym over on Glenn Street. Glenn Street was the name of the street that the gym was on. Beside the gym was the tennis court, and they had a big field there where we’d practice. Louis Zachary was the coach. Him and Henry Spate. When we went up to the YMCA to weigh... I played when I was 12, and I was going to play when I was 13, but I weighed too much. You couldn’t weigh over 125 pounds, and I weighed 130. I had to lose five pounds, and talk to a 13-year-old kid trying to lose five pounds.

Tom: Hard.

Arthur: Hard to do, but I finally did it, and I got to play part of the year. You know, as a kid, I loved sports. Here’s the thing. Appleton kids, we always had basketball teams, but every time... I lived on the other side of the mill. The gym was on the left-hand side. I lived on the right-hand side of the mill. Well, a lot of times if you tried to get over to the gym, there’s always four or five guys waiting on you to jump on you, so I just quit going over there, and I went down to Anderson Mill gym.

The coach down there saw that I could play basketball pretty good, so he asked me to play with their team. Well, I did. We won the championship, and Mr. Spate came over to my house. He was the basketball coach. He said, “Arthur? What are you doing playing with Anderson Mill?” I said, “Well, Mr. Spate.” I wouldn’t tell him the truth about the fights. I said, “Well, Coach Louis asked me to play with them.” I said, “We have a pretty good basketball team.” He said, “Yeah. Y’all won the championship.” He said, “You come to Appleton. Play for Appleton.” So, the next year I did, and we won a championship. As a matter of fact, we won it, I think, three years in a row.

Somebody in high school told me to go out for Boys High. I was in the 10th grade, and I did. Coach Dwayne Morrison was the coach, and he came to me and told me. Said, “Arthur, I hear you’re playing with the mill team.”

I said, “Yes, sir.”

He said, “Well, you can’t do that and play for Boys High.”

I said, “Why not, sir?”

He said, “You might get hurt.”

I said, “Okay, sir. I won’t be at practice, today.”

“What?”

I said, “I won’t be at practice.”

I said, “Sir, I’ve been playing with them boys three years, now. We’ve won the championship the last three years. I don’t know how to explain it
to you, but I grew up on the mill hill. I’ve been playing with those boys all this long. I just feel obligated.”

Tom: Can’t leave them.

Arthur: He got upset with me. As a matter of fact, he told me, he said, “You’re a natural. You got abilities most boys don’t have.” I said, “Well, I don’t know about that. I want to play with them.” As a matter of fact, my senior year in high school, I then got too old to play in the junior league. The Boys Club of America came to our school, and announced if anybody wanted to play with their traveling team to go to room such-and-such. Well, I did, and there were several guys showed up. As a matter of fact, Coach Morrison came in there, and he told that guy that I was over there. Thomas Stouffville, I believe it was his name. He’s told Mr. Stouffville, he said, “You get in your gym there. That boy is a good basketball player if he’ll just apply himself.” And I played two years with that traveling team, which we never won a championship, but we won a lot of games.

Tom: Where all did you travel?

Arthur: Well, Greenville, Spartanburg, Greensboro, Durham. All of the south kind of, north kind of teams.

Tom: So, you went to elementary school where?

Arthur: Glenn Street.

Tom: Glenn Street Elementary School?

Arthur: Six years.

Tom: Six years. And, then you went to Boys High?

Arthur: No. I went to McCants Junior High.

Tom: McCants Junior High.

Arthur: Yeah.

Tom: And then, where did you go?

Arthur: Then, Boys High.

Tom: Then, Boys High. Okay. Describe the teachers.
Arthur: Well, some of them were good to me, now, what I remember. Some of them were good. Some of them were strict, and some of them wanted you to learn. I was very fortunate. I had some very good teachers. Matter of fact, I was a senior in high school, and I was playing in a get-up-game, I guess you’d call it, at the YMCA. This man, it was a men’s team, but I was still in high school, he come after me and said, “Arthur, will you come help us? We need some help.” And I said, “Sure.” We were playing up at the YMCA. The Y, at that time, they had two courts short ways this way. When we played, they took and turned the goal around. We played long ways. Well, they didn’t put no mats up. I went and blocked this guy’s shot and hit the wall. I tore all of the ligaments all in my arm and had to go to the hospital.

I was in the hospital seven days, I believe it was. Out of all of my teachers, one failed me because you couldn’t miss over six days. Six days was the limit, and I had been in the hospital seven. One teacher failed me. The other six passed me, and I was very... I can’t say I was an outstanding student. I felt like I was a good student. I made good grades. I don’t remember who told me this. I was in the 10th grade. Said, “You pay attention. You pay attention to your teacher. You take notes what your teacher says, and you’ll never fail.”

Matter of fact, my senior year in high school, all I had to do on my final exams was make 50 to graduate. Which I made. I made good grades. As matter of fact, you had to graduate with 16 units. It seemed like I had 21 and a half. I mean, I didn’t try to excel in school, but let me put it this way. I didn’t want to fail. I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school. I got a granddaughter. She was the first person to graduate college. I try to instill in my children and my grandchildren. There’s nothing like education.

Tom: Can’t take it away from us.

Arthur: Right. That’s what I’ve told them. I say, “There’s one thing people can’t do. They can’t take how smart you are away from you.” And I try to, as a matter of fact, I finally got one of my granddaughters, she’s a nurse, convinced of this. The more education you got, the more money you’re going to make. I said, “Now, that’s just simple logic.” I’m fortunate that I just had another granddaughter graduate from college, and I’ve got a grandson. He’s in Appalachian State. I’ve tried, I guess you’d call it preaching, preaching to him all the time. I said, “Son, don’t get messed up with girls. That’s for later in life,” I said, “You ain’t missing nothing. You understand this? You work. You get you a job. You work, you study, and understand what your teacher’s trying to tell you to better yourself.”
Tom: Did you work at the mill during school?

Arthur: Yes, sir. Oh, matter of fact, it was strange. I’d been working there four months, and it come out in the paper that I was chosen as an all-star for Appleton. I wanted off to go to this banquet where they were going to present me with a little thing saying I was an all-star. They wouldn’t let me off. I got mad and quit.

Tom: As soon as you graduated from high school, you went straight into the Navy?

Arthur: Went straight in the Navy.

Tom: Did you further your education in the Navy?

Arthur: Let me tell you a little story about myself, okay? I’d done pretty good in boot camp. I was picked for honor guard to work parades, and the way you present yourself, hold yourself, march, everything. Done real good in boot camp. Made good marks. Graduated. My orders were to go to New London, Connecticut to go to Administrative School for 36 weeks. Then, I was going to go aboard the USS. What was the name of that ship? They would be in commission up in New England, and they lost my medical records. I didn’t go.

I stayed in San Diego two months. Well, I just had turned 18 years of age. I was stupid, I’ll admit that. I didn’t know what to do. Finally I got up enough nerve. I went to this officer and told him, “Sir, my name’s Higgins. Seaman Recruit, Service Number 5-36-85-75.” I said, “I’m supposed to be going to school, sir.” So he took my name down and everything and nothing happened. Well, another week or so went by. I found another officer. First one I found was an Ensign. This one was a Lieutenant JG. I told him the same thing.

Well, just three or four days went by, and the messenger found me. I was working at… As a matter of fact my duty was to clean up the gym. I was playing ball, and this messenger found me. He told me they wanted me over in building in such-and-such. I said, “Sir, I don’t know what building such-and-such is.” So he told me where to go. “It’s about three miles over.” I walked over there, and I went in and went up to this window. I told this young lady back there. I said, “My name’s Higgins. Service number 5-36-85-75.” She looked at some papers. She says, “Seaman Recruit Higgins? You owe the government [almost] $900.”
That’s what they had given me to buy the bus tickets home and to New England and 14 days leave. I said, “Ma’am, I ain’t got that. I ain’t got no money. I haven’t been paid since I’ve been here.” She said, “What you got?” I said, “I got a bus ticket home and the bus ticket there.” “You’re going to Connecticut, you got to turn that in.” I said, “Why? I’m going to school.” She said, “I don’t know about that, but you got to turn your tickets in.” So I turned them in.

Well, several days went by. Then, at muster this morning, they called my name out. I went up and they gave me a little brown envelope and I said, “Where am I going?” They said, “You going to have to look, yourself.” And, I tore it open. I was going to Long Beach, California, going to USS Cavalier APA-37. I said, “Where’s Long Beach?”

Funny part is, I got $6 travel-pay. That’s all I got. That’s all I had was $6, so I called old Miss Francis. I called her Mom. I said, “Momma, can you send me $100? I’m going to get to come home.” So she did, and I had $106. I went and got in line to buy my bus ticket from San Diego to Anderson. From Anderson back to Long Beach. Bus ticket was $106 and 75 cents. I told the guy, I said, “All I got is $106.” He said, “I’m sorry. You don’t get a bus ticket.” The guy behind me gave me a dollar. I come all the way across the United States on a bus. Three days on a quarter. I was just thankful. Matter of fact, we was in some part of Texas, and some guy that was on the the bus bought me a hamburger and a drink, and I had that quarter and I bought a drink and a pack of crackers.

Tom: Did you ever date any girl on the mill hill?

Arthur: Well, I don’t know if you’d call it dating or not. I never cared and went to a movie or anything like that, but we’d have... When a boy or girl had a birthday, they’d have a party. One of my neighbors, her name was Carol Morgan. She lived two or three houses down from us. I sort of liked her, and the one that lived down below me, when they a birthday or something, her name was Martha Corn, and I liked her.

Tom: You’ve got sweet on them?

Arthur: Yeah.
Tom: You’ve been married, but you did not marry a mill worker?

Arthur: No. Well, actually, after I came home out of service, I met this girl that lived up the street. Her name was Linda Williams. She and I dated for about a year, and we got married.

Tom: But she didn’t work in the mill?

Arthur: No.

Tom: You talked about injuring your and elbow and arm. How were health issues dealt with there? Do they take you to the doctor?

Arthur: Well, finally, what happened… My arm swelled up, but my hand swelled up. My fingers looked like small bananas, and Grandmother took me to the doctor. Dr. Dixon.

Tom: Was he a mill doctor?

Arthur: I don’t know. No, I don’t know. His office was uptown, and he had my arm x-rayed and said that all of the ligaments, he said there weren’t no bones broken, but all of the ligaments and tissues and everything was tore loose from my elbow down. And, like I said, I stayed in the hospital seven days, and they treated it with heat, ice, massage, or I guess you’d call it massage. Some kind of therapy. They got where I could move my hand, again.

Tom: But it didn’t keep you out of the navy as far as your physical. You passed your physical fine?

Arthur: Oh, yeah.

Tom: In your situation, particularly having been raised by your grandmother, primarily, were finances ever discussed in the family in the house? Anything that you knew of?

Arthur: No, sir. Matter of fact, I never asked my grandmother, to my recollection, to buy me new school clothes. The only time I think I ever asked her, I asked her to buy me a pair of tennis shoes.

Tom: The rest of it, you made the money yourself?

Arthur: Actually, when I went to work in the mill, I bought my own. She told me. She said, “You’re going to buy your own school clothes. You’re going to
pay for your lunch. You’re going to pay for your annual. You’re going to pay for your high school ring.” And I did all of that. Up until that time, she’d take me to town, and usually we’d go to Fleishmann Clothing Store. How she’d knew the Fleishmanns, I don’t know. I guess because of trading, but she’d usually get me two pairs of blue jeans, some underwear. I wore T-shirts all the time. White T-shirts, and she’d usually buy me a pack of white T-shirts and some socks, and that was to last all year.

Tom: How were you clothes washed?

Arthur: Well, to start with, we washed them in the wash pot. I was a little boy, and I took a, we called it a paddle, but we’d take that paddle. You’d sit there and jar them things up and down, up and down for 15, 20 minutes. You’d take them out of one wash pot, put it out of the soapy water, and put it in the clear water. You’d do the same thing. Rinse them out. Then, you’d take it by hand and squeeze them out. Then, you’d hang them on the clothesline. Finally, I guess I must have been about 14. Riddle Furniture Company, my grandmother bought a washing machine. I don’t know if you know what I’m talking about, but it had an old ringer type at the top.

Tom: Sure.

Arthur: I’ve got my fingers caught in that thing a lot of times. Granny would tell me, “You go out there and drain that water out.” We had a hose. You run it off the side of the porch and run it off on the ground. Put some fresh water in. You had a hose pipe come out of the house. Run it in there. We were doing that. Like I say, some of them had two parents working. They had a hot water heater in the house, a washing machine, dryer, you know? But, still, I didn’t notice. I just knew they were better off than I was. I mean, I had that much sense that we couldn’t afford that.

Tom: Did you resent that?

Arthur: No. No. The only thing that ever really bothered me, Mr. Mears and Wicker, both of them worked in the mill. They had a TV. We finally had a TV, but they had a TV. They had a screen put on it. It made it look in color. It wasn’t in color, but it made it look in color. I always thought that, I said, “Man, that’s nice.” I remember Miss Wicker on Saturday morning. There’d be two or three of us kids going over there. She loved wrestling. Oh, man. But she’d tell you. She said, “You sit down. Don’t you say a word.” She’d be up screaming, hollering, twisting, jerking around.

Tom: Did they, by any chance, have a daughter named Bobbie? You know Bobbie Wicker?
Arthur: No.

Tom: You don’t know her. Okay.

Arthur: Well, she was related to them.

Tom: Did your family ever receive the benefits of a pounding? You know what a pounding is?

Arthur: Yes, sir. Not that I know of.

Tom: Not that you know of.

Arthur: I will tell you this. We bought our groceries at L. J. Stewart Grocery Store on Bleckley Street. My grandmother had to have surgery. I must’ve been about 13. I was young, I remember, but she’d give me a grocery list every Saturday morning. I’d take it up there. They’d fill it. Bring it down to our house, unload it on the back porch. Mr. Stewart was good to my grandmother. She was out of work six or seven weeks. Them groceries were there every week. No insurance. No money coming in, and she paid him. Actually, when I’d take the groceries up there, she’d give me, say, $15 maybe. Groceries was $11 and 25 cents. That other little bit of money go on that bill, and I forget how many weeks it was, but she finally paid him off.

Matter of fact, let me tell you something, sir. That man was so good, when they sold mill houses, my grandmother went to him and asked him, I think, I’m not sure. I can’t remember. I remember seeing the papers. It was $2,300 and so many dollars for a house. Mr. Stewart let her borrow the money.

Tom: He was the grocer?

Arthur: Yeah.

Tom: He was the man that owned the grocery store?

Arthur: And my grandmother. I don’t know how much. I don’t know if he charged her any interest or not, but she’d pay him $30 or $40 a month ‘til she paid him off. I remember that.

Tom: And she wound up selling the house, eventually, when she passed away? What happened there?
Arthur: No. Actually, I was supposed to have inherited the house, but it wasn’t notarized. She had a friend that was a secretary to allow her to fill the paperwork out. Signed it and everything, but she never took it to a notary public to have it notarized and have it recorded. My great aunt, I guess you’d call it a receivership, she got the house. Well, I was in the service. My brother bought a car. He put no insurance on it. She signed for him to get the car in the rig. The man did own a rig, sued him. He took the house.

Matter of fact, I was working at Anderson Mill. This must’ve been in 1964. Wintertime. I’m trying to remember. I went home. I worked the first shift in the cloth room at Anderson Mill. I came home from work. There was a padlock on her door, and a big red thing that said that the house was in-

Tom: Receivership?

Arthur: That the house had been a lawsuit, and I didn’t read it all, but I broke in the house. I didn’t have anywhere to sleep. I found a winter jacket, right as winter went in. I stayed two nights there, and I finally got…. As a matter of fact, I asked my mother to let me borrow $100 so I could find me a place to live. She did, and I found a trailer, and I rented a trailer, and I moved in it.

Matter of fact, it’s strange, sir. The man I rented a trailer from? He’s the one that sued my brother and took the house. Matter of fact, he came to me later. Told me, said, “Arthur. If there’s anything in that house you want, you go get it, because I’m going to get rid of everything in there.” I went and got a few personal things. My great aunt had a, I don’t know if you’d call it a quilt or not.

It was a big, I guess today you’d probably call it a comforter. It was pretty big, so I got it. I got the rest of my clothes, and I think I got a few dishes. That was that. He asked me. There was an antique chifforobe in there. Probably worth over $1,000. It had been in a family for, I don’t know how many years. Long, long, long time.
I said, “I ain’t got nowhere to put it.”
He said, “Well, I’m going to get rid of it.”
I said, “Help yourself.” I was young, not married. I didn’t have no sense of value, I guess you could say.

Tom: All right. Describe your church experiences while you were living on the mill.
Arthur: Well, there were several churches. Pastors would come to our house to visit. My great grandmother was a very religious woman. I mean, I can tell you things that she told me as a kid. She baby-sitted me. That’s why she came and lived with us when I was a child. But I went to, there was a Fire Baptized Holiness Church not too far from us. It was down next to L Street and M Street down there, and I went there some.

I went up to Taylor Memorial Pentecostal Holiness Church. I went there some. There was a Baptist church on D Street, and when I say I went, a lot of times it was a vacation Bible school and Sunday school. I just remembered something. As a kid growing up, some of these churches made all us kids sit in the front row, and if you cut up the pastor, the pastor pointed his finger at you. Said, “I’m going to tell your mom and daddy on you, boy.” Or boy. So, everybody was real quiet. It was strange. I wasn’t a religious person, but I feared God.

After I got up to be a teenager, these buddies of mine, they come and said, “Hey, two pretty girls go to that church down there. Let’s go down there.” I said, “Uh-uh. I’m not going,” I said, “It ain’t right. If you all go down there and talk to those girls, y’all go right ahead,” I said, “I’m not going with you.”

I was a pretty fair softball player, and this buddy of mine tried to get me to… he went to Taylor Memorial, and I went to church with him a few times, but I was there to drink. It took me a long time to understand I was throwing my money away. My philosophy, it even remained after I got married, was live fast, live hard, die young. I never thought I’d live past 30, but the Lord saved me when I was 29. Been serving him ever since. Thank, God. Been through a lot. Lord brought me out of everything.

Certainly, living on a mill hill, it’s sort of like a great big family to me. Now, that’s what I thought. See, I’d run around, I say run around, but we were buddies. Austin Wicker, Raymond Wheeler, David Corn, Bud Black. We all lived close together, you know? I don’t know how to explain it. It’s like we were kin people, you know? It wasn’t anything for me to go to one of their houses, and, why, they’d be eating. I’d sit down in the living room or the bedroom or maybe go sit down on the front porch or back porch, you know, somewhere, till they’d say, “Arthur, you want to eat? Go on in.” I’d go in and eat.

Tom: Describe the physical condition of your grandmother when she would come in from work from her shift when it was over.
Arthur: Exhausted. She worked in the spinning room. She was what they call a spinner, and she was a short woman, I’d say probably no more than 5’2.” I don’t know if you know anything about a spinning frame or not, but when the roving run out and you were making yarn, when that roving run out, you had to put in a full yard. It probably weighed three or four pounds, and it’s up high.

She would tell me stories back when she was a girl. She went to work in the mill when she was nine years old. As a matter of fact, in Appleton, but it was called Brogan, then. She had a little box that she stepped up on to put that roving up, and she complained all the time about her arms and neck hurting, and I can understand why.

Tom: So she worked her entire life in the mill?

Arthur: Yeah. Matter of fact, she retired [from] Appleton. She took early retirement at 62 because her health was getting bad. She didn’t live, matter of fact, when I was in service, she passed away with a stroke. She retired, I think, in 1961. She was born in 1898, and I think she retired in January or February of ’61.

Tom: So she basically raised you your entire life.


Tom: And you called her what?

Arthur: I called her Mama.

Tom: Mama?

Arthur: Yeah. Matter of fact, let me tell you a little story about myself. You know, when you’re a teenager, I just graduated from high school. As a matter of fact, the very next day, I was 17 years old, Mama took me out on the front porch. She said, “Sit down there, Son.” She’d sit down in the rocker. She said, “Son, I’ve done the best I could do. I want you to know this. I fed you, clothed you, tried to teach you right from wrong.” She said, “Now, I’m going to give you two weeks to find you a job. If you ain’t got you a job in two weeks, your pants are going to be on the doorsteps. You going to find you a place to stay.” I said, “Yes, ma’am.”

So, these buddies of mine, me Austin, Herschel Williams, he lived up on I Street, Terry Whitten, he lived down at Gluck Mill. We decided we’re going join the Navy. Buddies under the buddy program. And we did. We
all went to boot camp together. Hershel William’s daddy died, and he came home, and they put me in that honor guard. And, well, I wasn’t around them too much. Austin and Terry. The other guys… I guess you could say I was more or less of a loner. To be honest, I was scared to death. I didn’t know what…

We’d practiced in parades on the parade field. Now, you could imagine. I was number 47. Number 47 would have been a whole unit of men graduating. Probably 60-something men. There was 48, I think, but I was number 47.
I’d say I was from here. You come down—

Tom: Roosevelt?

Arthur: Well, if you just think, if you turn right on Roosevelt and went about halfway up to the next street, that’s about how far I was away from the podium. Well, right across the bay was the airport. I mean, I just had graduated from high school. I hadn’t seen anything like this. They had all of these big jets coming around. I was looking up like that, “Man, my goodness!” Those things were big, I mean real big jets, you know? I heard this, “Psst, psst, psst.” I turned around and looked. He said, “He’s calling your number, 47.”
I say, “Yes, sir.”
“Front and center!” I started walking.
He said, “Run!” I was running up there.
“Number 47, what’s your problem?”
“I ain’t got no problems, sir.”
He said, “Your head was on the swivel down there. You weren’t paying attention.”
I said, “Sir, I’m just sort of fascinated by them jets coming over. “Oh, you like airplanes?”
I said, “Never have seen so many jets, sir.”
He said, “Oh, I going to get you to know them real well.” I didn’t know what he talking about.
He said, “You go back down there, Number 47. Every time a plane comes over, you run down to the fence.” Well, one come over and I run down to the fence. Well, then one took off.
“Number 47, come back up here. You got to follow that plane back up here, too.” I run airplanes all day long, sir. All day long. I never once ever swiveled my head, again. I learned something that day.

Tom: Were politics ever mentioned in your family at home?

Arthur: No.
Tom: Current events? World events? Nothing?

Arthur: No.

Tom: Just mill life?

Arthur: Yep. What’s going on at work in the mill. People quitting, people dying. The only thing, really, I was interested in as a kid was sports.

Tom: How many generations of your family worked in the mill? I know your grandmother worked in the mill.

Arthur: Well, my great grandfather, he worked not too far from where we lived. The name of it was Townsend Mill, but everybody called it Twinney Mill. He was a, I guess you’d call him a mechanic. He worked in a card room, and somebody started, and back then, the belts went up in the ceiling. These big, old wide belts, about three inches, four inches wide. And somebody started to do it. It caught him and pulled him and slammed him up in the ceiling. Busted him up, and he died a young man. He didn’t live, but he worked there. Most all of my people, some of them worked there at Twinney. I had an uncle. Well, he was my great uncle, really.

Tom: The majority of them worked in the mill?

Arthur: In the mill. Yeah. Let me tell you something. My Uncle Grover, he lived over when the Fiberglass come here. He went down there and got a job. He worked there I think 30-31 years before he retired. One of my other uncles, he worked at the mill in Pendleton. I can’t remember the name of it. And later on, he left there and went over to Seneca Mill up in Seneca. Him and his wife, both. But I had one uncle. Him and his wife were having trouble. She was running around, so he left. He got a friend of his to help him get a truck that was going to Houston, Texas.
Interview with Kenneth Gary Jordan, Gluck Mill

September 23, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom Cartledge. I’m back at the First Baptist Church in Iva, South Carolina. It’s the 23rd of September, and I’m here with my friend Gary Jordan. Gary, if you would, please state your full name and your date of birth.


Tom: Give me a general idea of your life in your mill village.

Gary: Okay. It was a wonderful childhood. Actually, I was born in the boarding house. My parents had been married about a year and a half, and they couldn’t find a mill house at the mill village, so they rented a room from Mr. and Ms. Manley for six months or so and moved to two rooms at the boarding house. So, that’s where I was born, and when I was about a year and a half or two years, they got a mill house. It was a four-room house, and we later moved to another location across the railroad tracks on the upper side of the railroad tracks. We moved there, and our house happened to be across the street from the gymnasium, so my childhood was wonderful.

I was an only child. No brothers and sisters, but there were enough playmates that I felt like I had 50 brothers and sisters because we played every day. In cold weather, we went to the gymnasium. In the summertime, we played baseball or cow pasture sports and so-forth, built a wash-hole coming off of the mill pond for swimming, and picked cotton in the fall of the year. The company owned their own cotton farm and ginned their own cotton, so I was able to get work as an early child and play sports and do everything right within three or four streets of where I lived. It was a happy childhood.

Tom: Where did you eventually live?

Gary: 204 Riley Street. Stayed there until I was 21 years old.

Tom: Is it currently occupied?

Gary: It is currently occupied. As soon as the mill houses were sold, the first thing my dad did was to fix that house up, so it actually looks pretty good today, and it’s changed hands a couple of times.
Tom: You lived there until you were how old?

Gary: 21. I actually attended Clemson as a day student and commuted from that address. I had an automobile by that time, and I had a paper route with 225 customers, so I would commute with five other friends and students at Clemson. They paid me $2.00 a week, and I drove a 1953 Studebaker five days a week to Clemson. It’s interesting. If our classes were out at different times at the end of the day, we could hitchhike home. We didn’t have to wait and all go in the same car, but it was very easy in the ‘50s to stand on the side of the road and get a pick-up to drive you to Anderson, so it worked out very smoothly.

Tom: Where were your parents originally from?

Gary: They were originally from this town. Iva, South Carolina. My grandparents lived there when I was a child. We didn’t have an automobile, so we would catch Cook’s Bus at Gluck Mill, and he would bring us 12 miles south on Highway 81. We’d get off and walk to my father’s parents’ almost every Sunday.

Tom: Tell me about your relationship with your parents.

Gary: Very close relationship. My parents had a lot of friends. They didn’t have an automobile, but it seems like every weekend they were going somewhere—to the movie theater or out to eat or going to the mountains for a two-day weekend with someone else in their automobile. I remember, I would go along and would ride, sometimes, in the back window. The old cars, sometimes, behind the back seat had slant windows, and it was big enough for a child to lay up there. My father liked to cook. He worked five days a week, but he would usually do the cooking on Friday and Saturday night, and he loved fried fish, so we’d have fish almost every Friday and Saturday.

Tom: What was a typical Sunday meal?

Gary: Sunday meal? Actually, we would go to church. Went to the local Methodist Church which was walking distance from the house, only half a block. We would catch Cook’s Bus after church and ride to Iva to eat at my grandmother’s; many fond memories there. She knew about the time we were to arrive. As soon as we would get to her home, she would walk out the door, down the steps and find a free-range chicken. She would catch the chicken by the neck and ring it’s neck, bring it in and clean the chicken in boiling water. We’d have fried chicken and everything that goes with it within the hour.
Tom: Going back to your house, tell me about the house as far as electricity, furnishings, bathroom facilities.

Gary: Sure. When I came along, they had electricity in the house. I understood those houses, when they were originally built, didn’t have electricity and didn’t have inside bathrooms, but by my time, they had added bathrooms mostly on the back porch. There was electricity, but every room had a light hanging down in the middle of the room with a cord, and you’d reach up to the lightbulb to turn it on and off. We didn’t have central heating. The main source of heat was in the kitchen with a coal-burning stove, so during the week, all of the activities would be in the kitchen from cooking to eating. We had a hot water heater hooked to the coal stove in the kitchen, and it was my chore to bring in the coal. I’d bring in buckets of coal, and we stored the coal in the back end of the detached garage.

Tom: Tell me, what did you have for a typical breakfast?

Gary: Typical breakfast. If my father cooked it, you ever heard of brains and eggs? He loved brains and eggs. I didn’t care for brains and eggs, so I would have eggs and bacon. And my mother, any biscuits that were cooked at my house came from those tinned canned biscuits, so we’d either have biscuits out of a can or toast.

Tom: Describe your waking up routine.

Gary: Waking up routine. It’s interesting. On a mill village, back in the ‘40s and ‘50s, they had mill whistles, so at about 5 o’clock in the morning, there was a wake-up whistle, (the mill later changed to a siren) that was loud enough to actually hear it and wake up. Then, they would have a warning whistle about 15 minutes before work started. Back then, the shift started at 7 o’clock, so at 15 to 7 there was a warning whistle, and at 7 o’clock, was an on-the-job whistle. So, that’s really what we used to wake up. I had a paper route, so I got up with the wake-up whistle at 5 o’clock and delivered the papers. Later on, my father, when I started at Clemson, carried half of the papers for me so it worked out good for me.

Tom: Was that on a bicycle or walking?

Gary: Well, I’ve done both. We started out walking. My father took over the mill village, where houses were close to each other. He would do the village and I started with a bicycle on the outskirt houses. Later on, I got a 1936 Ford with mechanical brakes and straight drive, so I did that part with that ’36 Ford. Later on, I got a ’53 Studebaker which I used to go to Clemson.
Tom: Do you have any idea what you were paid for your paper route?

Gary: Well, that’s another interesting thing. I had it for 10 years, and I had it for the four years I was attending Clemson as a day student. The charge for the paper was 35 cents, and I think of that 35 cents, the carrier (which was me) got 13 cents per paper. We did most of the collections at the mill gate. The first shift was 7 o’clock to 3 o’clock. Well, on Friday, they would have an envelope with cash money in it for their week’s wages. Myself, insurance collectors and other bill collectors would stand at the gate on Friday afternoon and collect our money as they exited the mill on Friday.

Tom: You talked a little bit about Clemson, but go back to your school there at Gluck Mill.

Gary: Okay. We had a two-story brick schoolhouse with six nice classrooms. The bathrooms were downstairs. There were no lunches; students got 30 minutes for lunch. You could go to Miss Piece’s store next door or somewhere else for lunch, or you could brown-bag your lunch. Let’s see, the first three grades were downstairs, and the next three grades were upstairs. Before I started first grade, they built a wooden classroom onto the two-story brick building for the 7th grade, so we had seven grades and excellent teachers, strong discipline. They weren’t afraid to use a switch and had no trouble in school. I later learned that the mill supplemented the payment for the teachers at Gluck Mill to attract the better teachers. I think we were very fortunate that the mill contributed to things like that.

Tom: Ok. Describe your after-school activities.

Gary: After-school activities were, in the winter during the school year, I’d go straight to the gym and play basketball. If I had homework, I would try to do my homework before I went to the gym and before my parents got off work from the mill and got home at 4 o’clock. Then, we’d go back to the gym at night. The gym stayed open until 9 o’clock at night, so we would play outside. We would play sports like Kick the Can, Gully Bug, Dodgeball, and I’m remembering that on Monday nights, we’d have Boy Scout meetings. We weren’t really strong in the scouting. We didn’t have uniforms, but we would always study the scout book and do our scout oath, but we’d spend probably three fourths of the time playing Dodgeball, Hot Tail, and sports like that.

Tom: You mentioned when your parents came home from the mill. Both parents worked in the mill, and did they work the same shift or different shifts?
Gary: They would both work the first shift. Now, my mother worked in the cloth room, and my dad actually got a job in quality control. He was in charge of the laboratory, which was air conditioned, and he checked the quality of the yarn and fabric that was being checked; the bursting strength of the fabric and the tensile strength of the yarn and that sort of thing. My father volunteered to go into the service during World War II. He had seven brothers and sisters that were already in the service, and he was actually two weeks away from being deferred, but he wanted to join. He went in, and Mr. Sweetenburg, the mill superintendent, moved my mother from the cloth room to the laboratory to take my dad’s job. So, while he was in the Navy, she was doing his job, and when he got back from the war, he got his job back. She went to work in Anderson at banks and with doctors.

Tom: You mentioned going to Clemson. What was the highest level of education that you obtained from Clemson?

Gary: I have a Ph.D. from Clemson.

Tom: So, you have a Master’s and a Ph.D. from Clemson?

Gary: And a B.S.

Tom: Your Ph.D. is in what?

Gary: Physical Chemistry.

Tom: Did you work at the mill, yourself?

Gary: I did when I was 16. Well, let me mention my first job. When I was eight years old, I got a job at the company store, which was a grocery store, a clothing store and a mercantile, store bagging groceries. So at eight years old, I was working after school on Thursday and after school on Friday and all day Saturday. For bagging groceries those hours, I got $2.00 a week, and I was very happy to get that. When I became 16, I was eligible to work in the mill, and they offered me a job. My very first job at 16 years was probably the very hardest job I ever had in my life. They put me in the weave room, which was very loud, dirty, with a lot of lint, and I was sweeping and mopping around the looms where lint and dust and dirt collected. I was mopping the floors between the looms, and it was real hard work, hot with no air conditioning. At the end of the day, I was dog-tired.

The second summer, they were installing new cleaning equipment called Pneumafil, in the spinning room. They assignment me to help the guy
installing the Pneumafil, which was really a vacuum cleaner, under each string flow on the spinning frame. That was not as hard work, it was upstairs and wasn’t as hot. The windows were open, and it was kind of enjoyable work. I think we got paid a dollar an hour in 1951 through 1954. It might’ve been 50 cents an hour. I’m not sure.

And then, after doing that for two summers, the third summer, I was already attending Clemson. Then I got a job at an adjacent mill, Haynesworth Mill in Anderson. It was really a synthetics mill and a knitting mill. My job there was to patrol around 24 Tricot knitting machines, which was flat-bed fabric, not circular knitting. If I found a hole in the fabric, I turned the machine off for the fixer to repair the hole in the fabric. She taught me how to repair and I would help her. I would do my patrolling job, and then I would start fixing some also. That was enjoyable work, and I didn’t mind doing that at all. Actually, I calculated… I would walk 15 miles a day patrolling those machines in eight hours.

Tom: How were health issues resolved? Sickness, injury, anything of that nature?

Gary: Actually, when people on the mill village, including my family, if they got sick, the doctor would come to the house. I think my mother got pneumonia one time, and that’s the only time I remember we needed doctors in the house, but otherwise, my father, in addition to being over quality control, was the first-aid guy, too. They had a first-aid room at the mill. If anyone got hurt in the mill, they would go there for first-aid type of medical treatment.

Tom: Was there a nurse there?

Gary: Not a nurse, no.

Tom: How were discipline issues resolved in your family and at school and in the village in the mill?

Gary: Okay. At home, spankings were popular. If you did anything wrong or out of line or so, my father would spank me with a belt. My mother would use a switch, and sometimes she would have me to go outside and cut the switch. They would take me to the bathroom, they would catch me by the arm, and I’d bend over, and they would spank my butt. It would hurt, but not hurt for long, but I would get the message.

At school, the same thing. Teachers had paddles, and if someone misbehaved, some would spank them in front of the whole class. Others
would take them to the back room and spank them. I was never spanked by a neighbor, but I understand that if kids would misbehave, their parents okayed anyone to spank them, but I was actually a pretty well-behaved child, so I didn’t get into much mischief except a couple of times.

Tom: How was discipline dealt with in the mill, itself?

Gary: In the mill, you had to go see the superintendent. Mr. Sweetenburg had his own office, and if it was anything that happened in the mill, the overseer of the plant would march them up there and go into Mr. Sweetenburg’s office. They’d have to explain the situation and he would listen to both sides of it and so forth. The worst thing that could happen if they did something real bad, they could lose their job over it and, of course, lose their mill house.

Tom: In your family, were family finances ever discussed openly?

Gary: When I was really young, my father went to work in the mill. He actually got a job, coming from Iva, which was the home of Jackson mill where he played ball, to play baseball on the Gluck Mill baseball team. They made a job for him there, he did things like pick up Coke bottles throughout mill and whatever. This was in 1935, right after I was born. My mother was at home at the time. My dad made $6.00 a week, and my mother laughed about it and said we paid rent with $2.00, we bought groceries with $2.00, and we just blew the other $2.00, and I guess it started from there. Everybody in the village was making similar wages. They were living on $6.00 a week, and that was, of course, a year or two after the depression.

Tom: Was it necessary for your family to ever receive the benefits of a pounding?

Gary: No. my family didn’t, but they participated in poundings and often, when that would happen, if the man of the house, the wage-earner got injured and was out of work or whatever, it was a big thing for neighbors to pitch in and help out.

Tom: Did your family ever receive any financial support of any kind from The United States Government?

Gary: Nope. Did not.

Tom: All right. Describe your personal church experiences and, perhaps, influences that church has had on your village.
Gary: Okay. My mother was a Baptist, my father was a Methodist. The Methodist church was half a block, within sight, of our mill house, so as long as I can remember, we went to the Methodist church, and did it religiously. We would be in church on Sunday morning, we would stay for Sunday school, and I guess my most memorable, best memories I had are the Sunday school teachers I had. Really, we studied the bible in Sunday school, and I remember my favorite teacher was Mrs. Blackston. She would have us to read the scripture, we would discuss the scripture, and then she would teach about it. One thing that stuck with me. She asked us a question one time, “If you could’ve lived at any stage of your life, when would you liked to have lived?” And we all answered the question. I forgot what we said, but she said, “You know, I would’ve preferred to live when Jesus was alive, so I could’ve met him in person.” So that always stuck with me.

Tom: You described your physical condition when you got home, you were wringing wet. Your dad, ultimately, had a pretty decent job. How about your mom when she came home from work?

Gary: She was the most perfect housekeeper you’ve ever seen. My dad used to say she’d love to sweep the front porch; she was a housekeeper more than a cook. We hired a black lady to do the washing on Mondays and that sort of thing and the ironing. My mom was upbeat, she played the piano, and she was never down and despondent at all as I can remember.

Tom: How many of your relatives actually worked in the mill?

Gary: Oh, I don’t know. A bunch of them. On my father’s side, my grandfather, my dad’s father, was the superintendent of Jackson Mills. All of the Jordans worked in the mills part of their career and some of them their entire career. My father and his three older brothers that worked in the mill their entire lives. The younger, well several… the youngest brother worked in the mill all of his life. Some of them went on. There was a family of 12, and I think two of the children died at birth or within a year or so. But of the ten 10 kids left, I think all worked in the mill at some point in time.

Tom: How about your mother’s family?

Gary: My mother’s family did not. My grandfather was actually president of Jackson mill in Iva during the Depression. He lost his job during the Depression. The local people would come to the bank to take their money out of the bank, but there was no money to take out, so the mill just closed down. He didn’t have a job, so he and a first cousin started a mercantile
business. He started with a meat market and went from the meat market into the mercantile business. So, he had Wakefield Mercantile which sold everything under the sun.

Tom: Just a general store?

Gary: A general store and all. So he spent his life doing that, and his son took over that business. My grandfather had three daughters and one son (one of the daughters was my mother). The son took over that business, and the daughters worked in office-type jobs.

Tom: This was your maternal grandfather?

Gary: Maternal grandfather, right.

Tom: During your village years, were you aware or your family aware of US politics?

Gary: Not that much. As I grew up, Roosevelt was the man. I can remember when Roosevelt died, my neighbors went on the front porch and cried out loud, wailing and gnashing their teeth and so forth, but to me, it seemed like it was 100 percent Democratic with no real political arguments or discussions.

Tom: Going back to military service, explain your military service to me.

Gary: Okay. When I went to Clemson, it had an ROTC program. All of us entered ROTC. It was mandatory for the first two years in college, and most of us stayed on; so I got four years of ROTC and had mandatory two years in service. I went in the Army as a Second Lieutenant, then First Lieutenant, and when I got out of the reserves, I was a Captain. It was a fun time. I spent two years at Fort McClellan, Alabama. I was with troops the first year. Second year, because I had a chemical degree, they assigned me to the Chemical Corps, and I taught Radiological Fallout at the Chronical Corps School for the last year.

Tom: What was the most challenging experience you faced while living in the mill village?

Gary: At the mill, the first thing that popped in my mind, was getting through that dissertation for the Ph.D., as one of the toughest times. Actually, it went smoother than I thought, but I was really dreading going through my oral exams with the four professors. Once I got there, I realized that I
knew more about my subject than they did, and it wasn’t as hard as I thought.

The mill village. Gee, I can’t think of anything that wasn’t really enjoyable. The down point I guess, there were about five of us kids, when we must have been 10 years old, were caught tick-tocking a house at Halloween. Mr. Adam’s house, he caught us. He turned us in to the mill superintendent, and the next day at school, someone from the mill came and got all five of us and marched us down to the mill office. We had to go in front of Mr. Sweetenburg and defend our behavior. He lectured us and had our fathers to come and stand behind us and threaten to have the sheriff to come down and lock us up. He asked our parents if they would agree to that, and they all said, “Oh, sure, do it.” So, we thought we were off to jail, but they were just trying to scare us and said, “Don’t ever do it again, and go back to school,” and we didn’t do it again.

Tom: Explain tick-tocking.

Gary: Tick-tocking. All mill houses were just alike. They’re wood with wooden planks overlapping other planks. You’d take an ordinary kitchen knife, stick the small end of the knife under one of the boards or drive it under there through the paint or whatever, get a long string, and go back into the bushes, hide, and pull the cord, and let it go and let the handle pop against the wall. It was part of the trick or treat thing, but we’d do it whether we were tricked or treated.

Tom: Were you ever called a negative name or a Linthead or a Bobbin-Dodger or anything like that?

Gary: Actually, I don’t have any negative memories of that being a problem to me. I played sports and once I got to Junior High School and High School, I played basketball and baseball and fit right in with the other kids. Three groups of kids—kids from the mill villages, kids from the farms, and kids from the city. We all were in the same classrooms, but we didn’t really have any of that class division that you hear about.

Tom: Who or what had the most positive influence on you while you lived in the village?

Gary: Well, my teachers in grammar school really had a positive influence, and I’d say my Sunday school teacher had influence, and well, I think so many. I had older friends that were mentors to me. When I was eight and ten years old, some of the older guys who were 10 or 15 years older would let me ride my bicycle with them and let me play ball with them and,
fortunately, when I was 15 or 16, I was playing baseball teams with people 25 to 30 years old, so I always looked up to those people, and they were all very kind and gracious to me.

Tom: I had the pleasure of interviewing a friend of yours by the name of Frog Stansell.

Gary: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Frog and I buddied. We buddied up on the basketball team.

Tom: He said to be sure and call you, “Spot.”

Gary: Right!

Tom: Explain that to me.

Gary: Well, I had some white hair in the crown of my head, that looked like a spot of paint, so when I was six to ten years old, I was known around the gymnasium as Spot or Spot Button. Some of the older people called me Spot Button, but Frog still calls me Spot to this day.

Tom: He’s a remarkable man at 90 years of age.

Gary: He certainly is. Did you hear about the tragedy with his wife?

Tom: I knew that.


Tom: What would you consider to be the most valuable lesson you learned living in the mill village?

Gary: Just to appreciate what you have. We didn’t have much, but we appreciated what we had. We didn’t know we were poor, and friendships meant everything, so I’ve kind of gone out of my way to make friends wherever I am, and my childhood meant everything to me in later life.

Tom: Did living in the mill prepare you for life beyond the mill?

Gary: Yes, definitely.

Tom: Is there any particular part of that? Respect, compassion, friendship, all of the above?
Gary: All of the above, really, and one thing about living in the mill village, it seems like if you go anywhere in the United States and meet a person that has experienced mill village life, that person is like a brother or a sister to you. They know exactly the type of thing that went on in that small, compact village, and it’s just precious.

Tom: Precious. Okay, my friend. I think that’s going to do it for us. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate it.

Gary: Thank you very much for doing what you’re doing.
Interview with Sandra Barrett Metcalfe, Ann Yeargin Roberts, and Marie Golden Partain, Gluck Mill

September 13, 2019

Tom: Okay. This is Tom Cartledge. This is the 13th of September, and I am at Marshall United Methodist Church. I'm about to interview Sandra Metcalfe and Ann Roberts, so if you would, Sandra, please state your full name and date of birth.


Tom: Same thing for you, Miss Ann, if you would.


Tom: All right. Sandra, if you would, give me a general idea of your life in your village here.

Sandra: It was growing up with lots of children, lots of places to play. We had a gym, we had a tennis court, we had a playground, and we spent most of our day doing these kinds of things. Creating our own things like a ball game or hopscotch or whatever. We had a creek at the end of our street, and me, myself, and I would go down there and just clean out an area and take a sandwich down there. The other people would come, and we would just have a little picnic. Then, as we were older, we spent the rest of our time in the gym. We played basketball, we played baseball, we played football, we did everything that the boys did, and we thought that we were just as competitive as they were. Then, our church, of course, was a big part of our life.

Tom: How about you, Miss Ann? Tell me about your life?

Ann: Well, I didn't live on the mill village, but my grandparents and bunches of aunts and uncles lived here, so I spent a lot of time here, and best way I can describe living on this mill village is to say that it was what people try to have now in these gated communities. We had a mill pond, we had a golf course, we had a tennis court, we had a ballpark, we had a gym, and we had a country store that supplied all of our needs. So, we could have been totally inclusive down here. Had three churches of different denominations, and we were happy when all the kids played together.

Sandra: We were almost like Mennonites. Able to create our own.
Ann: And the children had imagination because they had to figure out things to do, and they had to use their mind. They didn't turn on a little gadget. Some of these houses was built up, and they played under the houses, and one day you might play Cowboys and Indians. The next day you might play something else.

Sandra: Dolls.

Ann: Dolls.

Tom: Okay. Sandra. What was the address of your house?

Sandra: My address was 411 Riley St.

Tom: Is it currently occupied?

Sandra: Yes, it is.

Tom: Do you know by whom?

Sandra: I do. It was a neighbor across the street. The Hawkins. There was probably 11 children in their family, and one of the sons lives in the house now.

Tom: Ann, tell me your home address. The house that you grew up in.

Ann: I grew up in Homeland Park, and it was 3406 Wilmont.

Tom: Wilmont. Is that house still there?

Ann: Yes.

Tom: Do you know who lives in it?

Ann: I do not.

Tom: All right. At what ages. Sandra, did you live here?

Sandra: I lived here from the time I was born until I got married at 18 and moved away.


Ann: Yes.
Tom: You're still involved here in the Methodist Church.

All right. Sandra. Describe your family.

Sandra: I was an only child. I had a wonderful mother and a wonderful father. I had an uncle and aunt that lived down the street, which had a daughter, Rita, and Rita was my cousin, but she was more like my sister. My family was wonderful. We were involved in church. We were the… What's the family that's so perfect? The Partridge Family.

Tom: Yeah. The Partridge Family.

Sandra: My family was wonderful. Close

Tom: Do you have any idea where your family originated? Where they came to this area from?

Sandra: I am Black Irish.

Tom: Black Irish. Ann, do you have any idea where your parents, grandparents came from?

Ann: Not really. I've never researched it. I've been told that we were of German descent because our name was Yurgan, and that has a German translation to it.

Tom: All right. Describe your typical breakfast.

Ann: Well, I was not much of a breakfast eater. If I ate anything, it was probably a piece of toast. I'm sure as an infant, I was fed appropriately, but my momma used to say, sometimes, she never heard a word out of my mouth until I walked out the door and said, “Bye.” Because I didn't like to get up early and eat, and that’s still pretty much the same today.

Tom: All right. Do me a favor and describe your typical everyday dress as a youngster.

Ann: I guess we probably primarily had, at that time, we called Sunday clothes and play clothes. We mostly wore nice little dresses to church, and then we just wore little play clothes. Jeans, things like that to play in. Shorts.

Tom: What did you wear to school, typically?
Ann: When I went to school with dresses. We never wore any pants when I went to school.

Tom: I’m going to go back to Sandra to ask you about your home there on 411 Riley. Describe your home to me.

Sandra: We thought it was big. We only had one big bedroom. When I was probably eight or nine, we built another room on, which was my bedroom. But at one point, our bathrooms were on the porch. We did have running water at that time here, and my house was really nice because we had inside people that worked at the mill that did lots of work on the houses. Whatever needed to be done.

Tom: How was it heated?

Sandra: We had kerosene heat in my early years. Then, Piedmont Natural Gas was run, and we had gas heat in my last years. We never heated with any coal or anything like that. You only had a portion of your house heated. You did not have the whole… Your bedroom was not heated.

Tom: How about the electricity?

Sandra: We always had electricity.

Tom: Always had electricity.

Sandra: Always. In our years, we did.

Tom: I asked Ann about her waking up routine and her typical breakfast. Go ahead and describe yours, if you would.

Sandra: Well, a typical breakfast was, like I said, if you got a butter biscuit or did something in that order. Hate to tell you this, but I drank a Coca-Cola half the time for breakfast.

Tom: All right, let's talk about school. Tell me what you wore to school, Sandra.

Sandra: Oh, we wore skirts and little shirts. No pants were allowed. If it was really a cold day and your mom thought you really needed something on your legs, you put on a pair of pants under your dress, and when you got to the school, you took those off. But you wore little galoshes. Those kinds of things that kept you dry. We were always taken care of.

Tom: Describe your school and the teachers.
Sandra: Oh, well, our school was brand new when I started school. It had just been built. Last night, they were talking about the schools being built in the ‘50s, and that was when our schools were built. They were wonderful. We had wonderful heat. No air. But lights. Our school was really, really good and wonderful teachers.

Tom: Yeah, I was going to say, what about class size?

Sandra: An average size was probably less than… right around 20 or so. I don't think it was ever over 22 or so, do you?

Marie: I was trying to think. I was going around on the tables there at first grade. We probably had 20, I would say 25. Now, the school that was the Gluck School before the ‘50s, that's right up here, I think they had larger classes because the Starr people. The district was totally laid out differently, then. I think that's why they put us in School District 5. I think, when they started building the schools, they started building schools that went up like that. It went up to the ninth grade at—

Sandra: At the old school.

Marie: At the old school.

Tom: All right. Tell me about, Sandra, your education. Where did you go to high school?

Sandra: I went to Hanna in the 10th grade. T. L. Hanna, and then in the 11th grade, I transferred to McDuffie, and that's where I took my cosmetology which led me into the job that I kept for 48 years.

Tom: Where's McDuffie?

Sandra: Well, McDuffie was on McDuffie Street. It was the old Boys High. We went to Lakeside at the old Girl's High. I went to McDuffie, which was the old Boys. High, and then I went to Hanna. So, I toured them all.

Tom: Did you ever actually work in the mill?

Sandra: No.

Tom: Ann, did you ever work in the mill?

Ann: Yes, I was the nurse at the Wellington and Equinox Mill for several years. As a child or young person, I did not.
Tom: Tell me about your education as a nurse after high school. Where did you go to high school?

Ann: Hanna. I was in the last class of the Anderson Hospital Nursing Program. They had, at that time, affiliated with Clemson. I got a three-year degree from Anderson Hospital. I worked there in surgery until I got married and had children. I worked down here for several years at the Industrial Nursing which was interesting. Not in a lot of nursing involved. We had to do preventative-type stuff for hearing. They had just started with the OSHA Hearing Program, and I had to do hearing tests and make ear plates.

Tom: So, you are a registered nurse?

Ann: Yes.

Tom: Very good.

Sandra, did you ever date anyone from the mill village?

Sandra: I dated everybody.

Ann: She’s telling you the truth.

Sandra: We didn't date one person and go anywhere. We dated somebody to get away to go somewhere, and eight of us went. But we did but date all these boys that come to the gym.

Ann: It’s not like it is now. We liked people, but as far as what the kids nowadays call dating, that wasn’t what we meant.

Sandra: No, no, we don’t call it that. That wasn’t the kind of dating we did.

Tom: But you dated people from the mill families?

Ann: Oh, yeah.

Tom: Did you marry one of them?

Ann: No.

Tom: Did you marry one of them, Sandra?

Sandra: No.

Ann: I married one from Orr Mill.
Tom: Oh you did? But you didn’t marry a fellow that worked at the mill. Very good. Well, you talked about being a nurse and everything, so how were health issues dealt within the family? I mean, did the doctor come to your house, or were you usually taken in?

Ann: I remember the doctors coming to houses. My grandmother, I remember, the doctor would come to her house to see her. Now, I don't think I ever had a doctor come to the house to see me because Mother and Daddy always were able to get there. But I do remember that my grandmother, at one time, was disabled, and the doctor did come to her house. And he always came at lunchtime so he could eat lunch.

Tom: All right, let's talk about discipline. Sandra, how were you disciplined at home?

Sandra: Oh, I was really disciplined because I was an only child. I didn't get spared anything.

Tom: Were you spanked?

Sandra: I was, and I was hickory-ed, and I was not let go places because you would be on restriction for a week at a time. If you didn't go to school, you didn't do anything the rest of the day. That was the end of your life.

Tom: What were you spanked with?

Sandra: Like I said, my dad always just did it with his hand. We had a weeping willow tree, and you got to go get your own hickory. And, then, I would break it, and then I’d have to go back and get another one. But you know what? He didn't give me anything I didn't deserve.

Ann: Exactly.

Tom: Were you ever disciplined at school?

Sandra: Not really. Not bad because Marie's daddy was the principal, so if you did something, he would just come home and tell my mom and dad, and they did it.

Tom: Ann, tell me how you were disciplined and all, being an only child.

Ann: Pretty much the same. I don't remember a lot of spankings. I remember one my daddy gave me, and it was with his hand, and I completely
deserved it, but he never did what I would call… that people talk now about beatings. It was just a little spanking.

Sandra: My daddy never would’ve whipped me with a belt.

Marie: My daddy did.

Sandra: And I was afraid of it, too.

Ann: And my momma spanked me with a hickory stick, and I deserved that, too. But, mostly, my parents laid down the rules and we obeyed them. That was the law, you know?

Sandra: Well, from your school, if you were in trouble there, you were in as much trouble when you got home. Not, “What did my child do to you.”

Tom: All right. Let’s switch to family, finances. Were finances discussed openly at home?

Sandra: No.

Ann: No.

Tom: Did you ever receive any kind of benefit, your family, from the government?

Sandra: No.

Ann: No.

Tom: Did either one of you ever received the benefits of a pounding?

Sandra: The mill always… If people got sick. Back then, you didn't have sick days to be out. The churches, more or less, kind of took care of that from place to place. But they did do things when people, like I said, the Hawkins that lived across from us with the 11 children. They really did a lot. Ann and me, both being an only child, it was a little bit different because we were fortunate that we never had bad illnesses.

Tom: Now, did both of your parents work in the mill?

Sandra: Like I said, my mom did and my dad did. For the first five years, she didn't work, but she did. She worked 15 years on the third shift so that my dad could be at home at night with me, and she could be there all day. When
we missed the bus, my mom was the one that took us to the school or forgot something. They covered the area. We always had somebody there.

Tom: How about you, Ann. Both of your parents work in the mill?

Ann: My mom did. She worked in the cloth room. My dad worked, briefly, in the mill, and then he went in the service.

Tom: Military?

Ann: Military service. After he came out, he did not go back to work in mill, and my mom did not either. I had already come along by then.

Tom: All right, Sandra, talk to me about your church experiences.

Sandra: From the time we were born, we knew it was Sunday, and we went to church. We were carried as babies. We went there every week, and every person there took part in the church. In fact, you would say that those people probably did as much to raise me as my mom and dad did. They were such a good influence. And, like I told you out there, we did not only participate in this church that they went to, but if we were having something, if we were having Bible School, if we were having revival, this whole mill village was included in everything.

Tom: You attended the Baptist Church?

Sandra: I did. Southside Baptist.

Tom: What church do you attend now?

Sandra: Concord Baptist. The only two churches I’ve ever been a member of.

Tom: And, Ann, you’ve been a member here from the very beginning.

Ann: I was. At the time, they called it christening when I was six months old at Orrville because this church was not built.

Tom: At Orrville Baptist Church? I know where that is.

Ann: No. Orrville Methodist. And, then, we moved here, and I’ve been here.

Sandra: Another thing. We baptized in the ponds. My mom was baptized in the pond. Of course, by the time I was baptized, we had a baptismal, but my mom and her whole family were baptized in the mill pond.
Tom: All right. Describe the condition of your dad when he’d come in from work from his shift.

Sandra: He was tired. He was hot. But you know what? We met him at the top of the hill and said, “Can you take us to Broadway Lake and let us go swimming?” Of course, my dad was always a yard freak, so he came in—

Marie: Rested 15 minutes and right back at it.

Sandra: I don’t remember my daddy ever resting until it was dark.

Tom: Did you have a garden?

Sandra: We did. Everybody had a garden, you know?

Marie: Oh, yeah.

Tom: Did you have a cow?

Sandra: We did not have cows, but the Hawkins across the street... several miles back to the pasture. They had cows down there. Cows and pigs.

Tom: Cows and pigs. You had neither one?

Sandra: Not there. But my dad and his brothers had places that they had cows and pigs, and we always had homemade sausage, fresh beef, and all that. We might’ve not had a lot of money, but we always had something to eat.

Tom: How about your family, Ann? Did they have a cow or a pig?

Ann: No, my grandma and granddaddy lived on the next street over, and Grandma always had a garden, and she had chickens. I found one of her old diaries, which she kept. Miss So-and-So. 2 dozen eggs. 25 cents. And that kind of thing. So even though she worked in the mill, she still sold her eggs. And, then, she supplied the garden harvest to anybody on the mill village that needed it. Certainly to all of us, her family. It wasn’t uncommon to see a garden in the backyard.

Sandra: Oh, no.

Tom: Well, I’ve been told that the mill even furnishes seeds and all that stuff.

Sandra: Oh, they would. They did all that. They would do things at Christmastime and get fruit baskets and that kind of thing. The mill, the people that were
over the mill, and all that, were as interested in the people as each person was that lived next door to each other. They cared. They lived within—

Tom: That's probably because they were local.

Sandra: They saw. They saw what was going on.

Ann: And they gave a ham or a turkey every year at Christmas

Sandra: Yeah, everybody got it.

Ann: They had a store, and they gave little coupons, and especially during the war, if you didn't have money, you could use one of those coupons, and then you could pay it back when you got your check on Friday.

Sandra: I don't know if Gary told you, but we had a store down on the corner of where 81 goes down South Marshall. Master Store. Marshall had some money, and he would do things, like, if people got in really need of borrowing money, he would let them borrow money. My mom's dad worked for him and did a lot of the stuff like she was talking about. They delivered the groceries, then, you know?

Tom: What about politics? Were politics ever discussed?

Sandra: Not really. The only time we ever, what I would consider politics. At one point, the unions tried to come into our mill, and there was a real concern with that. We even had a couple of people that died. Killed themselves over it.

Tom: I've been to Chiquola. Are you talking about Chiquola or here?

Sandra: No, here.

Tom: Really.

Sandra: He killed himself, and they would be at the gate. We always, when our dads got paid at the mill, or moms, they had a man that came out every Friday. He stood there with this little box about like this, and he had your money, not check, but your money in there. At that time, when the union and tried to come in, it really got to be, you would almost call that a riot, kind of, with the people the way they were so strongly opposed to it. But they had recruited a few of the men that were from here and gave them really good checks to try to recruit it into the mill.
Marie: After I was married, I lived next door to one of the men that lost the respect of the mill village because he was trying to get the union in, and I guess the people here were treated well, they were paid well, so it wasn’t like they—

Sandra: They didn’t feel like they needed somebody to come in and intervene for them.

Marie: And it was so different here than some other mill villages. I moved from Newbury, and I don’t remember, but I have been told by my family even when I was a baby, my grandfather helped to get a union in Newberry at the Mulholland Mill, and he did that because nobody in the company would stop child labor, and he was opposed to child labor. He was influential. He was one of the bosses in the mill, and he was influential. He helped to get the union in, and then when the union came in and it was so horrible, the things that they expected, he helped to get the union out, as well. It’s really funny. Strong Thurmond was very… he would come to my grandparents’ home and sit and visit on the front porch with them and talk about how he appreciated Granddaddy and what he had done and that he was a fair man. Not a man that was, “I’m union because I’m union,” or, “I’m not union because I’m not.” That all he wanted was to make life better for the village.

So, you know, there are lots of things. There are lots of stories like that that people don’t know a lot about.

Ann: One thing, too, that I think is not unlike what’s going on in today’s political arena. There’s a lot of people telling us what we need and what we ought to have and how we ought to do this and how, but they’re not thinking about the people that they’re talking to. They’re not walking in our shoes. And those people down there in the mill had come in from the fields and everywhere else, and they had a good life here on this mill village, and they didn’t want somebody telling them, “I can make this a whole lot better,” and not explain what they were talking about.

Tom: Okay. In that regard, were your people originally sharecroppers, farmers?

Ann: My grandparents.

Tom: And they came and worked in the mill?

Ann: They came from Iva for a while, and then they moved up here when the mill provided the houses.
Tom: Well, they had a mill in Iva. They had Jackson Mill there.

Ann: But they worked a farm.

Tom: Farm people. How about yours?

Sandra: My grandparents were sharecroppers. They lived down off of 29 where Sandbrook Forest, that trailer park, is. They had a big farm there. In fact, it connected onto Mountain Creek Church. That's where my grandparents and all my dad's family lived. My dad was one of 11 children. He was one of the older ones, and that was what happened to sharecroppers, because like I said, we always had something to eat. Didn't necessarily mean that had any money. I don't know that I ever saw my grandmother with money, but she always had what she needed.

But it was bartering. Back then, everybody bartered. When my dad and a couple of other brothers got old enough, they did come to work at the mill, and they supplemented their parents with money.

Tom: How old was your father when he came to work in the mill?

Sandra: I think he was probably 15 or 16. Now, I had an uncle, my dad's sister's husband, Jack Beasley. Jack would tell about being 12 years old when he came to work in the mill because he would say that he would lay down in the floor and try to put up the ends with his toes. That was always so funny, but he had went to work there, and he didn't stay working at the mill, probably, that many years after he was old enough to do something else.

Tom: Were either one of you ever called a derogatory term? Linthead or Bobbin Dodger or anything like that?

Sandra: We didn't ever go anywhere else that other people saw us. So we just lived to ourselves.

Tom: Close community.

Sandra: And my husband asked me one day when I started McCants, he said, “Did you feel inferior to those people?” I said, “No, it didn't take long for me to know that I was superior to them,” because, with the raising that I had and what they were doing, I didn't want to be on their level.
Tom: You know, one thing I've noticed about both of you this time is that both of you have very good penmanship, so somewhere, somebody taught you how to write cursive very, very well.

Sandra: Oh, we did. We did. And that is so sad.

Tom: You know, people now can't.

Sandra: You know, I told my granddaughter one day we were at one of the restaurants where they had the little thing on the... And I said, “Sign my name,” And she goes, “Nana, I can’t do that.” And she can now that she's practiced. I mean, we had to look on that board and copy every note that we got. We didn't have somebody that handed you this sheet of paper and it’s mimeographed. The little thing that we did the mimeographing on, this is the way you did it.

Tom: Well, they don't teach it. They're beginning to teach it again.

Marie: They’re finding it’s not a good thing not to.

Sandra: But I learned so much from the writing because if I wrote something I could remember it. I might be over here, over here when you told that, but if I write it down there, if I write your name. I wrote your name the other day on my thing, and it sticks.

Ann: Well, we had to learn back then.

Sandra: You did.

Ann: We didn’t have Sesame Street and all of that to learn from.

Sandra: Howdy Doody was the best thing.

Ann: We had to learn.

Tom: Well, let me ask you this. I'll ask you individually. What was the most positive influence on you in your life while you lived here?

Sandra: What was the most, well, you know, as me going to school and then staying here working, all the people that I did their hair, I had known as grown-ups, but once I started working at the beauty shop, I became affiliated with all the things that they knew. And when you do hair, you tell me more than you tell your doctor. So, I learned a lot of stuff from
them. The people we went into church with and the people that I worked with. It was wonderful.

Tom: Ann, who is the person you could go to help resolve a personal issue?

Ann: I don't remember having too many personal issues growing up, but I was very close to my aunt. My dad's sister. She was a nurse, and I aspired to be a nurse. So, growing up, I think I leaned, probably, toward her more. And then, later on, I continued that closeness with her because she never had any children, and she treated me just like I was a child of hers without being mean and having to discipline and tell me I couldn't do it.

Tom: All right. Sandra, how about you? Was there a person that you could go to help resolve?

Sandra: Like I said, I don't ever remember having problems when I was growing up.

Ann: There was no drama in our life.

Sandra: We had no drama. We lived together every day. We went to church together every week. We didn't have the drama that kids have now. I don't remember needing all that kind of care.

Tom: What would you consider to be the most valuable lesson that you've learned living in the mill village?

Sandra: I think to be independent. I think our independence was we had to make our way.

Tom: Think for yourself.

Sandra: We had to make our way. I think that was the thing, and we felt good about ourselves. We never had any inferior… the fact that Marie has a college education and Ann has a college education. I never felt inferior to them. Like I said, if I needed their help, I confided in them. If they needed my help, they confided. So it was kind of like all the other bartering we did. We've always helped each other. If I’ve got a problem, they’ve got a problem. If they’ve got a problem, I’ve got a problem. It’s the love that we have.

Ann: Yeah. That’s the keyword right there. Hillary Clinton wrote the book, but we lived it. It takes a village to raise a child, and this village raised every
one of us. We could walk up and down the street and everybody knew who we were.

Sandra: And if you were doing something wrong, they would tell you.

Ann: And you were not going to do anything because you knew there were eyes everywhere watching you. It wasn't that we felt like they were spying on us. Like Sandra said, it was the love that all of them felt toward us.

Sandra: We were more grown-up at 18 and then kids are now at 35. When we got married.

Ann: I think growing up on the mill village was the most wonderful thing any anybody ever did because nobody was ever judgmental towards you. No family was any better off than the other families. Even though the supervisors may have lived in a bigger house than we did, they were all in the same boat. So there was no class situation here.

Sandra: Yeah. But like I said, until we went to middle school, we did not know that there was another world out there. I mean, we really didn’t. It was strange.

Marie: And the only reason I knew some differences is because Daddy picked me up and my brother. He had to go to meetings. And when you can't get a child to behave for just a short period of time… Mother worked second shift. My brother was hearing-impaired and cleft lip and cleft palate.

Tom: I remember you telling me that.

Marie: And he would sit outside, and I would draw for him, stick people, and he would try to draw them. But as for making noise or jumping around… ’til that meeting was over, we knew this was our job. And, you know, Daddy would get us a coloring book or whatever to take. And we were quiet. The only reason I knew there were “other schools” and “other people” was because we really didn’t. We competed with the—

Sandra: The strange part about the not marrying people from here, we married somebody else and brought them here. They played at this ballpark, they played softball. They did all the things and, now, they’re as much a part.

Marie: They’re a part of the village.

Sandra: Like our reunion, Chester is friends with more of the people that was friends with me than he ever was with the people that… Because we just stayed together.
Ann: We were talking the other day about how we grew up not understanding and knowing that there was such a thing as segregation because there's a street up here, next to the Pentecostal Church where the black people lived that worked in the mill.

Sandra: It was called “Nigger Road.”

Ann: But we still didn't see them as being anybody different.

Sandra: I can’t think of that boy’s name that lived over there, but he comes to the store and sees Chester on the time.

Marie: It’s just amazing.

Ann: And I never went to school at all with the blacks, but I never felt that… I just never understood why. I just thought, “They have their school, and we have our school.” Until all of it broke loose, I never understood what was going on.

Tom: We've been joined by Marie Golden Partain, and I know because I've talked to you before, Marie, at the reunion. I know that your father was a principal here. Where did he get his education?

Marie: My dad got a degree in business management after he came out of service on the GI Bill, and he went to Newbery College. That's where he grew up. My mother grew up. He went, first, to work in a mill because mills were that, and a business degree kind of gave him a top-of-the-line job. He went first to Lancaster. He got a job there, and he wasn't at all pleased. He didn't mind working with the people he knew in Newbery. He wasn't pleased with Lancaster because he had this need to be an athletic director.

Some of his friends who were athletic directors who played ball against him when he was a young man got in touch with him and let him know where athletic director’s jobs were. He came here.

Tom: As athletic director, not as principal.

Marie: Right. He came here as the athletic director, and they had a female principal, and I told you that it went up to ninth grade. Well, these were adult men, pretty much, in ninth grade. They were big, husky boys. She was having some trouble with discipline and what have you, and the… I don't know what his title was. Anyway, Mr. Marshall—

Sandra: He was probably the superintendent at the time.
Marie: … talked to him. Mr. Marshall asked Daddy if he would be interested in going up there because he said, “You do a good job of keeping them settled down when you’re playing ball and all. If you can do that, you can do this, you got a college education, we'll start you out teaching music.”

So my daddy taught music, but he was the principal, and Ms. Evans taught some other classes, and they told Daddy that they would send him if he was interested. They would pay for him during the summers when he was out of school to get his degree to be an educator. Well, by the time, that was in ’50, and we started school up there in ’53, Daddy had gotten bunches of his educational courses because even though he couldn't do the credits, they didn't let him transfer credits at that point in time, they did respect that Mr. Marshall needed a principal here, and they knew that they were going to the districts very soon, so they let Daddy at Erskine and at Clemson get the credits he could get in the educational courses.

That took every summer. I mean, we had the most fun going and sitting on the Erskine campus, and we'd be on our way to Newberry to see my grandparents, and Daddy would be in school, and mother fixed us a picnic lunch, and Daddy come eat lunch with us and go back to classes. It's just the grandest experience.

Sandra: It got to be a real joke how long it was going to take him to get a degree.

Marie: It was. It was the funniest thing in the world because her Daddy went to school every summer, and even then they had the shorter courses in the summer for people that were going around the clock, so Daddy was with a lot of younger people as well as other older people that wanted to move and get more work education in their particular fields. Daddy got credits from those two. Daddy also got his master's degree from Furman. Daddy had enough hours that if he was willing to do a dissertation, he could have gotten his doctorate. He said, “I've done just fine without a doctor's degree. And when I got through with that masters,” he said, “I wasn't interested in going to school,” but literally, my daddy went to school most of my life.

Sandra: He did.

Tom: All right, I’m going to ask each of you. Did living in your mill village prepare you for life beyond the village?

Sandra: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ann: I would say so, yes. The time I spent, I would say, helped me immensely.
Marie: I feel like my experiences on the village, good or bad experiences, are the reason I am the person I am today and did prepare me to get out into the world. I didn't go to school. I slipped off and got married when I was 17, and my husband came from another mill village, and I met him through sports. He was an athlete from another mill village. I don't think that our marriage would have survived marrying so very young, even though I thought I was extremely mature. I don't think our marriage… If we hadn't both had some of the background of the mill village.

Sandra: But we had a lot of common denominators.

Marie: Right.

Ann: All three of us went into professions that required us to deal with all kinds of people, and that's exactly what we had done all of our lives growing up. And we didn’t put one person above another person. And, going to the churches here in the mill village, that was the lessons we were taught. That nobody’s better than anybody else. So, I definitely think it—

Tom: It prepared you for life.

Marie: And my dad always said to me, he said, “Honey, there's one thing you need to accept. You need to accept that you are better than nobody. But there’s nobody better than you.” And I think that was kind of what he had been taught on the mill village because he grew up on the mill village. Mother grew up in town. They grew up on the mill village. I just think that was kind of the lessons that we learned in our churches.

When I first went into Psych Nursing, I laughed when they told the teacher that I was older when I went back to school, and I told one of my instructors when I was in a psych class, I said, “I know that we're working with some of the worst mental illness here, and I know that these people sitting right here, they don’t do much of anything, and that’s what we're trying to get them to do.” I said, “But you know, I didn’t know there was anything wrong with those people when I was a kid.” There were some schizophrenics that lived down here, and we knew that they might not speak to us or, if they did, we’d go up and talk to them.

So, I think we experienced the good and the bad, but we saw people take care of their own. There was so much pride in families, and nobody wanted somebody else to have to give them a hand with it. The hardest part with working with people who have grown up on the village and all… you don't use the word “depression.” You don't use “anxiety.” If you say depression or anxiety to my mother, she’s not depressed. She’s not
anxious. She’s almost 92 years old, and certainly she has normal, natural depression. She has anxiety secondary to having that.

Tom: Seems like everybody else does.
Marie: Having to learn all this technology now.
Sandra: See, we’re all getting a pill for it now.
Ann: So one thing is, we lived down here and grew up with Ernie, and they had another daughter that was born with Down Syndrome. There were other children on this mill village that were born with disabilities, and we didn't think differently about them.
Sandra: They weren't treated any different. Ernie played softball at this field just like everybody else played ball.
Ann: And he worked in the mill.
Marie: Right. He worked in the mill with Les.
Tom: Your brother?
Marie: Mm-hmm.
Ann: It wasn't a big surprise to us when we got out into the world and ran up on people like that.
Ann: We just had enough... our exposure, it was positive.
Interview with Earl Lollis Meyers, Chiquola Mill

August 14, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom Cartledge. This is August the 14th, year 2019, and I'm in the mayor's office in Honea Path, South Carolina, and he's agreed to be interviewed. If you would, Mr. Mayor, state your full name and your date of birth.

Earl: My name is Earl Lollis Meyers. 8/27/1937.

Tom: If you would, please, sir, give me just a general idea of your mill life.

Earl: Well, I was raised here in Honea Path all my life. I didn't live right on the village, but I stayed on the village most of my life. All of my relatives lived over there. We stayed at their houses and this type thing, so I would say most of all my life on the village.

Tom: What was the address of your first home here that you grew up in?

Earl: Oh, God. You've asked me a question. My dad rented houses, and he moved from place. We lived on Harper Street at one time. We lived on North Main Street one time. We lived at different places. Down on 252, but my dad did not own his house. He did not work directly for the mill at that time. We rented, and we moved from place to place, but all of my relatives and all lived on the village.

Tom: Were you born here in Honea Path?

Earl: Yes, I was born here on North Main Street.

Tom: Describe your family if you would, please.

Earl: My family—my momma lived here in Honea Path all of her life. Her dad worked in the Chiquola Mill for years. He was an overseer of the cloth room. He was also a light preacher. He pastored churches. They had what they call, “Light Preachers.” They would pastor for a year at a time, stuff like that. My family background on my momma’s side: she was born and raised here. My Dad, he was a plumber. He worked in the mill at different times. He worked at Regal and Wear Shows. He worked here in Honea Path. He helped pour the foundation to this mill over here when they was building it in 1902 and 1903 when they was building the mill. He told me that. He also put some… the Methodist church over there, it started coming apart. Splitting, and they put cables. The cables are still in that
church now if you can get a chance to the visit, it’d be worth your time to visit it. They put these cables in there, and Daddy showed them to me. They pulled it back together like they do when they have earthquakes and things. My folks have lived in Honea Path, basically, all of their lives.

Tom: Tell me about your family. Did you have siblings? Brothers and sisters?

Earl: I had one brother and a sister. My brother was the oldest. He worked in the Appleton Mill in Anderson a big part of his life. He also worked at the shirt plant here, and when he first come out, I guess you’d say, “Come out of school,” they didn't have, I think, up to the 10th grade or something like that at that time. My sister, she worked in the mill over there, in fact, ‘til it closed. Her husband was an over-hauler. He overhauled looms. A maintenance man, and he started when he come out of high school until he retired. And then he was about 68 or 70 years old, then.

Tom: And that was at the Chiquola Mill?

Earl: At the Chiquola Mill.

Tom: If you would describe to me what was, perhaps, your typical breakfast.

Earl: Breakfast?

Tom: When you were growing up?

Earl: Well, back in those days, and I'm going to cover a lot of ground here—back in those days, people raised hogs. They raised their own food, mostly. Daddy, he had a hog he raised every year. He always raised one. Sometimes, you’d raise a cow, occasionally. Then, he’d rent a foothill, about an acre of land, and plant grain on it. He’d cut the grain, take it to the shedder, which is above Belton. He'd sell the grain, basically to them, and the way it was sold, he could go up and pick up a bag of flour as we needed it. So we had, which I call it, “Good old hog meat,” that we’d use for breakfast. Eggs. We had our own chickens, and Mama always cooked. There weren’t no such thing as toast at that time. They cooked biscuits, and they would keep it over a wood stove, and we’d have them all day long, so to speak.

Tom: What would you say would be your typical lunch when you were growing up?

Earl: Oh, man. I tell you what, we had so many dried beans at that time. Every day, we'd have pinto beans, small butter beans, large butter beans. We’d
just have dried beans a lot for lunch. Now, when I had company over, back when the school season was out, Mama and Daddy would… They shipped chickens in on the bus. Baby chicks, and Daddy would get those things and raise them. When they got up to frying size, Mama would tell us boys to go out, say, “Go out there and catch me one of them chickens. We’ll have it for lunch.” And we'll catch that chicken, kill a chicken, and mom would fry that chicken, and that's what sometimes… I remember those lunches, because it was very special. You know?

Tom: What about your suppers?

Earl: Supper? Well, I don't know what you've ever heard of or not. Have you ever heard of fatback gravy? We had fatback gravy a lot of nights at suppertime with hotcakes. Hotcake was nothing more than the dough made up like a biscuit and put in a black frying pan and cooked on top of the stove, and we tore it off or Mama would cut it off, and we’d put fatback gravy on it or sopped the gravy with the hotcakes.

Tom: How was the stove heated?

Earl: The stove, we had a wood stove. That was way on up in years. It was in the early fifties before we got an electric stove.

Tom: Describe, if you would, your everyday dress during the school year.

Earl: Well, during the school year, once in the last of August, my mother would take us to the store, and then she’d buy us a new pair of shoes and mostly, well, I call them knickers. They had stretchy bands around the back of the knee. We wore those to school every day. We’d wear those shoes all the way until the bottoms completely wore out of it, and then Daddy would start cutting pasteboard to put in it to keep our feet dry, but by the time we got home if it rained or something like that, the pasteboard had done dissolved and come apart. But, typically, we used to buy clothes for school once a year, and we just wore them flat down out before the school year was over.

Tom: All right. Tell me about school. Tell me about your teachers. You went to school all of your life here in Honea Path?

Earl: Yes. In fact, right where you’re sitting is the building that I went to school in. This first grade. I went all the way through the seventh grade here. And, then, when I moved up to the high school, they moved it. At that year they moved the seventh grade from here up to the high school, because they did start at the eighth grade and used to go through the eleventh. And,
then, added a grade to 12th grade. But, yes, we went to school here. We had teachers that were local teachers, and they didn't mind correcting you. It seemed like if we done something at school, by the time we got home, it done reached home, somehow. I don't know how, because we got corrections after we got home.

Tom: How was the conduct in school? Did kids behave? Would the teachers discipline you?

Earl: Yes, very much so. I mean, we had discipline. Sometimes, it’d get so bad, the teacher would send you to the principal's office, and you didn't want to go to the principal office because, usually, you got a spanking when you went to the principal’s office which you couldn't do today. In fact that, I'll try to show it to you in just a minute, I've got a paddle that was used here in this school. They did paddle us, and you didn't want to go to the principal office. The teacher would bend the hands back some time, and you remember these little old “rit-rat” balls that had a rubber band on them? The teacher used those to paddle your hands with the palm of your hand. We knew to obey our teachers.

Tom: Did you go to school after you graduated from high school? Continue your education?

Earl: I did. Not to a… I didn’t go to college because we couldn't afford to go to college. And, plus, I wasn't that smart, I didn't think. “No way.” But I did continue. I went to work. When I come out of high school, I then fell in love, and I got married. And I got me a job, and I started at the bottom of the line in a textile mill. I worked all the way up to plant manager over the period of time working with Bigelow-Sanford, making carpet, but, I took courses. At that time, they were starting Tri-County-Tech. In fact, some of the first courses Tri-County-Tech put out, I was in those courses. I worked at Belton Yarn Mill, and Charlie Gibson was kind of over Tri-County-Tech it at that time, and they would send instructors to the plant, and I took that. Also. I went on to better myself in the ICS Course in basic textile. Also, textile management. I took that, which was equal to, I guess, a junior college degree.

Tom: How long did you work in the textile industry?

Earl: 27 years.

Tom: The girl that you married, was she a from a mill family?
Earl: No, she was a foreign family. Her parents worked in the mill. In fact, when I married her, they worked at Regal Textiles and Wear Shows, but she lived at Dosheno. You probably don't know where Dosheno's at, but up here, BHP. Right behind BHP High School, that's Dosheno area, and that's where she lived. She was in the band when I was in band. I was a drum major. She was in the band and we kind of fell in love, I guess, through that series or so to speak. We've been married 62 years.

Tom: Good for you. Good strong, healthy marriage. Speaking of marriage, do you have children?

Earl: Yes, I got two. I had two daughters.

Tom: Did they live here in Honea Path?

Earl: One of them lives in Honea Path, teaches. She’s in computer technology at Anderson Robert School in Anderson. My other daughter, she got killed in a car wreck about five years ago.

Tom: Other than the band, what were your after-school activities?

Earl: I loved football. I love any sports. The band was my second. There’s a way I got to go to ball games, so I don't end up playing to go to football games. But I did have to work, and this might be very interesting to you. I used to push a snowball wagon. I don't know if you know what a snowball wagon is, but this man had a box that had bicycle wheels on it or plow-hounds on it. I pushed it all over the mill village over there, Iva. All during the summer, scraping ice and selling snowballs for 10 cents apiece. That's the way I made my money, because Mom and Dad did stop, at that time, coming out of The Depression, they had no money to give us kids to do anything. That's the way I made my money. Then, on Saturdays I’d set up here and they call it, “The Wagon Lot,” where the farmers come in around with the news and ride their wagons in the shop and get their groceries. Those kids would like to come through there. They didn't know what a snowball was, but they’d eat those snowballs. I'd sell a 50 pounds of ice on a Saturday. Any Saturday is good during the summertime.

Tom: How were health issues dealt with? Sickness, injury, anything like that?

Earl: Well, you had local doctors. In fact we had, back in those days, we had two doctors. They worked in… Most of them was set up in the back of the drug stores, whoever the drug store. We had two drug stores on Main Street. Doctors made house calls at that time. You would call them. If you couldn't get to the office, if you was that bad, they would come out. It
might be 10, 11 o'clock at night before they got there, but they would come and check you and that type thing. If you got injured, you just... In fact, I cut my leg bad. My dad give me a pocket knife for my birthday at nine years old, and I was staying with my aunt, and I was cutting through a little old stem, and it cut through my leg and it took 16 stitches in it. The doctor told me I'd never walk again. They took me downtown here, and the doctor sewed me up, and he tried to get me to walk on crutches, and I wouldn't do it. I was determined I was going to walk, and today, it has never affected me.

Tom: How were family discipline issues resolved? When you misbehaved, what happened?

Earl: Well, I can say that, I shouldn't say what I'm fixing to say, but if they had the laws on the books now that they have, when my daddy come along, he'd be in jail because you got corrected if you done wrong. I mean, Daddy didn't beat us, don't get me wrong. Daddy didn't beat us, but he let us know that our behind-end was for correction, and he corrected us. He always told me, he said, “You might have to eat off the mantel, because you can't sit down.” But we knew when Mama spoke or Daddy spoke that if we didn't mind them that we was going to get disciplined. I never will forget one time I was a young boy, and on Sunday night after church, me and the group, we'd just got our driver's license. We wanted to go ride around, so Daddy said, “Ok.” He said, “Son, you got to be in at 10 o'clock.” So we start out riding around, and he told me before I left, it was, like, 4:00. He said, “If you ain't in at 10 o'clock. I will have the police chief out hunting you.” Sure enough, at 10 o'clock that night, five minutes after 10:00, I walked in the door, and the door opened when I got there, because daddy was standing behind the door, and he had done called the chief of police who went to our church to have them be on lookout for us. Send us home.

Tom: Speaking of church, how important was church?

Earl: Church to us, and it wasn’t to everybody, but church to us was very important. I mean, let me tell you, it goes back a long way to World War II... World War I, I’ve seen boys leave this town, and they used to hang stars in the windows. If you’d see a flag in the window with two stars or one star, that meant that's how many kids they had shown they’d drafted, and I think people would come to church and they beg, pray, plead to God to bring their sons back home. Of course, when the sons got home, you never saw him back in church no more. I mean, but most people were regular steady to church. The churches didn't have all the activities that we have today. They didn't have all of these youth programs. Usually, the men made the living, and the women looked after the home as far as the
cooking, taking care of the kids and all that type stuff. So, when we come along, we have what we call RA’s. That’s the Baptist. I’m a Baptist. RA’s for boys. They had GA’s for girls. And, we had a lady. We called the First Soldier. That’s what we called her, but she was just strict to us. She would tell us what to do, and if we didn’t do it, she would grab us behind the ear and pull our ear or something like that. But, anyway, church was very, very important to us young boys.

Health or Revival Services, you know what I’m talking about? Revival? I’ve seen them go for three weeks at a time right here in this town. And before the preachers had fell in, they’d stop them. And the mill, in every church that was organized over on that village, a piece of land to build a church on, but the church that I was telling you about, the walls coming apart, they called it the Union Church. The old folks could. And the reason I call it the Union Church is that every denomination of church that was starting could use that church one Sunday. Our church, my Mama told me was always formed down on a hill or the tree stump as the pulpit. Once a month, I could go to that Methodist church. In fact, my mama was left to sleep in the Methodist church. Dad and them… Granddaddy had a deacon’s meeting. And after the deacon’s meeting, he forgot that he left her on the back seat asleep and got home. And her Mama said, “Where’s Mary at?” That was her name. “Oh, she's up on the back seat of the church asleep.” He had to go back to the church and get her at the Union church.

Tom: I'm sure you're familiar with the term pounding, you know, on the mill when somebody, a family would run into hard times and couldn't go to work, and people would go around and give what they could give so that the family could survive that lack of income for a while. Was your family ever the... did they ever receive the benefits of a pounding?

Earl: I don't remember us actually receiving one, but I remember us helping. We'd take the young kids. I say “kids.” Young boys. Our Sunday school teacher or our director, they would take us and get in the car, and we'd ride around over the village to members that we knew and asked them. We'd collect the, what I call canned goods, mostly, and bring it back to the church and put in a box and then we would take it to the home. It hadn’t been too many years ago that we started what we call a church pantry. They do that now, and people can bring it to church, put in there, and then we had a committee that if you hit a hardship, to help you out. If you was out sick for several weeks or something like that.

Tom: As far as you know, did your family ever receive any financial support from the United States government?
Earl: Far as support? No, but we got food stamps, gas stamps. In fact, I got some. I should have brought them if I’d known you were going to ask this question, I would showed them to you. I still got them, the some that we didn't use. You had gas, you had sugar. You had different stuff. Coffee. Things like that that you could go to the grocery store and they were like 10 cents. I mean, they weren’t a lot. They were little books, but we received those. Yeah.

Tom: Were country politics, state politics, and national politics ever talked about in your home?

Earl: Yes. Not like it is today. I wouldn't say, because we didn't have TVs. I remember in one thing in particular. I remember never watching too much politics, but when Roosevelt come on radio, Daddy would get us around the radio at different times, because you know when the news was coming on, and that's when the war was going on. To hear the updates of the war, things like that. But yes, you had politics, and usually around here when you had politics they had, I call it, “stump meetings.” Up on Main Street at the old wagon lot, they would have a wagon set there and people get up and make speeches. If you’s running for senator or house or local government or something like that. Sheriff. I remember the sheriff getting up speaking,

Tom: Who was the most influential person in your life?

Earl: My dad, mostly, I would say.

Tom: Would you consider growing up in a small town like Honea Path to be valuable to learn life's lessons?

Earl: Yes, very much so. I think it learns you more how to get along with people, and it's like, today, it's really a concern to me that most people, a lot of people, don't even know who their neighbors are. You used to, I mean it, neighbors was neighbors. I mean, you could call on your neighbor to help you do anything. You needed a cup of sugar, you can run next door. Say, “Let me borrow a couple of sugar,” and you’d get a cup of sugar, and things like that. I think in the larger cities, things like that, you don't have that relationship, you know?

Tom: As mayor of Honea Path, do you think that your living in this town has prepared you in a number of ways to be qualified to be mayor of this town?
Earl: Yes, I think so. Over the years of learning how to get along with people, deal with people, help people, things of this sort that I learned as young boy coming along. That everybody is equal. I wasn't taught to have hate in my heart for my friends and people like that. The blacks. I know we talk racial. I had a friend of mine, in fact, his wife is a councilwoman on the council now. Me and him, I guess stayed together about as much as anybody could. His mama came to our house and helped my mama with cooking and cleaning the house every week, so we got to be friends. We played together, but we respected—

Tom: And he was black?

Earl: He was black. We respected him. My mama respected them. We was taught to love them. They had a heart and soul just like everybody else, but we weren't taught the hate that you hear the today so much about.

Tom: That word is bounced around every 10 seconds on the television. The hate.

Earl: Yes. Right.

Tom: It is an awful word. I think a better word is “respect.” And you've already mentioned that you have to respect. We're all God's children.

Earl: That's right.

Tom: It doesn't make any difference who we are, where we live.

Earl: That’s right. That’s exactly right.

Tom: That's good. Is there anything else that you would say that you've benefited from living in a small town, other than what you've already mentioned? Is there anything that you could say that—

Earl: Not a whole lot, really. I learned a lot about business, because you had a lot of local, small businesses. That was another thing I think you mentioned. That when I come along, when I got on up... Well, we got our driver's license, you know, at that time at about 14 years old, I mean, you could get them. When I got my driver's license, we had a man that had a grocery store here that went down our church. And I talked him, and he hired me to work on Fridays and Saturdays. I hated to work on Saturdays because I liked the date on Saturday night at that time. But anyway, I learned a lot about business, how businesses work. I didn't get into the full mill, but I knew how to deal with the public. And just think, I have seen a lot of things, and this is what our kids don't understand. We didn't have
parents that made big bucks and could hand you money out. I mean, some people had allowances. Daddy never could afford to give us an allowance. I mean, my dad was a plumber. I've seen him go out and walk, take his tubes in a pouch and walk out in the country because he was good on pumps. Well pumps. Come back, might bring a ham home with him. Might bring a bag of beans with him.

Tom: That was his pay.

Earl: That was his pay. We didn't get dollars and cents back like we do today.

Tom: By chance, did you or your brother or anyone in your immediate family serve in the military?

Earl: Not active. My uncle did. John Drexler, he served in World War there. I served in the National Guard for 15 years, myself. In fact, I got froze about three times. I was ready to go to Korea. I had my bags packed, and they told us we were going to have to report the next morning, and they called us that morning and say they had cancelled it, and this type thing, but I served. In fact, I was a charter member of the Belton National Guard when they first started it in 1954. They started that unit, and that's when I went. I was still in high school, and I joined.

Tom: Is there anything else that you'd like for people to know about small town living? I'd like to ask you, how long have you been mayor?


Tom: And you're up for reelection this November?

Earl: I'm up for reelection.

Tom: Do you have opponents?

Earl: I have one that’s going against me right now. Votes close tomorrow.

Tom: Oh, really?

Earl: They close tomorrow.

Tom: You mean people can qualify?

Earl: And sign up and run against me. Well, the election will be November the 5th, I believe it is.
Tom: How well do you know your opponent?

Earl: I know him pretty good. He lives right next to my grandson. I know him pretty good. I talked to him back several years ago that he needed to run for a council and get to know what's going on, because really there’s more to this job. It used to be part-time. This time and place, it’s not part time no more. I mean there’s something all the time going on. He works at Tri-County Tech, I think it’s Tri-County. It might be Greenville Tech. I know he works for a tech school, but he works for 40 hours a week. How is he going to be coming here and deal with just the things just like we're talking right now? Deal with the public about their water bills and grants to clean up the mill sites or put sewer lines in. I mean that… you can't do that at night. You've got to do that in the daytime.

Tom: What would you give the chances of building the nursing home there? What do you think that's… Got you fingers crossed for that? Is that what you would prefer, as a mayor, to be developed there?

Earl: I'd love to see that developed there. I don't care what's developed there. I'm not closed-minded. I try not to be as long as it benefits our town and community and cleaned up, because it’s a mess right now. The nursing home—we have people from around here that have go to North Carolina, Georgia, McCormick down in that way to see their relative who's in nursing home. The need is here. We've had the survey done. We've asked them for 150 beds. The need is for close to 300, 400 beds in this area, so the need’s there. Which it creates good quality jobs. They say that's another thing people just do not realize that we don't have nothing to draw industry to us like—

Tom: A mill.

Earl: …an interstate highway. Railroad comes up about four miles up the road. It stopped, but it's just a dead end line that used to go to Greenwood. So, those things, we're sitting here isolated. Yes, we’re more of a bed-and-breakfast type of community. It’s community people. The older people. When I say older people, like the people who’s retiring up North, we call them snowbirds. You might be one. I don't know…

Tom: No, I’m not.

Earl: … that drift this way. We've about had them come through here and go to Florida. Where Florida is the life. “I don’t need to be here.” But they will drift back up this way. In fact, one of my best friends, he died this past winter, was plant manager at the Templeton Plant, and he came down here
from Connecticut and he wouldn't go back. He said, I love it down here. I love the people. I love the fellowship. He said, he told me this, “I got a little house there. Just a small house. About a 1200 square foot house. I'm paying $6,000 a year taxes on that house. Come down here, he said, “I ain't paying but $600 on it, and I got a 2,500 square foot-plus house.” He said it's cheaper to live down here. And he liked the people.

Tom: Well, that’s it. The people are just friendly. They’re just good people. That’s all you can say about it.

Earl: Where are you from?

Tom: I’m originally from Mississippi. I was born in the Mississippi Delta. I’m a Southerner.

Earl: Yeah, you’re a Southerner. Ok.

Tom: But, actually I'm a retired orthodontist, but I practiced in Florida for a while, but we've lived over on Hartwell Lake now for about 15 years.

Earl: That's a good area.

Tom: Yeah. We enjoy it there.

Earl: I worked down at Calhoun Falls.

Tom: Oh, you did?

Earl: For about 15 years. Drove there every day.

Tom: Let me turn this off.
Interview with Roxie Juliette Rollins Moore, Jackson Mill

July 16, 2019

Tom: I’m about to interview Roxie Moore. This is July the 16th, and I’m at the Iva First Baptist Church in Iva, South Carolina. I’m talking to Roxie Moore. Roxie, I need your full name and date of birth.

Roxie: Okay. It was Roxie Juliette Rollins-Moore.

Tom: Date of birth.

Roxie: 3/30/1943.

Tom: What was the address of your village home?

Roxie: 54 Oak Drive in Iva.

Tom: Is the house occupied?

Roxie: It is.

Tom: Do you know who lives there?

Roxie: I do not.

Tom: Describe your neighborhood.

Roxie: Okay. We lived in a two-story house, and there were about three there that were two-story. We had six rooms. The others were more four-room houses. The neighborhood was wonderful, and we’d all get together. Am I answering you right?

Tom: Yes.

Roxie: And sometimes, we’d get out there and play ball together. Hopscotch, play music, and cut up and dance. Everybody, all the kids get together. Do things together,

Tom: How long did you live at 54 Oak Drive?

Roxie: Probably 17 years or so.

Tom: When did you leave?
Roxie: 1962, ‘63. Somewhere around that.

Tom: Describe your family.

Roxie: My father, he worked in the textile at Jackson Mill and my mother, she was a stay-at-home mom. I had two stepbrothers. My father had had a child before he married my mom, and my mom also had a child before she married my dad, and then I have a younger sister two years younger. And a brother two years younger than she.

Tom: Just you three children?

Roxie: Yes.

Tom: Describe your relationship with your parents.

Roxie: We had a good relationship. I know that we were loved. And we knew that Mom was always going to be there at the home when we got up and got home from school. We knew she would have breakfast ready in the mornings, and we had a good relationship.

Tom: How about your relationship with your father?

Roxie: It was a good relationship.

Tom: How about your sibling relationships?

Roxie: We had good relationships, yeah.

Tom: Describe, in detail, your village house. You already told me that it was a two-story, six-room house. Who stayed in each room?

Roxie: My sister and I stayed in an upstairs room and, then, my brother occupied the other room upstairs. Of course, my parents had a bedroom downstairs. And later on, then, in some of that life, my grandmother (my father’s mother) came to live there also.

Tom: Why did you have a six-room house when the most common house was a four-room house? Was your father a supervisor or manager?

Roxie: No, no. As a matter of fact, I may have said that first. At first, I think there were two apartments there for a little while. And then, later, my father was able to buy the house. The whole house.
Tom: Describe the house as far as heating, electricity, bathroom facilities.

Roxie: We had gas heat. At first, I believe we only had a bathroom commode room on the back porch but later on, he was able to purchase and make a bathroom. It was painted white and, like I said, he bought it while he was working at the mill.

Tom: You said, earlier, that your mother always woke you up with breakfast. Describe a normal breakfast.

Roxie: Well, sometime, we would have… Most of the time, it was biscuits. Homemade biscuits a lot. And, sometime, we would have sausage and biscuit, grits, eggs. And sometimes, it may be cereal or toast, jelly.

Tom: Just ordinary breakfast.

Roxie: Yeah, yeah.

Tom: How about lunch? What would be a normal lunch?

Roxie: A lot of times for the lunch, we eat it at dinnertime also, she might have pinto beans or beans and cornbread. In some lunches, maybe once a week, we might have hamburgers or hotdogs and French fries. Something like that.

Tom: Describe a typical supper.

Roxie: Like I said, sometimes it would be leftovers, maybe from lunch and beans, cornbread. Occasionally, a meat, but most of the time our meat was more toward the weekend and Sunday dinners or something of that order.

Tom: Describe a Sunday dinner.

Roxie: Oh, we might have roast, potatoes, and green beans. She cooked the best pole-beans ever. And corn. Stuff like that.

Tom: You said that your mother woke you up with breakfast usually ready. Is that how you normally got up in the morning? Your mom woke you up?

Roxie: Pretty much so, I think. Back when we were younger. And, then, later on I think we just bounced up. Yeah.

Tom: Describe your typical everyday dress.
Roxie: Well, back then, all girls, we wore dresses about all the time or skirts. And we might have oxfords. And my mother made a lot of our clothes, also. We wore those black and white oxfords. We wore tennis shoes some, but not that much back then.

Tom: And you went to school here in Iva?

Roxie: I did. Iva Elementary.

Tom: Describe your teachers?

Roxie: Very good. I had a good relationship with my teachers. I did.

Tom: And then, you went from the elementary school?

Roxie: To Crescent High School.

Tom: Crescent High School is a consolidated isn’t it?

Roxie: Yeah. As a matter of fact, our class, when we started at Crescent High School, it had already been there, but we were the first ones to go through the whole four years.

Tom: So you graduated?

Roxie: I did graduate from Crescent High School.

Tom: Did you do any kind of education after your high school graduation?

Roxie: I did. Not right then. I got married, had my children. Decided, “I don’t really want this right now.” I did go back later on.

Tom: In what?

Roxie: And I took Dental Assisting, so I worked with some dentists. I don’t know whether you know some of them or not.

Tom: Describe your after-school activities.

Roxie: Well, a lot of it was doing your homework or out with some of your girlfriends around the area, and we even had a park in that area. Sometimes, we’d go up to the park. But, like I said, we’d play hopscotch or things like that.
Tom: Did you ever work at the mill, yourself?
Roxie: No, I did work at the Iva Manufacturing and Sewing Plant for a while.
Tom: Did you ever date anyone from the mill village?
Roxie: Not my mill village, but later in life I did; my husband was from the Anderson Mill Village.
Tom: How were health issues dealt with if you or your siblings got sick? How did your family deal with it?
Roxie: Well, if they thought we needed a physician, we got to go to a physician. Sometimes, back then, the physician would even come to your homes.
Tom: Same thing with injury?
Roxie: Yes.
Tom: Same thing if anyone was injured?
Roxie: Yes.
Tom: How were discipline issues resolved?
Roxie: Oh, back then, we got spankings or a paddling. Maybe a few belt strikes, too. They didn’t hesitate about that.
Tom: Did your mother spank you?
Roxie: She did. Mm-hm.
Tom: Your father?
Roxie: Yeah.
Tom: Did you ever get disciplined in school?
Roxie: Well, I never had to be what you call, “In any crucial thing,” that I did. Of course, the teachers did paddle everybody but as far as… I wasn’t a bad person (laughs).
Tom: Were the issues of finances ever discussed in your family?
Roxie: Not that much.

Tom: Are you familiar with pounding?

Roxie: Oh, that’s where you get help and stuff. We never-

Tom: Never received a pounding?

Roxie: No.

Tom: To your knowledge, did your family ever receive any assistance from the federal government?

Roxie: Not to my knowledge.

Tom: Describe your personal church experiences.

Roxie: Well, I was a regular in church. We went Sunday, Sunday mornings, Wednesday night, and if they had it any other night, we went to that, too. That was kind of the way we did.

Tom: Which church did you attend?

Roxie: Wesleyan Church. Iva First Wesleyan Church. We were very involved in children’s work. We went to that or whatever.

Tom: Are you still involved in church work?

Roxie: I am.

Tom: Which church?

Roxie: Community Wesleyan Church.

Tom: Describe the physical condition of your father when he would come home from work.

Roxie: Well, usually, he was very, very tired because it was the night-hour shift. He also liked to work on radios. He had them in a little shop at the back where he worked on radios, and that was his hobby.

Tom: Were there other relatives that worked in the mill?

Roxie: Yes. I had a brother that worked out there.
Tom: In the Jackson Mill?
Roxie: Yes. And my sister, also.
Tom: Your sister actually worked at Jackson Mill?
Roxie: Yeah, for a while.
Tom: But you never did?
Roxie: No.
Tom: And your sister is older or younger?
Roxie: Younger.
Tom: Did your family, as a family, ever discuss politics or world events? Anything like that?
Roxie: Yeah, we discussed it, but I don’t remember how involved we’d get in it. It wasn’t a big deal, I don’t think.
Tom: Was NAFTA ever brought up or discussed?
Roxie: No.
Tom: Anybody in your family ever go into the military service? Brother, perhaps?
Roxie: Yes, my brother did.
Tom: What did he serve?
Roxie: Where or what?
Tom: Army? Navy?
Roxie: Army. He had to go to Germany.
Tom: What was the most challenging experience you faced while you lived in the village?
Roxie: Challenge? Right now, I don’t know.
Tom: Let me ask you this. We you ever called a derogatory name because you lived on the mill hill? A linthead or anything of that nature?

Roxie: I don’t remember being called that.

Tom: Who was the person that you could go to for help in resolving your personal issues?

Roxie: Well, my mom, I’m sure.

Tom: Your mother? What would you consider to be the most valuable lesson that you learned in the mill?

Roxie: Getting along with people. I mean, all the neighbors, we all got along. If we needed anything. Or, say, if you needed a cup of sugar, you could go next-door ‘til you got yours, and we all got along great.

Tom: Do you think living on a mill village prepared you for life beyond the mill?

Roxie: I believe it probably did.

Tom: Positively.

Roxie: Mm-hm.

Tom: Is there anything that you would like to mention about life in the mill village?

Roxie: I mean, it was an experience to get used to. There would be some times that you would think, “Oh, I wish I had a bigger home,” or different things. But, in the long run, it was fine.

Tom: All right, that’s going to do it, Roxie.

Roxie: Oh, ok.

Tom: I want your full name again. You have so many names.

Roxie: Well, I didn’t know if you wanted my middle or maiden name or not.

Tom: I want everything.

Roxie: Roxie Juliette.
Tom: R-O-X-I-E

Roxie: I-E. And Juliette was my maiden name.

Tom: How do you spell Juliette?

Roxie: J_U_L-I-E-T-T-E. And Rollins. R-O-L-L-I-N-S.

Tom: R-O-L-L-

Roxie: … I-N-S. And then Moore. Married a Moore.

Tom: Do you have children?

Roxie: I do. Three daughters.

Tom: Where do they live?

Roxie: Two of them live in Starr, South Carolina, and one of them lives in West Union, South Carolina up toward the mountains.

Tom: Are you close to your children and grandchildren?

Roxie: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I even have some greats.

Tom: Really?

Roxie: They are great. Yeah.

Tom: Well, that’s an experience. Okay, Roxie. I’ll tell you what. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate you spending your time.

Roxie: Okay. Thank you.

Tom: It was fun. Yeah.

Roxie: Thank you.

Tom: I’ll send you a note. Did I get your street address? You’re at 54 Oak-

Roxie: That is where I lived, then. Do you need my address now or you don’t?

Tom: Yes, I do. I need your address there.
Roxie: Ok. If you’re mailing, it’s P.O. Box 61, Iva. It’s the mailing address.

Tom: 61? That’s-

Roxie: Yes. And my home address is 315 Gray Circle. I don’t live far from Mr. Jordan.

Tom: Is the zip-

Roxie: 29655. Did you know Russell Street, the orthodontist in Anderson?

Tom: No.

Roxie: And the McConnell, and—

Tom: Yeah, McConnell, I do know. His son is taking over the practice.

Roxie: Yeah. Hardin.

Tom: Yeah, that’s right.

Roxie: Mm-hm. Yeah. At first, I just did billing work, and then I started working full time. And George Christopher, he retired. And my husband had already gotten sick, so I was only working one day a week because his practice had been bought, and so he got sick. I didn’t go back.

Tom: Did you enjoy it?

Roxie: I did. I love people. I enjoy people. I am involved in a lot of work with the seniors now, in Iva. Sunrise Seniors, and also after my husband passed, it’s been over eight years, I started a Circle of Hope Widow’s Group. And we meet once a month.

Tom: And where is the Wesleyan Church located?

Roxie: The one I go to is on the Elberton Highway more towards Georgia. Community Wesleyan. It’s a small church up above my home.

Tom: And your mom was the most influential person in your life?

Roxie: I would think so. Yeah.

Tom: I was talking to Roscoe and he said that Gillespie… Are you familiar with that name?
Roxie: Was he the minister at First Baptist?

Tom: Yeah.

Roxie: Yeah, yeah.

Tom: He’s the person that had most influenced his life. Must’ve been quite a character because he played all kind of sports at Clemson.

Roxie: He did. Yeah, he did.

Tom: Okay, dear.

Roxie: Okay, hun.

Tom: You’re a very attractive and sweet lady. Thank you.

Roxie: Well, thank you very much.

Tom: Thanks for coming in.

Roxie: Okay. And I hope your wife’s going to be okay.

Tom: Oh, my wife is fine. She puts up with me.
Interview with Margene Cole Murdock, Appleton Mill

September 14, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom Cartledge, here, and I’m at the home of Margene Murdock at 172 Horace Bell Road in Honea Path, South Carolina. 29654. Okay, if you would, please state your full name and your date of birth.

Margene: I’m Margene Cole Murdock, and my date of birth is 4/10/35

Tom: Margene, give me a general idea of your life in your mill village.

Margene: We lived at the old Abney Mill Village, which really is still a nice little mill village. Nobody ever locked… I don't think we ever had a key to our door. We never locked our door, but our house was built up. It had a lot of steps coming up the front, and our favorite place to play was over under those steps and up under the front porch. That’s where we played, and we played… we didn’t have cars. We took old bottles and made cars out of them and played cars that way. The best thing in the world was in summertime. We played outside. It was in the city enough, I guess, because they had street lights, and when the streetlights came on, we had to get home because we could not play outside after the streetlights were on.

You know, nobody had refrigerators back then. The city ice plant had a truck. The back of it was full of ice, and this man would come out. Mr. Hugh would come by and ring a bell as it came up the street, and you had a sign that went on the front door outside, and it would say, “25, 50, or 100 pounds.” And you turned that sign so it would point up to how much ice you will need that day. We had ice boxes that you put things in, and as the ice melted, it kept it cool.

And I remember, Mr. Hugh would come on by, and we would all run out there while he’s chopping the ice out, because he would take an ice pick and chip it off. But, sometimes, there were little chips of ice that fell. While he had the tongs to carry it inside, we’d get all the little chips that were out there and eat the ice. I bet that was one of the greatest things in the summertime was meeting the ice truck. We didn’t had ice cream trucks to come by. It was the ice truck that came by.

My mama worked in the mill, and my daddy did, too. I went the first year at Glenn Street School, and we walked to school. I had a sister and a brother older than me, so they took care of me. We walked to school, and nobody bothered. We just all gathered together. Nobody much bothered
us. We had a great time, and we moved from there to Seneca. My mom
and Daddy both got a job in Seneca working at the same mill, so we
moved to Seneca. I was in first grade, and my brother was born while I
was in the first grade, who I thought was my own baby.

Tom: Did you move back?

Margene: To Anderson, yeah. And I'm sure you've heard of it. Clemson was
auctioning off some houses that they had bought, because they were going
to build Quonset huts for the returning service men or married students, I
guess it was, at that time because that was before the war. They were
going to build these huts for the married students, and they had bought a
lot of these old houses, and that was also before the lake came in. They
were selling them, and they would sell each one for... Each one was a
hundred dollars, but you had to move it within, I believe it was 60 days.
You had to move it off the property.

My daddy, who could make anything, I swear he could; he could just build
anything. And fixing, and I didn't know you took cars to a garage. My
daddy worked on the car when something was wrong with it. But, anyway,
my dad, he and Mama decided that they were going to buy it. My mama
had bought two lots down here. Raymond Frederick was selling property
out of West Whitmann Street, and she had bought two lots and paid him
every week on that until she got them paid off. They were looking to build
a house back then. They wanted to move back then.

After they bought the lots, then they saved up, and I’ll never forget that.
My daddy called us all up in that front bedroom where we were living, and
then said he wanted to show us all something. He showed us all a $100
bill. I will never forget it. I didn’t even know that they made $100 bills,
but we all got to touch it and feel it, and then he was going to Clemson to
buy one of those houses. So he did, but he wanted us all to enjoy it so we
would realize what was coming.

Then, every day, after work, he worked in the mill, and they got off of
there at about two o'clock. He was on the first shift. They got off at 2:00.
They went in at 6:00 and got off at 2:00. He and my uncle, my mother’s
sister’s husband, would leave Seneca and go to Clemson and start tearing
down that house, and they didn’t have a big ball that came and knocked
everything down. They did it. They took it down. And Daddy even built
himself a trailer to go on the back of our car so he could start hauling that
lumber to Anderson to put on our lots down there. It took him awhile, but I
guess they got it done in time. They weren’t punished for it. They tore the
house down, and that’s what built our house on Sunset drive. That’s where I was raised on Sunset drive. That’s off of West Whittman Street.

Daddy took that lumber and built our house. Now, [he] had to buy shingles. He had to buy shingles and things like that. But we went every weekend and helped work on the house. All of us kids. I can remember carrying shingles up a ladder, and I can remember putting up sheet rock and putting mud, I think that’s what they called it, on the sheet rock. And, then, painting everything, and we didn’t have a roller pan, either. We painted everything. I remember us going down there in the summertime, and Mamma would make sandwiches for us and tea. We would go down there, and I hung on the underpinning of the house. You hang on it, and sit there, and eat your lunch down there because we were building on the house. My daddy built the house, dug the well himself. It was hand-dug, and he put a pump in it. The house wasn’t comfortable when we moved in. All we had was water. We didn’t have a bathroom. We had an outside toilet until they could afford to build it, and as they got the money, then they improved it.

Tom: Do you remember the address on Sunset Drive?

Margene: 309.

Tom: 309 Sunset Drive.

Margene: In Anderson. And it looks terrible now. The house is still there, but it looks terrible, because we built onto it. My daddy and Mom built onto it after we had left home, but my mamma died very early. My momma was 59 years old when she died of a heart attack. A sudden heart attack. A shame that she did. My daddy was married three times. To my momma and to his second wife who died and, then, to his third wife who died. He outlived them all because he lived to be 93 years old before he died.

But he still worked in the mill. He was a loom fixer, and then he was, I guess you call it a millwright, although he only had a third grade education. He went through third grade, but he could out-figure you and me. With math, he really was fantastic, and he built our house figuring it, himself. Drew the plans and built it himself, which I thought was wonderful. And installed everything we have. Everything, he installed it. So, after he retired from the mill, he started putting up wrought iron at different places. He had a little wrought iron business after. And my brother said, “Yes. He’d go out and contract wrought, and then I had to make it.” That was my baby brother who lived near me.
Tom: At what age did you move in the house at Sunset?

Margene: I started in the 5th grade. So, that would be what? About 11.

Tom: Yeah. About 11 or 12. And how long did you live there?

Margene: Until I married. I slipped off and got married very early, which did not work out. I wasn’t gone long. I went right back, but until I met David Murdoch in 1963, I lived at home.

Tom: Well, how old were you when you first got married?

Margene: 17 and a half. That’s why it didn’t work out. We were both silly.

Tom: Was he a mill boy? Did he grow up in the mill village?

Margene: No, he didn’t… Well, wait a minute, now. His sister worked in the mill, but not in the mill village because they lived on Brown Street in Anderson. He died with cancer.

Tom: You speak very fondly of your dad. Tell me about the relationship with your parents.

Margene: Oh, I was a mamma’s girl. I’ll tell you. I was a mamma’s girl. I’ll tell you how much I loved my mamma. My sister was a daddy’s girl, but my momma would not drink after anybody or eat after anybody. You know how kids are. But she would not eat after anybody. I mean, that was just the thing she had. She just would not do it, and so we were sitting outside. No TV. I was still a young’un, and we had just moved down here, and she came in from work that day. They would sit outside. You know, we’d sit in the cool, wherever it was cool. We didn’t have fans or anything in the house.

So we were sitting out in the yard where it was cool, and she said, “Honey, would you go fix Mamma a glass of tea?” Said, “I’m so tired.” I said, “Mamma, I will.” So, I’d go in the house. Now, this entailed taking the ice tray out, opening the ice tray, putting it in a glass, filling the ice tray back up, putting it back in the refrigerator, getting the tea out. You know, it wasn’t just running and getting some tea. There’s a lot entailed about it. So I’d fix it up. A pitcher of iced tea, and I got just barely in our living room, and I could see them where they were sitting outside, and I could see my momma. I really just loved my momma so good. I thought, “You may not drink and eat after any of them, but she’s going to drink after me.” And I took that glass, and I sipped it, and then I turned it a little bit and I sipped
it again. Turned it a little bit. So no matter what side of that glass she got, she was drinking after me. So I went outside. She said, “Oh, thank you, honey. You’re so sweet.” And all of this. And I thought, “Mm-hmm.” I sat there as she drank that tea. And I thought, “You may not drink after the rest of them, but you’re going to drink after me.”

Tom: Tell me about your siblings. You were the only children in the family?

Margene: My oldest brother was six years older than me, and my sister was two years older than me, so I think they lost one.

Tom: You were the baby of the family?

Margene: For six years until my brother. And when he was born, I thought he was the most wonderful thing in the world, but I always loved babies. But I loved him so good. He was born at home, and they put us in the back bedroom. At that time, I had four rooms. That back bedroom. So, the kitchen and front room, and that first bedroom where all theirs. If they needed water, they could go to the kitchen and get it. Mamma never made a sound. I can remember that. She never, never made a sound like she was having that baby. But, now, I apparently was the world’s biggest liar ever when I was a kid. I don’t know. But we were looking through the keyhole trying to see what we could see. Well, the doctor had came in with his big medical bag, and I saw that. Then, my sister and my oldest brother and me were all in there watching that. I wouldn’t let nobody watch that no more. So, then I turned around and closed my eyes. We heard the baby cry, and I said, “He brought him in that bag.” He brought the baby in that big, black bag. I just swore to it that mamma didn’t have that. He brought that baby. Because we never heard a sound out of my momma, because that would’ve upset me beyond words. Not only that, but they put a little pee pot in there so that we could pee. They didn’t know how long we were going be in there. They didn’t, because our bathroom was on the back porch at that house. This was on Tribble Street.

Tom: Where does Sunset come in?

Margene: Oh, that’s when we moved back after Daddy built the house. This was a rental house. A mill house on Tribble Street where my baby brother was born. Do you know what a slop jar is?

Tom: Sure.

Margene: They had slop jar in there for us kids. Well, me and everyone had used it and didn’t push it up back up under the bed. So after things got done, we
started… There were two big, double beds in there. One was this way, and one was that way. So we would jump on that one and jump to that one. And, then, jump back. Well, my brother who’s six years older than me, now. So when Willis was born, he was 12, approximately. And he was too big to do that, but he got up, and he jumped, too. Well, when he came down, he came and his foot went in the big bucket. And he about died. His foot was going to wash off. Oh, he was such a blooming idiot.


Margene: As well as I remember it, it had the one light. You’d get the plug and put it in the cord.

Tom: Did you have wall lights or lamps?

Margene: No, no.

Tom: Just a single drop.

Margene: Not that I remember. But, I know the heat we had was from a small heater a little bit bigger than that, and they had a wide rim around them, but when it got real hot, the belly of the heater would just get red-hot. At one time, after we had moved from that house to Seneca, Willis, my baby brother was riding his tricycle, and he ran his hand up against that, and it burned him severely on the back of his hand. And that scar was on there when he died.

Tom: So it was coal to heat the heater?

Margene: And, so many of them. Out from the driveway. Yeah, we heated it with coal. We had to go buy coal. And the driveways were at the back of the house. They didn’t come off of the road. Then went off over here, and they came in through that. Not each house had a driveway. We went to the mill, and I can remember doing it. Going with Daddy and then we’d get back, and got cinders where they had built fires at the mill. And you’d get the cinders and that’s what they put. It was a big paste that made it, and they didn’t have gravel. So that’s where they’d keep it. In a mud bath.

Tom: All right. Tell me about a typical breakfast.

Margene: Oh, always grits. Always grits. And gravy and biscuits. Not always meat, and not always eggs. Sometimes just… that was the least. And I can tell you that my Daddy played the trumpet. He was so tall. Back during
reconstruction, we lived in Seneca, and Daddy got laid off from the mill. The mill laid everybody off. And Daddy went to work for the, let’s see, it’s Roosevelt’s thing. The work program.

Tom: Mm-hmm. WPA.

Margene: WPA. He went and worked for them, but they had band that also went around and entertained the different camps. There was one big camp up at Oklahoma State park. You know where that is? That’s when they built Oklahoma State Park, and Daddy was in the band. I remember when he would play in the band, and he would come back. His pay was a big 25 pound sack of flour and, then, a big bucket of lard. And sugar. I don’t remember how much sugar. That’s what he got, because he would work on construction or whatever they had for him to do, but he would work on weekends in the band, and that’s where he made it lots of times. That’s all we had to make.

Tom: What about a typical lunch?

Margene: I can’t even remember, but I can remember that we had beans every day. And we were very poor. My grandma and granddaddy, his mom…my daddy’s momma and daddy came to live with us, and they didn’t have a-

Tom: Where did they come from?

Margene: They came from the country.

Tom: They were farmers? Sharecroppers?

Margene: Sharecroppers. And they came to live with us, and they thought we were living high, I guess. Anyway, so they kept us while Mom and Daddy both worked. That’s who stayed with us was our grandparents. My papa, he would rake the yards. There was no grass to cut. He would rake the yards and do stuff like that, and then his job was to help us with our lessons. Grandma did the cooking.

Tom: How many of you were living in a four room house?

Margene: Well, with them, that would be six. There were four of us, and then Papa, Gram that would be six.

Tom: Where’d you put Mom and Daddy?
Margene: Oh, that’s right. I forget them. That would be eight. But we were all living there in that four-room house.

Tom: Where would everybody sleep?

Margene: Well, you know, lots of times, we slept on pallets with quilts down on the floor. And, see, you took your old clothes, and that’s what they made quilts out of. You could look at the quilts and you could think, “Well, I wore that. That was my dress.”

Tom: Brought back memories.

Margene: Of course, we passed it down. We passed our clothes down to each other, and then, when that wore out, then we gave them to one of our other relatives that might need some.

Tom: All right. Tell me about your typical dress. What did you wear, normally?

Margene: Cotton dresses. And I’ll tell you, most of them were made out of flour sacks. Because somebody, some genius thought of the way to really sell flour was to make pretty sacks, and people would bite. And they did, because that’s what we used to make clothes out of. My grandma sewed, also. She made just about all of our clothes. Mine and my sister’s both, because girls couldn’t wear pants. We had to wear dresses.

Tom: What kind of shoes?

Margene: Well, I’ll tell you, you got shoes as they could afford it. And if your shoes wore out before it was your turn, you better find some newspaper or something to go in it. You know, after we got bigger, we wanted to get what they call ballet shoes. You remember girls used to? I don’t know because you’re not from here. They wore ballet shoes. And, then, we’d have socks. Big old, thick socks turned down. I don’t know why, but that was the style. And we wanted to get ballet shoes. And my mom said, “No, if you get ballet shoes, you know they’re not going to last. And what are you going to do if it’s not your turn?” Because it was a budget, you know? My mom always said when she bought groceries, that she always bought just a few extra things like cans of beans or something because then, one week out of the month, she would not go buy groceries, and she’d take that money and spend it on other things. Because she would build up.

Tom: Smart. She was a good economist. Tell me about school.

Margene: Oh, I loved school.
Tom: Glenn Street School?

Margene: That was just the first grade. And the biggest thing I remember about that is Miss Eaton could not get my name right. She wanted to say Margie Jean, and my name is Margene. All one word. And Mamma, she’d put it on our thing that we’d put up under to remind… She’d write your name on it. And Mamma would say, “That’s not right.” And she would turn it over and put my name. “Now, you tell her this is right.”

Tom: So, after Glenn Street, what school did you go to after that?

Margene: Lonsdale in Seneca because we lived on the boundary place. It was where the railroad tracks are. We had to walk. I mean, it was a long way to walk. I walked all through the mill village. We didn’t live on the mill village. We had to walk all the way through the mill village as we walked to school. And I don’t care what… If it was raining, snowing, sleetting, or whatever. You had to go to school, and we didn’t have any way to go but walk.

Tom: So at that time, you were not living in Tribble?

Margene: No, at that time, we were living in Seneca.

Tom: All right, now. What about high school?

Margene: We moved back here, and I started in the 10th... After Daddy build our house, we moved back here. I started in the 5th grade back here. Yeah, because I was 11 years old. We lived in Seneca from 3rd, 4th and 5th grade. 3rd and 4th. Then, 5th grade was down here.

Tom: And the house on Tribble is the house he built?

Margene: No. The house on Sunset Drive is the house he build out of wood down up there.

Tom: Do you know the address on Tribble?

Margene: 551.

Tom: Let’s see, you went to high school there. Did you go to school after high school?

Margene: No. See, I went off and got married, but let me tell you this. We went to junior high. Boys and girls went together. And then, when you graduated
and started in the 10th grade, the boys went on one side of the town, and the girls went on the other side.

Tom: Boys school.

Margene: Boys High and Girls High. And then, the year that Mr. Howell was our principal. In fact, our paper was named The Howell’s Gals. That was the name of our newspaper. He retired when I was in the 11th grade, I think. He retired. And then they didn’t name it The Howell until it was the year after we graduated, because I graduated in 1953. He had been retired, so they named it to honor him.

Tom: How about after school activities? What did you do when school was out?

Margene: You had to go home. After I got my driver’s license, Daddy had a piece of a car for us. He always had some kind of car for us to drive. And my sister and I would take turns driving to school. She’s two years ahead of me, so she graduated just as I started at the high school. She was graduating. She went to work in Belton at the telephone company, so I followed her and went to work at the telephone company. I went to work at the telephone company before I graduated. Part time. They’d never done that before. They’ve never done it since. I don’t know if it didn’t work out, but a couple of us went to work down there.

Tom: How long did you work for the telephone company?

Margene: Oh, gosh. You know what, I still worked there when I got married. I went back to work. I worked probably a couple of years.

Tom: And the fellow that you married when you were 17 and a half? Was he in the mill village?

Margene: They didn’t, really. His sister worked in the mill. They didn’t live on the mill village. They lived on Brown Street in Anderson.

Tom: How did your family have entertainment? What did you all do for entertainment?

Margene: Well, we sang a lot of gospel songs. Southern gospel, and we went to every singing around. My daddy, at that time, he wouldn’t go. And he wouldn’t go to church at that time. He’d say, he told mamma, “There’s plenty of gas in that car. You got money. Take these children.” Take his children to church, you know. But he would go to the airport, because my Daddy was interested in flying. And Amelia Earhart did land in those. And
it got Daddy real… He really wanted to learn how to fly, and Momma told him, “We don’t have the money.”

He went to work part-time at the airport just helping out, gassing up the planes, moving planes, all that kind of stuff. He paid for his own flying lessons that way, but any money he made down in the mill was family money, and it couldn’t be spent on airplanes at all. And so that’s how. If we were going to see Daddy at lunchtime, we had to go to the airport. See, Sunset Drive is near the airport, so Daddy loved flying. He loved it. He still had his pilot license when he died, and I told his doctor. I can’t even remember his name right now, but I took him up there to get him to sign that Daddy could get his pilot’s license. I said, “Don’t you sign that.” I said, “I wouldn’t go up with him for nothing else.” But he said, “I’m going to sign it. Let him die happy.” I said, “Yeah, but I don’t want him to take me with him.” I said, “He don’t need to be flying.”

He had grit. Putting up wrought-iron, he had an accident and collapsed and put out his left eye, because he didn’t usually put his goggles on. It got in his eye, and it put out his eye, and he still was flying after that, but he only had his private. You know how you can get your solo license, and then you have to have so many hours in to get your private license. And, then, of course so many more hours and take all kinds of tests to get your commercial. Daddy only went through third grade, so he knew he would never get his commercial, but after he got his pilot’s license, and then he started working on planes, why, sometimes he would borrow a plane of some of his buddies, and finally, he started buying planes, and rebuilding them, and then selling them.

Tom: Boy, he was a very talented man.

Margene: We all had to work. I mean, we were taught to work. That’s the thing. If you wanted anything, you had to work for it. Anyway, what we would do on Saturdays and Sundays, and I was his main co-pilot, because my sister didn’t care too much about it, and my brother was too much of a smart-aleck. My oldest brother. I would go with my daddy and we would go to places like Seneca which did not have an airport and Lavonia in Georgia which didn’t have an airport. We would buzz the mill village, and then there was a pasture where cows were. My aunt and uncle lived in front of it, so they were close by. We would land up there and people would come out. You just don’t know how exciting that was, and I sold the tickets. Two dollars. And we would take you up. Take you around, and you could see your house wherever you lived. And I collected the money. I’ve always been a salesman, I guess. When I worked at the newspaper for
about five years, I sold classes my dad taught, which was in the back of the paper.

Back then, Mr. Howell was alive, and it was a great paper. I guess I found out that selling must've been my thing when I was a child, because I would sell... I shamed the guys to bring their girlfriends out. I would shame them. Two dollars. And paying for her to have a ride.

Tom: How were health issues dealt with in the family if somebody got sick?

Margene: I can’t ever remember going to the doctor. I remember when I had a bad tooth and had to go to a dentist. But we didn’t. My grandma, my mamma doctored us. None of us had any real health issues. Thank goodness we didn’t.

Tom: Home remedies?

Margene: Yeah. That's what most of us did. You know, there was this old thing my grandma had. It was called “Peat Soap.” I don’t even know what the name of it was. Supposed to be something medicinal. Oh, we slapped that on everything, you know.

Tom: You’ve already said that all of the money that was made in the mill went to your mom because she was-

Margene: She was the manager. And he could-

Tom: She was the manager.

Margene: And flying was a hobby, and that’s why he had to earn his money to buy a plane.

Tom: Did your family ever discuss finances among while the children were there?

Margene: Yes. We all knew that they didn't have much money. Like I said, we had beans. We had a different kind of bean every day. We didn't have meat every day. We had some kind of beans and potatoes. Mashed potatoes either creamed or a bowl with a gravy around them. Or she'd take that and fry them. Fry little patties after we had creamed potatoes. She would fry them and just different ways. Then we'd have butter beans one day. Pinto beans, one day. Navy beans, which I still don’t like, one day. And, I mean, every day we had some kind of different beans. If we had meat, and this is,
kids can't understand that. If we had meat, it was Sunday and we had chicken. That's the only meat we ever had.

Tom: Did you raise chickens?

Margene: Yeah, we raised chickens, and we had chickens, and Mama would ring their neck or Granny would. One of them.

Tom: Did the chickens live under the house, or did you have a chicken coop?

Margene: No, it was a little place.

Tom: Enclosed area. You know what a pounding is?

Margene: Yes.

Tom: Did your family ever experience a pounding?

Margene: No. We participated in them, but just like I said now, my Mama, she—

Tom: Thrifty.

Margene: Yeah. And she kept up with what was what.

Tom: To your knowledge, did your family ever receive any support from the government?

Margene: You know, I can remember during the war, we got gas stamps and sugar stamps. And, in fact, there is a picture. We started talking about that, where they were giving out stamps, and these two unidentified, a man and a woman, coming out of it. And, I swear it’s my Pop and Granny. Coming out. She had her little hat on. And she wore these shoes. The shoes she wore, I’ll never forget. The oxford kind, but they had the heel about like that, and she wore them every day with the heel that much. But she was only 4’11” so-

Tom: Did you have to pay for those stamps? Were they given to you?

Margene: As well as I remember, we didn't. See, I don't remember him saying. I didn't go with him to get him, but I'm—

Tom: You’ve already mentioned that your Dad didn’t go to church. Was church important in your family?
Margene: Yes.

Tom: What church did you attend?

Margene: To my mother. My mother was a Golden Rule Baptist. All of her family were all made up by Baptist preachers a lot. Her brother was a Baptist preacher. He’s the one who painted these two paintings here. Oil paintings. He was self-taught, my Uncle Lennon. He was self-taught. That’s two of his paintings. I got some more in there that he did. But church was very, very important, and my Daddy got saved and started attending church. It was, let’s see. I was still there because I was a teenager. That's when I came back home. We had started going to a little... Now on Sunday. We had started to go Oakwood Baptist church.

Tom: Oakwood.

Margene: Oakwood. Back then, Oakland was our Baptist Church, but during the week, they had a young people's meeting at the little Presbyterian Church on Whittman Street. Now, it's a nondenominational-something. The one up the hill from town. Back then, it was a little, small thing put out by Central Presbyterian. Every summer, they had a bunch of young preachers to come. And you know, we was going to go and meet them. Some of the rich people that that went to Central Presbyterian had places on Broadway Lake that we could go swimming. They would take us down swimming. We would just love that. Getting to go down there, but we could walk down that hill from where Sunset Drive is. We could walk down there to the little Presbyterian Church. Every Tuesday night, they had a young people's meeting. And so there was nothing at the Baptist church and that, so we would go down there with our friends to the Presbyterian Church and loved it. We put on a play every year at Christmas like you wouldn’t believe. I mean, we had to put it on twice because the seats were all taken for the first, so we had to do it again so everybody could see it. But we had a crowd that would come to our plays.

Tom: Describe the physical condition of your parents when they came back from work? When they got off of a shift.

Margene: Oh, just worn out, you know? And Daddy was always wet. Well, he’d change clothes at the mill before he came home. He wore clothes to the mill, and then he changed down there into his work clothes. When he would come home, he'd bring them home on Fridays because he wear them same clothes all week, and Momma would wash it. But you could tell they'd been wet because the mills had de-humidifiers, because it was so humid in there. Now, could see, after women got so they would go into
beauty shops and hair sprayed. Now, if you worked in the weave room or spinning room, if they had a lot of hairspray on there, you could see. They’d come out, especially at the spinning room, and you could see the lint on the hairspray on their head.

Tom: Yeah, and that’s how the term Linthead came out, you know? Were you ever called a Linthead?

Margene: I don’t think I’ve ever been. I don’t think. I knew what that was, but I don’t think I’ve ever been called one. But I’ll tell you, when we started… See, we went to separate schools. Now, after we came back here, I went to West Market and then to McCants Junior school, and then to high school, but when we got in high school, I found out that there were people who looked at you like, “You come from the Mill Hill.” These North Anderson people. I said, “You know, The Lord don’t deliver special babies north of Anderson.” He just puts them wherever he wants. They’re not any better than we are.

And Bobbie Martin Burns. Bobbie Martin, she’s a Burns now. She talked more than I did, and that’s something. Bobbie, she was always a loudmouth and loved ball. Any kind of ball. Basket. I’d get so mad. I said, “We’re not going do what you want.” She’d get out there, and she’d say, “Now, you play this. You play that.” Now, “Come on, get it!” You know, just, “We’re not all of us good as you.” But Bobbie was so loud-mouth and such a sport, ‘til when we got to high school, you had to elect cheerleaders, you know. We elected them. The kids elected them, and we ran Bobbie for cheerleading. It did not sit well with the North Anderson group. I can tell you that, but you know what? We voted her in, and she was a cheerleader.

Tom: She’s probably one of the best ones.

Margene: She was, and everybody it knew it and everybody loved her.

Tom: Did you have a lot of relatives working in the mill?

Margene: Let’s see. Well, my uncle, who was Daddy’s best friend, who helped him tear down that house and all that, he was the head weaver at boss. They called it boss weaver at Seneca. At that mill. And, then my Momma’s favorite cousin, Vinnie Coker. They lived down in Appleton Mill, and all of them were involved in the mill. In fact, her two daughters worked up at the one that was on the lake up at Clemson. J. P. Steven’s, but I don’t remember the name of them. They were there for years and years.
Did your family, as a family, ever discuss national politics or anything? Government?

Tom:  
Margene: Oh, lord, yes. We were very political. Well, see, one of the big things is, at one time people came here and tried to organize a union. And, boy, now you won't get my momma started. She'd tell them, “You're not welcome in this house.” And just go on, “I know all about it, and I'm not interested. So you can go.” They'd come and try because she was fairly well known. She was a very smart woman, and she was fairly well known, and I reckon they wanted to see if they could recruit her, but she wasn't recruitable.

Tom: Did anybody in your family serve in the military? Your brother?

Margene: Both of my brothers were in the service. My oldest brother was in the Air Force and, gosh, I think he was there, I think, two terms. And he was stationed in Savannah, Georgia. When his thing was up, he stayed in Savannah because, see, he started working at a radio station down there just helping out. Then, he got to announcing down there. And his name, well, we called him Rudy but his name was John Rudolph. And down there, they called him Johnny because in the service, they use your first name, so he was known by Johnny Cole, and he retired from down at WTOC TV in Savannah. He was a personality, you know? A TV personality. And when he was on radio, he used to call me at work and say, “Talk to me in that sexy voice.” And I knew he was on the radio. I said, “Don't you call up.” And what would make him mad, I'd call him Rudy. And he didn't want them to know that we called him Rudy.

Tom: What about your other brother? What did he serve?

Margene: Willis was in Germany. He was in the Air Force, too, in Germany.

Tom: In Germany.

Margene: And that was my baby brother that I adored.

Tom: You were his other mother.

Margene: Yes, I was. See, the Sunday after he was born, I was in there, because I always messed with babies. And here I was. Six years old, and I was in there. I picked him up and had him, and mom said, “What are you doing?” I said, “I’m going to take him to church with me this morning and show him off.” Mamma said, “Put that baby down! You're not going to take that baby.” I was going to take him to church. I was so proud of him.
Tom: Who was the person that you could go to in resolving personal issues?

Margene: My momma when she was alive.

Tom: Your mom. Well, you’ve already said you were a mamma’s girl.

Margene: Yeah, I was a mamma’s girl. My daddy thought I was his lawyer. He always came to me about things.

Tom: What would you consider be the most valuable lesson that you learned while you lived in the mill village?

Margene: Well, one lesson I learned was snuff does not taste good. I’ll tell you that. That was because two women lived next door to us. I don’t know if they were widows or old maids or what, but they both dipped snuff and it looked so good and they just loved it. And I begged them, “Let me have it.” She said, “Oh no.” We called her Aunt Ellen. She said, “Your mom would kill me.” I said, “Oh, that just looks like I want some.” It looked like it was chocolate to tell you the truth. I wanted it so bad. And so mom said, “I have heard enough.” She filled my mouth with snuff, and I had never been so sick in my life as I was. That was one of the biggest lessons I ever, ever learned. But we learned to love the Lord. And my momma made sure all of us knew that.

If somebody's short-changed themselves, you don't walk off. You notice right away. In fact, I’ll tell you, my great-grand, she’s got her permit now, so she wants to drive you everywhere you go. In fact, she’s going at two o'clock to apply for a job today. She so thrilled. But, she drove me. We went to Iva to pick up a cake I had ordered. This guy made the most beautiful coconut cake with pineapple. It was out of this world. It was so moist, so I had to order it and went to pick it up, and it was $30. I gave him two twenties. I didn't have any change. I gave him two twenties. And he gave me $25 back. Well, I just stuck it in my pocket.

After we got back home, I emptied my pocket. I said, “I can’t believe it. Emma. He has given me the wrong change.” Because he gave me $25. He shorted himself $20. I said, “I can't believe he did that.” And she said, “Well, Nanny, what are you going to do?” I got on the computer and notified them. I said, “I hate to tell you. You short-changed yourself.” That was the biggest thing that I can remember. That was the biggest lesson we were taught is you always make sure that they know. You know, and you give it back, too.

Tom: Honesty. Do you think living on the mill village prepared you for life?
Margene: I loved it. I loved it. It was like everybody was kin to you, and it’s hard to explain if you never lived it. It was like a commune or something. I mean, you could go to anybody’s house and get something to eat if you wanted. If they were eating and you were there, you’d just sit down and eat with them. They’d ask you to sit down. I thought it was magical. Now, Rick Bragg, who happens to be my favorite author, he wrote a thing, “The Best They Ever Had.” It is the best book you have ever read about the mill hill. The one that they were at in Alabama, they all had outhouses. See, we all had indoor plumbing, but they didn't have indoor plumbing, and he’s, like, younger than I am. And he tells about it. About when the boys would go and flip them over Halloween Night.

Tom: What was the name of the book?

Margene: “The Best They Ever Had.” I don't think I still got… I think most everybody has borrowed it, and they very seldom give it back. Let me see here if I still have a copy of it. I love this book. He just states things so great. No, I don’t have it. He just states things so great, I think. I enjoy it. And this is my mother’s people from Oklahoma County. Now, let me show you.
Interview with Roscoe Melvin Powell, Jackson Mill

July 16, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom Cartledge on Tuesday, July the 16th. Went to First Baptist Church in Iva, and I'm talking to Roscoe Powell. Roscoe. If you would, state your full name and your date of birth.

Roscoe: My name is Roscoe Melvin Powell. I was born on December 21st, 1947.

Tom: Give me a general idea of life in a mill village.

Roscoe: I think we were real poor, but we didn't know it, 'cause I think we had to deal with life back then with less than most people do now with more. Because I think that the neighborhoods you lived in back then where everybody knew everybody. You knew your neighbors. When we were kids, if we went up the street and misbehaved, our neighbors would pull out a belt and spank us (laughs), and there weren't no lawsuits involved. You just lived there because you were happy. You didn't know any better, and all the people around our neighborhood. We knew everybody. We got up in the morning, we went out in the summertime. We all were playing baseball. Even the girls, and behind our house was a company pasture. They had a big barn down through there. We'd play baseball out there. There were several. If you wanted a milk cow, my daddy, we had a milk cow. And there were hog pens built out there if you wanted a hog. I remember our daddy killing the hog and putting it in a big salt box. The ham, and that was the company pasture. And several people around the neighborhood had cows. They milked their cows out there, and it was just more like a big family back then than what it is now.

Tom: Your address on Central was what?

Roscoe: 153 Central Avenue. I don't know why I remember that 153.

Tom: And it is currently occupied?

Roscoe: I think somebody's living in the house right now. I'm not sure who they are, but it's just an old four-room, wood-frame house.

Tom: And what ages did you live in that house?

Roscoe: I lived in it from the day I was born until I graduated high. From '47 to 1966 when I graduated high school.
Tom: Describe your family.

Roscoe: Well, I had three sisters and three brothers. And they were all... I'm the youngest out of the bunch. They saved the best for last. (Laughs) I barely remember my older sisters 'cause they got married early when I was real young, probably less than 10 years old. And I had, like I said, I had three sisters and three brothers. There were seven of us, and we lived in that four-room house, and you heard that song, "Sleeping at the Foot of the Bed?" I can tell you, that's where I were. I was the youngest. I slept at the foot of the bed with my other 3 brothers.

Tom: What kind of relationship did you have with your parents?

Roscoe: They were strict, but good, honest, and hard- my daddy was a hard-working man, but he died of a heart attack when I was a senior in high school, but he worked in cotton mills all of his life.

Tom: In the Jackson Mill?

Roscoe: No, he didn't work at Jackson Mill. He mostly worked at Orr Mill in Anderson and maybe Appleton Mill or one of those. The ones I remember, I remember because Orr Mill they would, at Christmas, they would line up at their loading docks and have gifts for kids. Because I remember going through the line-up and getting my Christmas. They gave you a little cap pistol, a bag of fruit, and that's pretty much your Christmas.

Tom: Yeah, how did you get to live in a Mill Village house here?

Roscoe: You know, I don't know 'cause I would just... When I was born that's where I was brought up 'cause I don't remember. I remember taking a twenty-dollar bill every now and then, and going out to the office at Jackson Mill which is just up the street and making a payment, I guess, 'til they paid the house off. Which wasn’t very much back then, I don't think. But I remember my mother saying, "Go up there. Your daddy said go pay that at the office at Jackson Mill."

Tom: So you were in the process of buying your home? It was not rented?

Roscoe: No, we ended up buying it because after my Daddy died and all of us got out of school, my mother remarried and moved to Anderson, and we sold the house. I think, it seemed like it was about $3,000. We sold it because we all had to just get together and sign the papers to get the money to our mother.
Tom: Right. And you sold it for $3,000
Roscoe: I think it was about $3,000 what it sold for.
Tom: Describe in detail your house. Four rooms?
Roscoe: It was just a four-room house. It had a living room, a kitchen, and two bedrooms. We did have running water. We had a bathroom, but we never had a hot water heater. You had to heat water. If you ever had to take a bath, you heated it, and we burnt coal most of the time. You'd go on and heat a big bucket of hot water, put it in the tub, and run some cold water through it.
Tom: What about electricity?
Roscoe: We had electricity. No problems at all.
Tom: Was it more than a single light in the ceiling? Did you have lamps?
Roscoe: Yeah. We had lamps and a light. Each room had a light overhead.
Tom: And you did have bathroom facilities in the house?
Roscoe: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes, we had the bathroom.
Tom: Tub?
Roscoe: You had a tub.
Tom: With a shower?
Roscoe: No, didn't have a shower. Just a tub.
Tom: No shower. How were the rooms furnished? Were you there with all of the girls in the house?
Roscoe: No. When I was probably five, six, seven, eight years old when my two older sisters, they married and moved on. And, then, my oldest brother, he got married and, then, my other sister was married, and it was me and Robert and Smiley was left there.
Tom: And being the baby of the family of all six children, you were the baby?
Roscoe: Yeah. (laughs)
Tom: Were you picked on?

Roscoe: Well, some people say I was treated like a baby. I don't know (laughs). But I remember, 'cause we burnt coal and we had a... It was in the winter time and we had been shooting firecrackers. It was Christmas, really. Me and Robert, Smiley would. We were in the bed. And it's cold. Somebody had to get up and build a fire. And it's Christmas morning and Mother and Daddy, they were in the other bedroom. They were still in bed. They weren't going to get up early. So they kind of kicked me out of bed. They say, "Go over and build a fire." So I go over to the stove and add kindle, you'd wad up some paper, put some kindle, two three pieces of coal, and light it. Well, I made a mistake and put a sack of firecrackers into the stove. And when I lit it—

Tom: Made the mistake?

Roscoe: When I lit it, and them firecrackers started going off and my Daddy come in there, my rear-end was sore for a week. I made sure that no more firecrackers got in that coal stove. (laughs)

Tom: On a typical morning, how did you wake up?

Roscoe: Mostly, our mother come in there and I can remember, she'd say one time, "Y'all get up." The next time, she pulled the cover off of you, "Get out of here. Get up!" And she was a hard worker. She didn't have no clothes dryer. I can remember her hanging clothes out on the line, and five minutes after they were out there, they'd be froze.

Tom: Tell me your typical dress. Your clothing. Tell me what you'd—

Roscoe: Well, mostly, we wore blue jeans in the wintertime, and mine were come from Robert and Smiley, and then I wore them.

Tom: Passed down. Hand-me-downs.

Roscoe: Yes, and we didn't wear shoes in the summertime. Very little. But when we started school, like the song said, "We got a brand new pair."

Tom: In the summer you wore shorts?

Roscoe: Mostly, yeah. And run around barefoot. You had to have tough feet, I guess. I don't know. (Laughs)

Tom: You mentioned school. Tell me about the school you went to.
Roscoe: Well, we all went to Iva Elementary School which is, right now in Iva, it's been tore down. The got the old cafeteria still there they use as a community center. They got a little park there. It was Iva Elementary. And you went there until you finished 8th grade, and then they build Crescent High School along about that time. And, then, after the 8th grade you went to Crescent.

Tom: Did you finish at Crescent?


Tom: Did you go on to any further education after your high school?

Roscoe: No, we didn't get the option of going to college back then.

Tom: Did you ever, yourself, work at Jackson Mill?

Roscoe: No, I never. I always said, I guess I would have. I always said I wouldn’t work in the cotton hill. And my dad did. It pretty much killed him. Worked himself to death in the cotton mill.

Tom: And he had a heart attack?

Roscoe: Yeah, yeah.

Tom: When you were a senior in high school.

Roscoe: Yeah. He had one when I was probably... about four years earlier, and when I was a senior in high school, he had another heart attack, and he died. And his doctor told my oldest brother, he said, "You know," he had went to him later on; he said, "You know if we had the technology back then that we've got now, your Daddy would still be alive." But they just didn't have the technology in '66.

Tom: How about Brown Lung or anything like that. Did he?

Roscoe: No. He never had that. I think one of his brothers. They all worked in cotton mills up here in Anderson. I think one of them had Brown Lung. I think his name was Neil Powell. I think he died from Brown Lung.

Tom: Did you date somebody in the mill village?

Roscoe: I'm a married one of them. (laughs)
Tom: Okay, that was going to be my next question. And you married a girl who also lived in the mill village?

Roscoe: Yeah, she wasn't exactly in the mill village. She was right by the Asheville Highway come down along the other side of Iva where the doctor's office is now. She lived right across the road from there. I started dating her, probably after I had been out of high school three, four years. I'm five years older than she is.

Tom: You still married?

Roscoe: We're still married.

Tom: So how many years?

Roscoe: We got married in '72. And we've been married however how long that is.

Tom: Tell me about school. After school activities and summertime activities. How did you pass your time?

Roscoe: Well, the day I graduated high school, I went to work down at Rocky River Mill in Calhoun Falls.

Tom: And what kind of mill is that?

Roscoe: It was a wool mill, then. They made carpet or built, made the wool. It was a Bigelow-Sanford Plant is what it was.

Tom: And where was that?

Roscoe: It's right before you get into Calhoun Falls on the right, back down in there. Rocky River Mill, and Rough Lines was a, back then, industrial baseball was pretty big, and we were pretty decent baseball players, so I had a job. My brother was working down there. In fact, he had signed a baseball contract. He played minor league baseball for the Dodgers. And he was working... He messed his arm up, but he was working back down there and I got I had a job to go there and play baseball. Basically what it was... they gave you a job in maintenance if you could play baseball (laughs) and we played baseball back then in Industrial League on Saturday and Wednesday. You'd play two baseball games a week.

Tom: Other than baseball. How did you spend your time?
Roscoe: Hunting and fishing and any kind of thing outdoors I enjoyed. But after baseball, we got all involved in slow-pitch softball, right when it was real big back then. You probably remember some of the Misfits teams. We used to play with and against the Misfits and we played for old Iva Pop-Ups. And it was... Slow pitch softball got real big back in the late 60s and early 70s before it faded out.

Tom: How about basketball?

Roscoe: I played basketball in high school, and I played football in high school. In fact, in 1960, I ain't bragging, I was the most valuable player in '65 on football and basketball.

Tom: Very good.

Roscoe: And we didn't have a baseball team in high school that year. They didn't. My senior year, the Crescent didn’t fill the baseball team.

Tom: How did people that lived in the mill village deal with sickness or injury or something happened to one of your brothers or your sister. Who took care of them?

Roscoe: I think, back then, if you didn't have kinfolk close by, your neighbors you would look in on you. When I was eleven years old. I got a job delivering milk for Harper Hall had a day where they needed to deliver milk around Iva. Well, I got a job riding on a milk truck and running milk to the door. That's always running, and the second bottle of milk that I delivered was a brick house coming out right there out of Iva. I stumble and I fell on the cement carport. The bottle of milk busted, and I cut that main artery right there in my arm. And I right there bled to death and it left my right hand a little smaller than my left one. When I got to the hospital, I didn't have a pulse. And they didn't have my type blood.

Tom: Where would you go to the hospital?

Roscoe: Anderson. They had a doctor's office out here in Iva. They took me out here to the doctor office, and I don't remember all of that because I had lost so much blood. I was out of it and like that, but there was a woman that worked at Fiberglass. Heard I, because my blood B negative, which is kind of the second rarest kind. And a woman that worked at the Fiberglass came up to the hospital and gave me a pint of blood. And there was a soldier from Texas coming through. Heard it on the radio. He came over and gave me a pint of blood.
Tom: God sent you an angel.

Roscoe: Yes. He sure did.

Tom: How were discipline issues resolved? You said your dad wore you out?

Roscoe: You know, I don't ever remember my Daddy hitting me or spanking me. My mother, she would pull out a belt and hit across the legs every now and then if you'd done something. But my Daddy, I guess maybe he had spanked us pretty hard when we was young, but I can remember if we were sitting around and doing something, and he's look over at you. You'd quit. He didn't have to say a word.

Tom: How was discipline handled at the school?

Roscoe: The principal would... Well, I remember one time Miss Jackie Pettigrew was my teacher in the seventh grade. She had a fish bowl upon her desk and I was sitting there close to it. And I done something. Reached in and messed with the fish. She took me in the cloak room, bent me over, and had a paddle. She hit me three times, and tears come down my cheek. It hurt. I mean, she hit me like a baseball bat. And that was discipline in school. You didn't. You didn't.... they need more of that now.

Tom: How was discipline handled in the village and just the neighborhood?

Roscoe: You know, I don't think you had near the problem... We didn't have problems. Like I said, if you was down three or four houses down playing and going on and you do something wrong, they would either come out and the neighbor would come and say something to you, and you'd quit. Or they might take your belt off and. But, you know, in the worst scenario, they'd go tell your daddy. I think the neighborhoods were more—I don't know how to say it—everybody was more family. You knew everybody. You knew who lived in every house, and I remember neighbors across the road, the 1st, they had a TV. Well, about 4 o’clock in the evening, Superman come on, and we’d go two houses up and we’d try to slip across the road and go in the house so we could watch that TV. And my mother, most times, you hear the yelling across the road. Life was better back then, I think.

Tom: Were family finances ever discussed openly? The children pretty much left out of it?

Roscoe: I don't ever remember us, my mother and daddy talking about finances in front of us.
Tom: Were you ever the benefit of a pounding?

Roscoe: What do you mean by pounding?

Tom: You know, where they go to your house and—

Roscoe: Oh, oh, oh, yeah. No. No. We seemed like we always had a meal to eat. My mother could take a pot of beans and make them last a long time. It seemed she could take them butter beans and put them on the stove and get them simmering. And we didn't eat steak a lot, but she could... We always had something to eat.

Tom: What was your typical breakfast?

Roscoe: She would fry up some eggs and toast with jelly on it a lot of times.

Tom: How about lunch?

Roscoe: You know, I don't think too much about lunch. I don't know if we ever slowed down enough to eat lunch back then or not. You could go in the house. And a lot of times, I think because of me, she always had... 'cause I loved milk. She always had milk in the fridgerator. And you could go in, and grab your sandwich and lunch cold. We didn't slow down enough to eat lunch back then. We were outside playing ball.

Tom: What was a typical evening supper?

Roscoe: I'm trying to think. I can tell you what a Sunday dinner was like, because she cooked the best chicken in the world, and we usually had kinfolk coming down on Sunday or we would go to... We had cousins that lived on the Mill Hill on Anderson. And we would go up. We would go there once we got a car. I mean, I remember our first car. I was probably six, seven years old when I remember Daddy finally bought a car.

Tom: What kind was it?

Roscoe: I think it was an old Chevrolet. I can't remember. It was a 50s...it was a 50-something. '52 or '53.

Tom: To your knowledge, do you remember your family ever receiving any financial assistance from the government?

Roscoe: I don't think they ever did. I think they're too proud.
Tom: Tell me about your church experiences.

Roscoe: Well, we all.... When I was younger, a lot of times we went to Wesleyan Methodist Church down below Iva to the preacher down there. Everybody liked him. But, later on, the preacher Frank Gillespie, who was at First Baptist in Iva, who played football, baseball, and basketball at Clemson. We got saved out there and baptized by Frank Gillespie. It's funny. You might be sitting at the house one morning about eight o’clock and you look up and he comes walking through the door. Don't knock, don't do nothing. Coming in and sits down and butters biscuits and sits there and eats them. He would do that a lot. I mean, he was one of the people that I remember fondly from my childhood. In fact, he was a superstar at Clemson in football back in the '40s, I think he played in the Orange Bowl and things like that and Frank Howard and stuff.

Tom: Describe the condition of your dad when he came in after work.

Roscoe: Soaking wet with sweat. I don't even think it dried off of him on his way home. I can remember him, and that's one reason I always said I didn’t think I’d want to work in the cotton mill. I could remember him coming home and his clothes still being ringing wet.

Tom: Did you have a number of relatives that worked in the mills?

Roscoe: I think pretty much, yeah. He had, I think there were about seven of them. He had about four brothers and two sisters, and I think all of his brothers except maybe one. All of them worked in the cotton mills and Anderson 'cause all of them lived up there. I don't know how we ended up in Iva.

Tom: You knew the women work in the mill?

Roscoe: Like I said, Annie. She did until she... All I remember is her work. She was always a salesman at [Phonetic: Gallop Mills] on The Square at Anderson. And his other sister. I think it was Kelly. They was raised in Belton.

Tom: During your village years, were you aware of the United States politics or world politics?

Roscoe: You know what, I don't ever remember us even thinking about politics back then.

Tom: Did your family ever discuss governmental issues like NAFTA or anything like that?
Roscoe: I never. I don't ever remember them. Now, my daddy when we had company maybe the uncles, they might have discussed it, but never in front of us. Because we were always outside playing, and I don't ever remember politics ever coming in the question when we were coming along. Nothing like it is now.

Tom: Did you or any of your brothers serve in the military?

Roscoe: Robert went into the National Army Reserve. And, then he did that, so he could go play baseball, but nobody—Now, I was drafted back then in the '60s but when I got down, they turned me down on my arm. And the rest, nobody ever went in service.

Tom: Living in the mill village, were you ever singled out or called a name like a "Linthead" or anything from a town-person or a city-person?

Roscoe: You know, I don't ever remember that. May have, but I don't ever remember them being called names.

Tom: What would you consider to be the most positive influence on you while you lived in the mill village?

Roscoe: As far as a person, I would think Frank Gillespie, our preacher out there.

Tom: Ok, because my next question is, who is the person you could go to for help in resolving personal issues?

Roscoe: It would've been him. He had an old convertible. Well, old car with the top cut off it. We didn't have organized Little Leagues back. We had RA baseball. And they will come around a neighborhood driving that old jeep and he'd have eight or ten of us. We were probably ten twelve years old back then, and take us, put us in that little convertible thing, and take us to a ball field. We'd go ahead and have a baseball game.

Tom: What would you consider to be the most valuable lesson that you learned living in the mill village?

Roscoe: You know, I don't know, except maybe just accepting life the way it is instead of... You know, because back then, like I said, we were poor, and we didn't know it. And you don't feel like you... We didn't blame somebody else because we were living in the mill.

Tom: Did living in the mill prepare you for life?
Roscoe: I think it did. I think it taught you how to get along with people. Because they're so many people. I got to thinking all day how many people that I could call their names that lived on Back Street, Central Avenue, and Front Street. It was a kind of a little rivalry, sometimes, when we were playing ball with the kids on Front Street from the kids on Back Street, but we were always buddies. It was competition. It was good stuff.

Tom: Of your three... There were three boys. Were you closer to Robert or closer to Smiley, or would you say it was even?

Roscoe: Well, I think my oldest brother, Fudd, and he had gotten married, and he was off kind of on his own. And me and Robert and Smiley... We were all pretty close. I guess we were more. We've done more things together, us three probably, than the rest of the family.

Tom: So there were four boys?

Roscoe: Four boys and three girls.

Tom: Four boys and three girls. Is there anything that you would like to say, because we're about to wrap this up, anything that you would like to say about just life on a mill hill?

Roscoe: The only thing I can say is it was… I could go back, I don't know if I’d change anything or not. Because, you know, families were bigger back then. My mother came from a family with 16 young ones. They were eight boys and eight girls, and they were the happiest people I've ever seen in my life. I mean they still, some of them, there’s about three or four of them still alive. And every one of them is happy. They never sulked. Never one of them ever said a bad thing about anybody. And, like my mother, she was always happy. And never complained about nothing. And never had nothing. They need more people like that.

Tom: They do. Definitely. Okay, Roscoe. That was terrific. Let me make sure that we got this. 153 Central.

Roscoe: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I'm pretty sure that’s right. I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure it’s right.

Tom: Very good. All right. Thank you, pal.

Roscoe: Thank you, sir.

Tom: I appreciate it. Yeah. I'll let you know what's going on.
Roscoe:  Okay. Thank you. Do you need this?

Tom:    Yeah, I do. Thank you so much.

Roscoe: You need this back?

Tom:    No, I don't. I got it. You can hang on to that.

Roscoe: All right. I want tell you a joke before I go. About my mother's kids.

Tom:    Yes.

Roscoe: You ain’t got that thing turned on there?

Tom:    No, it's off.

Roscoe: Okay. They were 16 of them-
Interview with Claude Eugene (Smiley) Powell, Jackson Mill

July 16, 2019

Tom: Give me your full name.

Smiley: Claude Eugene Powell.

Tom: Date of birth.

Smiley: 11/21/45.

Tom: What was your street address?

Smiley: 32 Central Avenue.

Tom: 32 Central Avenue. The house still there?

Smiley: Yes, sir.

Tom: Do you know who lives in it?

Smiley: I do not.

Tom: Ok, Smiley. Describe your neighborhood.

Smiley: Ours was just a typical mill hill neighborhood. The streets were, when I was really small, they were all dirt, but it was nice. Shady trees. Trees down both sides of the road. Very clean neighborhood. Everybody knew everybody. It was just one big family, really.

Tom: How old were you when you left 32 Central Avenue?

Smiley: Well, I think I probably was about 25 years old. That’s when I got married.

Tom: So you lived there. Were you born there in that house? You came home from the hospital or wherever you were born? You lived there from when you were born until you were 25 years old.

Smiley: That’s correct.

Tom: Describe your family. I know Roscoe gave me a briefing on it, but tell me, again, about your family.
Smiley: Okay. Our family was probably a little larger than normal back in those days. We had seven kids. Mom and Dad, which would’ve been nine of us, and they were probably basically born about every two years. Had four boys, three girls. My dad worked. Mom stayed home and took care of the kids.

Tom: So, your mother never worked?

Smiley: She worked sporadically at the mill. She would work, and then she would be at home some. She worked in the weave room.

Tom: At Jackson?

Smiley: At Jackson Mill. My dad was a loom fixer at Jackson mill, and then later he went to Orr Mill in Anderson.

Tom: Where were your parents originally from?

Smiley: The Powell side of the family was from Georgia around Hartwell. My mom’s side of the family were Davises, and they lived out from I think it was Central, South Carolina up there. I think they called it Five Forks section up in there, and they lived on the farm up there.

Tom: Were they sharecroppers?

Smiley: Sharecroppers up there, and they had a very large family. My dad, they was sharecroppers in Georgia.

Tom: Tell me about your relationship with your parents.

Smiley: Oh, yes. I mean, family then, they were a family. Everybody, they had their jobs to do, and everybody did it. My dad, he was an outdoorsman. Hunted and fished, and we was raised that same way. We would do what we needed to do, and if we had time in the afternoon, we would go fishing, and in the wintertime we’d go hunting.

Tom: How did he discipline you?

Smiley: Oh, well, they were like any parent then. You did what you were told or you ended up probably with a whipping.

Tom: They would whip you with a belt?

Smiley: A belt or a switch.
Tom: Whatever they can get their hands on, huh? Was your house rented, originally, and did your parents, ultimately, buy the house?

Smiley: That’s correct. The mill company owned all of the houses, then. We rented from them, and then they gave the opportunity to the people to purchase the house if they wanted to, and we bought ours and made monthly payments to the mill company.

Tom: Do you have any idea what they paid for the house?

Smiley: I don’t know what they paid for the house, but I know I think our payments were like $25 a month.

Tom: $25 dollars a month. When they sold the house, do you know what they sold the house for?

Smiley: I think, my dad passed away, and mom got married and moved away to Anderson, and I think we sold the house for probably I think it was $7,000 or $9,000.

Tom: A good bit more than you paid for it.

Smiley: I bet you. Yes. We probably gave, I would say roughly $2,500 for the house when we bought it, maybe.

Tom: All right. Describe your house.

Smiley: It was a wood-frame house. Four rooms with one bath. It had a living room.

Tom: Describe the bathroom.

Smiley: Bathroom was just nothing fancy at all. Bathtub, commode, and a sink. It probably was maybe 8 x 8. Wasn’t very big.

Tom: Indoors or on the back porch?

Smiley: It was part on the back porch.

Tom: Most of them were. How did you heat the house?

Smiley: We had coal. Had a coal heater and had a fireplace, and actually there was a fireplace in the living room, a fireplace in both bedrooms, but one of the bedrooms we had bricked it up and made a flue for a coal heater.
Tom: Describe the lighting. The electricity.

Smiley: Yes, we had the wall switches, and we had light fixtures. You know, we didn’t have the hang-down type lights.

Tom: You know, because a lot of people just had the drop-light.

Smiley: Drop light. Right.

Tom: A drop light. But you had wall fixtures.

Smiley: Yeah, we had fixtures in the ceilings with a wall switch.

Tom: Describe your kitchen for me.

Smiley: Okay. We had a stove. Refrigerator.

Tom: Coal stove? Wood stove?

Smiley: No, ours was from the time I came along, we had an electric stove. Now, we had a couple of the neighbors that had a kerosene-type stove that had a little gallon jug of kerosene that you would burn the eyes with and, also, in the oven.

Tom: Describe your typical breakfast.

Smiley: Breakfast was probably biscuits. Mother made homemade jellies. We would have probably gravy and eggs. Wasn’t very much meat. Now, we did raise some hogs there for a while, and we would have sausage.

Tom: On the community property?

Smiley: Right. They had the Company Pasture they called it.

Tom: Company Pasture. Did you have a cow?

Smiley: We had a cow for a while. We had a Holstein Cow. My brother, my oldest brother, milked the cow, and I churned the butter.

Tom: That’s good. How about lunch? Now, did both of your parents work at the mill? Just your father?

Smiley: My father worked at the mill, and as we got a little older, my dad had a heart attack when, probably, I was in about the 6th grade, and then he was
only able to work part-time after that, and Mother went to work, then, in the sewing plant. Iva Manufacturing which made ladies apparel, and she went down and operated the sewing machine.

Tom: Tell me about a typical supper. What did you have at night?

Smiley: Probably-

Tom: What was left over from lunch?

Smiley: What was left over from lunch, but we had, especially in the winter time, when we had the coal heater going, mother would get up in the morning time, and she would take the dried beans, giant limas or pintos or black beans or black-eyes, and she would wash and lube them, put a big old piece of fatback meat in it, put it on the coal heater, and it would sit there and simmer until those beans got done and then we’d have beans and corn bread. Probably no meat during the week. Then, on the weekend we would probably have chicken or a roast or something like that.

Tom: Did you have your own chickens?

Smiley: They raised them. They had them in the back yard.

Tom: So, you had eggs from the chickens, milk from the cow when you had the cow, and bacon and fatback from the pigs when you had pigs.

Smiley: That’s correct.

Tom: Sounds pretty good to me.

Smiley: Yeah.

Tom: Tell me about your waking up in the morning. How did… you were the baby of the family.

Smiley: No. Roscoe was the baby of the family.

Tom: Oh, Roscoe. That’s right. Roscoe was the baby of the family.

Smiley: Yeah. I was the next in line. Mother always was an early riser. She was up way before daylight, and she would wake us up doing things, getting ready to cook breakfast, or she would be making the fire back again in the coal heater or she would be washing clothes, putting them on the clothes line. By daylight, she would have the clothes hanging out.
Tom: How did she wash the clothes?

Smiley: Okay. We were one of the lucky ones. We had a washing machine. It was a wringer-type, but the wringer didn’t work, so we used the washing machine to wash the clothes, and then you’d have to wring them by hand. She would take them out to the clothes line in the back yard, which everybody had clothes lines in those days, and she would hang them out.

Tom: Tell me about school.

Smiley: Okay. We probably was about a mile from school, which we walked back and forth from school every day. The elementary school was first through sixth grade, and I went to it for about the first two or three years I was over there, we had the high school and all in that building. But, then, they consolidated Starr and Iva and made a high school, Crescent, and I think it opened in 1957. Somewhere in that neighborhood. The first of couple years I went to school, we had everything there: Grammar School, Middle School, and High school. Class sizes were probably 28, 30, and all the teachers lived in the neighborhood so everybody knew them, so you knew you had to behave or they was going to tell Daddy on you, and that wouldn’t be good. Of course, we were not integrated at that time. We were all white students.

Tom: Sure, sure.

Smiley: Everybody knew everybody. All of the kids were from the same neighborhood. We played ball with each other all day long in the summertime, and then we’d go to school. Just like brothers and sisters, really, that you were going to school with because you knew everybody in the classroom.

Tom: You spent a lot of time outside?

Smiley: Yes, sir. We didn’t have too many computers back in those days.

Tom: Did you work in the mill?

Smiley: I did not work in Jackson. The only time I went through Jackson Mill was when the senior class went through. We toured the mill, and they showed it to us. I did work in a mill. I worked at, my first job was at Clark Schwabel on the Southside of Anderson. I worked up there and played baseball with them for the first year. They were in the Independent League, and they played once a week. Practiced probably three or four days a week. Then, the next year, I had the opportunity to move down to
Rocky River Mill, which was just North of Calhoun Falls, and they played in the County League so I got to play twice a week down there. Wednesdays and Saturdays. I worked down there probably for five years or so and played baseball with them. Then, I left and went into construction with Daniel Construction Company. I went into the piping side of it.

Tom: Did you date a girl on the mill?

Smiley: I did not. Probably back then, it was more of a group bunch together than a date. I didn’t probably date much until I was a senior in high school or maybe a junior, and the girl that I started going with, she actually didn’t live on the mill hill. She was about a mile out in the country.

Tom: Did you marry her?

Smiley: I did.

Tom: Are you still married to her?

Smiley: No, sir.

Tom: Are you married?

Smiley: I am, now. Yes. Second marriage.

Tom: How did you all deal with injuries or if you got hurt or if you got sick?

Smiley: We had Dr. Adams when I was coming along that I went to. I got cut a couple of times and had to have maybe five or six stitches. Never did have any broken bones, but we would go to the doctor when necessary. We didn’t have regular appointments. You know, “Come six months, and let me check you.”

Tom: Didn’t get hurt like Roscoe, right?

Smiley: Yeah.

Tom: He had it pretty severe.

Smiley: Yeah. Roscoe got injured, and he got hurt real bad.

Tom: Real bad with his arm.
Smiley: Yes. He almost died.

Tom: Who handled the discipline in your family?

Smiley: Both. Mother, during the daytime you better do what Mother said, or Daddy was going to take care of you later.

Tom: How did he take care of you?

Smiley: He’d give you a switch. You didn’t want to get whipped by Daddy. You’d rather get a switching by Mother, anytime.

Tom: Would he whip you with a belt?

Smiley: Oh, yeah. He used a belt, but usually, you didn’t get but one from him because, after that, you knew you didn’t want another one.

Tom: Did your family ever discuss finances openly? Did you ever, as kids, ever hear talk about money or finances or anything?

Smiley: No, sir. We didn’t. It was probably discussed between Mother and Daddy, and that was about as far as it went.

Tom: As far as it went. And you’re familiar with pounding?

Smiley: Oh, yes.

Tom: Did your family ever receive the benefits of a pounding?

Smiley: I’m sure we did. Especially when my dad had his heart attack. We had one lady over on our side of town. She made sure if anyone was sick and disabled for an amount of time that she was going to go around the neighborhood and take a pounding for them. The next week, if they weren’t still able, she would take another pounding for them and made sure that if they weren’t able to keep their house in correct order that she would make sure that some of the other neighbors would go and take care of things for them. Keep the house clean, stuff like that.

Tom: Do you think that your father suffered a heart attack because of the stress at work, or do you think it was an inherited issue?

Smiley: I think it was inherited or diet.

Tom: Oh, really?
Smiley: Yes. Because I can see my dad now. That piece of fatback meat that was in those dried beans?

Tom: Yeah. That was his.

Smiley: That was his. I mean, there isn’t anybody fighting for it, though.

Tom: How important was church in your life?

Smiley: Oh, yes. We went to church. First Baptist of Iva.

Tom: First Baptist of Iva. Are you still a member here?

Smiley: Yes, sir, and then on Sunday morning, we would go by. Let’s see. We had the Methodist Church that was close. The Pentecostal Holiness was close. We had the Baptist Church of God, but you would see… Everybody in the neighborhood went to church. Almost everybody. And you would see some of them went to the Methodist. Some of them went to the Church of God. The Pentecostal. Some went to the First Baptist, but there would be people walking up to church. I mean, nobody used a car to drive to church, hardly, because it was only maybe four or five blocks. There would be a line of people walking and each one going to their own church.

Tom: How would you describe the physical condition of your father when he came home from work?

Smiley: Dad, probably… There weren’t any air conditioning in the mill in those days, and in the summertime, Dad would be really hot. I remember you would see his shirt would be soaking wet with sweat.

Tom: Was there ever any mention in the family about politics, would events, or anything of that nature?

Smiley: Didn’t hear much of it, then. News just didn’t get around in those days like, now, you turn on CNN, Fox, or you get it on your personal computer 24 hours a day. It didn’t happen back in those days.

Tom: So, governmental issues and local issues weren’t discussed?

Smiley: Local. More local than national.

Tom: More local issues, really?

Smiley: Yeah.
Tom: What was happening in the community?

Smiley: Who was running for mayor, and who was city council.

Tom: Did you serve in the army?

Smiley: I did not. I was registered as 1-Y. I went for the pre-exam, I think four times. Every six months I’d go down and have a physical and you know, and they would send me my registration back, and it would always be, “1-Y,” which I think means, “In Case of National Emergency.”

Tom: Did you have a physical condition?

Smiley: Evidently. They didn’t tell me what it was, and I didn’t ask, you know? I would go down. The Draft Board then would call me about every six months to fill their quota, and I’d go down for a physical.

Tom: There were four boys in the family?

Smiley: Right.

Tom: How many of them served in the military?

Smiley: I had two brothers. Now, Roscoe I think he was not able because of the physical that he had when he had his arm cut. Two brothers was in the National Guard Army Reserve.

Tom: Did they ever serve overseas?

Smiley: No. My son had. My son was in the army. He was in the army reserve in the Belton Unit, and they were the first one that went over to Iraq. They called their unit up because they were in communications.

Tom: What would you consider to be the most challenging thing from living in the mill hill, or was there anything?

Smiley: You know, we was poor as dirt, but we didn’t know it because everybody was in the same boat we was in. We didn’t know we were in bad shape, I don’t guess. But, you know, we always had a meal. Didn’t always have an automobile. We didn’t have an automobile until a while. I think Roscoe and I probably was 10, 12 years old before we had a car.

Tom: Oh, really?
Smiley: Yeah.

Tom: Who in your life was the most influential person in your life?

Smiley: I think the first preacher that we had at First Baptist that I had a lot in common with was Rev. Frank Gillespie.

Tom: That’s the same person that Roscoe mentioned.

Smiley: Yeah. He really did have a lot to do with the young kids that were coming up in that day. He played football, baseball, and basketball at Clemson, and we were a sport-oriented family. We played ball all the time. He played with us, and he’d go fishing with us. He just kept us in line, and he was really a good fellow. Not only as a preacher but as a human being.

Tom: Were you ever called a Linthead or a derogatory term?

Smiley: Oh, we probably got called Linthead every day.

Tom: Really? How did you feel about that?

Smiley: It didn’t bother me, because that’s what I was. I mean, we would call another Linthead a Linthead. It was coming from people that were just like us. It was more a joking thing than it was anything. It was never mean.

Tom: You didn’t consider it derogatory?

Smiley: Not at all. No. I didn’t wear my feelings on my sleeve.

Tom: Do you think that living in a mill village prepared you for life?

Smiley: You know, I think so. In a way, it does, because if you didn’t get along with the people in your neighborhood, you weren’t going to be involved with activities they were doing. If you didn’t like somebody over there, you didn’t play baseball with them. It taught you to get along well with your neighbors and with your friends.

Tom: If there was anything that you think that I should know about living on the mill hill that I haven’t brought up?

Smiley: You’ve covered it pretty well from top to bottom. From the way the families took care of each other. You didn’t have to worry about... If you weren’t able to do this, somebody was going to help you do it.
Tom: Good. That’s what I love to hear. Okay, my friend. Thank you so much. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate it. Did you sign that?

Smiley: I signed that.

Tom: Okay. Very good. All right. Thanks. I appreciate it. I will let you know how this thing works out.

Smiley: Oh, I hope it goes well for you. I know it will.

Tom: Okay. Thank you so much.

Smiley: If you need anything else, give us a holler.
Interview with Tommy Marsell Shaw, Chiquola Mill

August 15, 2019

Tom: Okay. Tom Cartledge. I'm at 205 Maryland Avenue in Honea Path, and I've got the pleasure of interviewing Tommy Shaw. Tommy, if you would, give me your full name and your date of birth.

Tommy: Tommy Marsell Shaw. 3/17/43.

Tom: All right. Thank you so much. Now, what I want is for you to give me just your general description of life in the mill village.

Tommy: It was one big family. Nobody ever locked the door. If you were playing in the yard at suppertime in somebody else's yard, you went in and ate with them. I mean. It was just one big family. You took care of it. If the man broke a leg, the people milked his cow and worked his garden for him. If the woman had a child, the women went in and cooked and cleaned and done for her. Next door to the house, Miss Cleo Hammack come out one night after dark. She said, “Aunt Tho, have you made a bed check yet?” And she said, “No.” So we go, and Momma went in there, and she come back out. She said, “I'm missing one.” She said, “Well, I got one extra.” Momma said, “I'll go get her.” She said, “No, just let her spend the night. I just wanted you to know why I had an extra one.”

People took care of one-another. There was very little contention in the village. I mean, you may have a spat every once in a while with somebody, but most of the time, it was peace. If somebody died, they helped you bathe them. There wasn't no funeral homes for a long time. You bathed them and put them on a cooling board and, then, the cooling board… you put them in a box and carry them to the church to where you was going to have the funeral. I don't know really what all to tell you.

Tom: Okay, we'll get there.

Tommy: The cemetery over here was probably started in 1903. The oldest grave I can find is Dr. Hough. The mill was started, I think, in 1903. The first portion of it started in 1903.

Tommy: All right. Tell me about your family. Your brothers and sisters. Your mother and dad. The whole business.

Speaker: I had two brothers, one four years older and one four younger. They’re both dead. My mother and daddy are dead. At one time in this mill over
here, my Daddy, his mother, his daddy, his brother Jerry, his brother Pete,
his sister Alice, his sister Aunt Lewis were all workers over here. Were all
weavers here, except Grandpa. And I think Grandpa was a hauler. They
were all in the mill at the same time as workers in the mill over here. And
it started with, they worked 12-hours shifts. And Grandpa and them
sharecropped cotton on a rented place out in the country. Grandpa was
showing me. Then, they worked 12-hour shifts over here in the mill. There
was two rabbits hopping along one time. They got to the edge of the shop
property. And no rabbits. Told its owners to stop. He said, “What for?” He
said, “If you put your foot on that property, there, before you can squeal,
you’re in a frying pan.” And grandma had two children. Were died young.
The old doctor come down in the country from the city, and he told her
and checked her out. Said, “Michelle, you're young, you can have more
children.” Well, she had 11 more. She had 13. I always told her, I said,
“Granny, it’s a good thing he didn't tell you could have a whole pile of
children.”

Tom: What were your brothers’ names?

Tommy: Ronnie Eugene Shaw and Curtis Ray Shaw.

Tom: And they died?

in 2006. And my youngest brother in 2015.

Tom: No girls. No sisters.

Tommy: No. No sisters. My mother was a twin, and there was twins in my daddy’s
family. If I had’ve married, I’d probably have quadruplets or something
because they jump a generation. If I had’ve married, I'd probably have
quadruplets, but I never have married. I'm single.

Tom: All right. Tell me about, what was your normal breakfast?

Tommy: Usually, biscuits. We had homemade bread every day with butter and
Grandma's molasses. Did you ever know about Grandma's molasses? And
if you were lucky, you had meat, country ham or bacon, sausage, and a lot
of that was raised here. Everybody had a hog pen, chickens, and right
behind my house…. let me see here if I can see this. There was a barn
right down here that was made by the company. Built. And if you had a
cow, you'd say, “I got a cow and need a stall.” They’d assign you that
number to you as long as you want. If you have a goat, as far as I know,
there's a picture nowhere of it, but you see that counter there? That little
building? That's the color of it. And as far as I know, there's not a picture anymore of that old barn. I don't know of.

Tom: Are you in this picture?

Tommy: That's me holding my youngest brother.

Tom: That's fabulous.

Tommy: But I wish I could find a picture of the whole barn, but I don't know if one exists, anyway.

Tom: So your family did have a cow and did have a hog?

Tommy: My grandmother had a cow, but we all had hogs. They had hogs. We had them. They had them everywhere, and the one that Daddy and them had down here rooted out a spring of water, and they cleaned it out and put a metal box on it with a lock on it. And all the guys that fished could come down and with a key and take out some minnows. They went and caught minnows, they put them in, and they'd go straight down through the yard.

Tom: So your family did have a cow and did have a hog?

Tommy: All right. Tell me about a typical lunch.

Tommy: For us, Tuesday and Thursday was always dried beans, and I'll tell you why. That wash day from my mother, rain, shine, sleet, or snow, she washed because you had to wash that often. You didn't have that many clothes. I mean, we had things but you didn't have that many. And you had beans and corn bread, and we had vegetables, and they canned everything. What you wouldn't eat when you had a garden was canned. We didn't have no freezers. Nobody had a freezer, but everything was canned.

Tom: Tell me about a typical supper.

Tommy: Sometimes, it'd be corn bread and milk with tomatoes. Sometimes, mother would scramble eggs and slam them down. And biscuit. My mother made bread, usually, twice a day.

Tom: No chickens? No meat?

Tommy: Yeah, we had chickens. They killed chickens, and we had fried chicken. Usually, Sunday was fried chicken day, and my mother could go up to Mr. Fred Mansour's grocery store up town, the famous store, and you could get a hamhock for a quarter. A little hamhock. And every morning, before
we went to school, she'd slice us off a little piece and fry it. We'd have bread and piece of that ham hock before we went to school.

Tom: All right, tell me about school.

Tommy: First four years went to Hammond, and then from Hammond, went to Watkins to fifth and six. And, then, from there at the high school to seven through 12.

Tom: So you did go to high school here in Honea Path?

Tommy: Honea Path. Yes sir, and then I went to Forrest College in Anderson. You know where it is on River Street?

Tom: I do.

Tommy: I went to night school three nights a week and worked third shift over there at the Chiquola Mill.

Tom: What were you taking at Forrest?

Tommy: Business.

Tom: Did you get a degree from that?

Tommy: No, it wasn't a degree, but it was very close to it. I finished all of my courses.

Tom: Certificate? Yeah.

Tommy: Yes, sir.

Tom: All right. Tell me about the condition of your parents. The physical condition of your parents when they would come in from the mill after a shift.

Tommy: My mother didn't work but a little while, because she had asthma, and she quit. And Daddy told her he'd rather she would stay at home and raise the boys, and he would make the living for us. But my daddy, before he got saved, he drank seven days a week. He never was out of work. He provided for us, but he even drank on his job, and they knew it. He was just that good a weaver, and when he would come in, in the summertime especially, there wouldn't be a dry thread on the over. That's how hot it was in the weaving room. He worked all the time. In fact, the first time he
was out, except maybe for a death, I come home from work one day and I said, “Mother, where's Daddy? She said, “He went to the doctor in Anderson.” I said, “For what?” She said, “He was hurting in his chest, and he had got over, and they put in the hospital.” He had a heart attack. Well, they sent him to AnMed and had it roto-routed out. He had three blockages back-to-back, and they roto-rooted it out. And he’d done real good. He lived to be 89.

Tom: Wow.

Tommy: My mother was 79. And when I was born, I had 11 living grandparents. Now, I ain't lying to you now. And eight of them lived long enough for me to go to their homes and them come here and my grandmother’s here.

Tom: That's amazing. Tell me, did you actually work in a mill?

Tommy: Worked three and a half years. That's beside… When I first started, we worked on just Saturday as a cleanup when I was in high school, and I drew the card room which is a dustiest floor in the mill. Why, every time they shut down, if it was two o'clock Saturday afternoon or 12 o'clock a Sunday night, we went in and worked eight hours with a busk man and cleaned up. And, then, I worked part of my last high school going over here second shift. And, then, I went to work on the third in the spinning room, and I stayed about three and a half years. Left here. Went to True Tamper, in Anderson, where they made the fishing rods and reels. Stayed three and a half years and left there and come back to Honea Path to the Torrington Company and worked 30 years. I came out at 55 to take care of my mother, because she had Alzheimer's. My Dad couldn't do it by himself. He was 80, and I came out to help take care of her.

Tom: Explain to me what you did for recreation. Just fun.

Tommy: Oh, we went up and down these gulleys, playing in the branch. Catching minnows, little horny heads. Frogs. We'd get on our bicycle and ride way off. We'd go pick blackberries and sell them for 15 cents a quart. My daddy would carry us camping. We had a little red, metal wagon.

Tom: I saw that in the picture.

Tommy: And he would put a cast-iron frying pan on a rack, and we’d have fatback and pork and beans and taters and all of that. We'd go over here to what was called the Big Spring Pasture. There was a huge rock, and back then, all the water in Honea Path was not from the river. It was from springs around the town. We had the best water in the world, and he’d say, “All
right, boys, gather up some rocks.” We were little. We'd gather up rocks. He’d put that rack over it. We'd gather sticks. He’d start a fire. He’d fry some fatback and, then, fry taters. We had pork and beans, and I don’t know what else. Bread. I don’t know even what we had to drink. Maybe that water from one of the springs. There was a pipe that had a leak in it, and we’d go around and get that water. Oh, it was so cold and good. We played over at the Big Spring Pasture. We rode bicycles, played in the yard, all of them. We had gangs. Not gangs like there are today. We had the middle Maryland Avenue gang. The upper Maryland Avenue gang. The Lower. But it wasn't violent like what it is now, and we didn't bother nobody. There used to be a church right over here. Chiquola Baptist. That's where the company let them have a lot. Now they're on Main Street over there. The big thing.

In early years, don't know exactly the year, Miss Kelly Brown came from Belton and she was standing on Miss Susie Shaw’s back porch. No kin to me. I knew her well. And she told me, Susie Shaw said, “I had a vision.” She said, “You see that lot right up there? There’s going to be a Pentecostal Church put on that lot.” So we celebrated our hundredth birthday some months back. We’re way older than that, but that's when we went in the conference of the Upper South Carolina Pentecostal Church. When they got ready to build the old part of our church, which was Church, then, the man of the mill carried the preacher and the deacons up on top of the mill and he said, “Y'all pulling that inland? You see this, y’all?” And they told them, “Well, it has to be that lot right down there.” And that's the lot that lady said it would be. They built the church and, I don't know if you know too much about the Holiness or not, but they’re a little noisy folk. The windows were raised, you had two flop fans, not as good as this, and services sometimes went on kind of late.

So old man John Will Shaw went in one time on Monday morning and told the superintendent of the mill, said, “You gotta do something about them Holiness people. They’re keeping me awake.” He said, “Let me tell you something, Them Holiness people come in here sober and ready to work. A bunch of y'all come in here and drunk and hanged over and all of that.”

Tom: Were you a member of that church?

Tommy: A member of it now, yes.

Tom: You're still a member?

Tommy: I’ve been there all of my life.
Tom: All of your life.

Tommy: Yes. They say it will be 70 years next March.

Tom: Your whole family went to church there?

Tommy: My daddy didn't go until he got saved. I was probably five years old when he got saved. The old time, it flew. And that really flew, then. And he was in that back bedroom in there, and the preacher and deacons come see him, and he got saved. He never touched no drop of alcohol. He drank seven days a week. He smoked three packs of cigarettes a day. I don't know whether you want all of this or not.

Tom: I do.

Tommy: When he got ready, he got several weeks, and he got to go back to work. And I don't know if you know anything about a mill or not, but he was walking the back to his looms, checking them before the time start, the Lord spoke to him and said, “Buck, you plan on serving me fully?” Daddy looked around. You can't hear nothing in the weaving room. But, then, the second time the Lord said, and he knew that it was the Lord within him talking to him. He said, “Lord, I’m going to do the best I can. I’ve only been saved a few days.” He said, “Throw them three packs of cigarettes in that trashcan.” He walked over and threw three packs of cigarettes in a trashcan and never smoked another cigarette. The Lord delivered the message. He was a Deacon for over 30-some years straight, and they didn't want him to come off then.

Tom: That’s a fabulous record. Did he by a chance to have Brown Lung?

Tommy: Uh-uh (negative).

Tom: But you are familiar with that?

Tommy: Yes.

Tom: Was that—

Tommy: We never did hear too much of that around here.

Tom: Really?

Tommy: Of course, I don't think it was really known in my younger years. You know what I'm saying? I don't think it was really known. Now, they are
people who had lung problems and cancer, but most of them smoked a whole lot of cigarettes and that strong tobacco. Of course, the tobacco you used to get was not covered in chemicals like it is now. The cigarettes and chewing tobacco and all that you get now is full of chemicals.

Tom: Did you or your brothers or anybody in your immediate family ever serve in the military?

Tommy: Daddy had one brother named Ray. Served 22½ years in the Army. He walked out of the country, barefooted, to town and signed up for the Navy, and they took him in. He piloted one of them things that carries the soldiers to the shore. He even carried some boys from Honea Path to the shore on one of the campaigns over there. They dismissed them, because it's toward the end of the war. They didn't need them. He’d come home, and Grandpa put him to work over in the mill, and he worked two days. He's said, “I ain't working in that heat.” So he went, and they took him in the Army. He stayed in 22½ years. He came out, went on the police force up here, and they found a big tumor behind his stomach as big as a quart jar, which was from that stuff they sprayed on them guys in the service, and he died with cancer.

Then, Daddy’s brother David just died this year. He was 89 in Panama City, Florida. He stayed in the Air Force 20, 22, 23 years. He retired, went to Atlanta, Georgia, and became a sky marshal. He flew on a plane with a pistol. He could take his wife with him to Hawaii where they flew. He retired from that and moved to Panama City because his wife’s people were still living. To take care of them. He stayed there when they died. Then, they came from the Air Force base in Panama City and got him to be over there. How would you say it? The police. And, then, he retired from that. He died this year. He was 89 years old. Then, he had a brother, Pete, the youngest boy. He was in the Navy for seven years. He didn't make no Korea, but he worked seven and was in the Navy seven years.

Tom: All right. Tell me about your clothing. When you were young, what did you typically wear?

Tommy: Do you know what we wore a lot of? Stuff made out of flour sacks. Flour used to come in cloth sacks. Miss Met Warner lived right here on Georgia Street. If it hadn’t been for her, there would had been a lot of kids naked around the village. The women saved them. You took that string and worked it out. You washed that flour sack, and you carried it down, and she measured you and sat down on the sewing machine, and she made you little pants and shirts out of it. And, then, cloth at the mill that they wasn’t
going to use, they let you have it. You made sheets, pillowcases and a lot of clothes out of it.

Tom: What would you wear on your feet?

Tommy: Summertime, you went barefooted. You couldn't go barefoot until the first day of May, and then you—

Tom: Was that a rule or was that a—

Tommy: Just everybody that I know of back then. You didn't go barefoot 'til the first day of May. That was—

Tom: You took your shoes that first day of May.

Tommy: Yes, sir. And we wore hand-me-downs. Oh Lord, we wore hand-me-downs. If they weren’t wore out, the next kid got to wear them.

Tom: If you wore shoes, what kind would they be?

Tommy: Lord, I don't know what the name of it would have been. They weren’t like this Nike stuff and all of that. They didn't have that when we were little. It was kind of, what would you call it… a hard shoe. Not a tennis shoe.

Tom: What about when you were a teenager or when you went off to Forrest? What did you wear then?

Tommy: Forrest College? I wore dress pants and a shirt. I left there at 9 o’clock. Drove an old ‘48 four door Chevrolet. Green that Daddy had. I usually got home by about 9:30 with the traffic. I’d run in the door, change clothes. Mother had me a sandwich to eat. And, sometimes, I eat it running up the hill to go to the mill because I had to be there at 10 o’clock.

Tom: And you got off when?

Tommy: At six the next morning.

Tom: So you worked from 10 o'clock at night to six the next morning?

Tommy: And some 6:00 to 2:00 and 2:00 to 10:00.

Tom: So they had three shifts.
Tommy: Yes. They had three shifts. They had, I believe, about 600 employees at one time before they started changing a mill over to more modern stuff or bigger stuff.

Tom: Did your dad work one particular shift?

Tommy: He was on second shift for a long time because the Baptist and Methodist overseers wouldn't let Holiness folks come the first shift. Now, I'm not throwing off on anybody. I'm just telling the truth. He finally got to the first shift, and they had a mill in Lima, South Carolina. Don't know if you know where that is or not. And it was a humongous loom probably as long as from there to here. There was only two mills in the United States that wove that cloth, and it was for a car companies, and I don't know what all else.

The one in North Carolina had so many seconds in it, they closed it. And this one over here, you can have no second in it all. If Daddy or somebody run those looms went by and found the second, you flagged that loom, picked out all. Had to pick all them threads back till that second was picked down, and it started back up.

The boss man called my daddy in the office one day, and he said, “Come in here, Mr. Buck.” He said, “Have I done something wrong?” He said, “No, I want to show you something.” Said, “You see that roll of cloth on that room out there? It won’t be long before it’s auctioned off.” He said, “Yes. Why?” He said, “That roll of cloth’s worth $50,000.” Now, you’d imagine how long ago that was, and this was the only mill over here. And Daddy’s sister, Alice Henderson, the one I was telling you about while ago? You had to press down so hard on a big lever at the bottom to get them started up. When you’re done, watch it going, too. It tore her bladder down, and she had to have her bladder tacked up. The last time she went, doctor told her, “You don’t need to come back in. I can't tack it no more.” She had to wear a diaper for the rest of her life from working on that. Let me run to the restroom. I need take a water pill. I’ll be back.

My mother's Daddy, he was raised in Rabbittown, Georgia, and he walked out of Georgia all the way over to South Carolina when he was about 14, 15 years old wanting a job. There wasn't no textile mill or nothing then.

Tom: He was a sharecropper?

Tommy: They mostly worked in chicken places over there where they slaughtered chicken. But he walked down and went to, I believe Greenville, first. He married my grandmother. She was a McNeal. And, then, they moved in
there, and Wallace died and was buried in Greenville. Then, they moved to Greenwood where my mom was born. My mother was a twin, and her twin sister died at nine months. Then, they moved to a Honea Path and stayed there the rest of their lives until he died.

Tom: All right, let's talk about discipline. How were you disciplined?

Tommy: My mother here kept a head bush and a peace tree trimmed. We didn't have to clip it with nothing. And my daddy used a belt. Now, they didn't beat us.

Tom: No, I understand.

Tommy: But you know, they disciplined. We knew what we could and couldn't do. Of course, we slipped and done stuff we weren't supposed to do, you know what I'm saying? In church before my Daddy started church, you sit between my grandmother and my mother. We were carried to church, when I was 6 weeks old. Your better not get up, because you got pinched, and it wasn't just a pinch. It's a twist. If you cried, you got pinched again. You didn't cry.

Tom: What about a discipline in school?

Tommy: The teachers would whip you. I was leaned over a table. We had a wide table with holes it in, and kids sit on each side, and I'd leaned over a table one day talking when I wasn't supposed to. And the teacher come up behind me with a three-foot ruler and popped my behind.

Tom: Did you ever get sent to the principal?

Tommy: At one time at Watkins, and we were coming home and I use the word, "butt." Which, I don't use the other word. The vulgar word. And one of the kids went back and told the principal the next day. He made me stay in after school for using “butt.” Just for that word all alone.

And everywhere I went to work after I got through at Forrest College, just because you got a piece of paper [diploma], don't make a difference if it was shoveling cow manure, because you had that piece of paper, you got better pay in everything.

Tom: Education paid off.

Tommy: Yes, sir. Sure did. And the man that was over at Mr. Charles Forrest started out as Carolina School of Commerce. Then, he built that out there
as Forrest College after him. He was in World War II, and he said they were in the Battle of the Bulge in the war, and he said one night they’d be in these gullies. And the next night, the Germans would be. And they fought back and forth. One of the most brilliant men I’ve ever met in my life, but he was a disciplinarian. He meant for you to come every night. He said, “You paid for it, you better be here every night.”

Tom: This house seems to be a lot better on the inside than what I would have imagined. What all have you done… that your family had done to this house?

Tommy: Let me tell you about the houses. When you go down here, and not the first bottom of the hill… the second bottom hill, there’s a branch running this way. When you cross that branch, that's the first houses built. If you go that way, you’ll notice the porches are different. They didn’t have a hall. They just had a foyer. The next houses built were on the other side of the mill. These were built last. The ones on the other side of the mill over there still had just a foyer, but they were built a little better. They were closed in on the porch and things. Then, these were built with a hall in it, because a lot of these houses had two families in it at one time. You shared a house, and when they got ready to sell them, the company didn’t want to rent them anymore. You either had buy it, or you had to move. And Perpetual Billing and Loan in Anderson financed most of them.

Tom: Not the mill.

Tommy: No, the Perpetual Bill and Loan financed it for you.

Tom: How was it heated, and what sort of electricity?

Tommy: The first thing I remember we had was in the dining room there. We had a coal heater. Big coal heater. And they delivered coal from the plant over here. Dumped it around here. One of our jobs was bringing five gallon buckets of coal and keep it on the little back porch all the time, and the fire would kind of die down. The next morning, we had kin in there, and Daddy would stoke it up. And that's what. And we used fireplaces, too, if it was real cold. And those ashes in the fireplace- if you burnt wood, you take mashed potatoes, and you roll them up in there nice, and you let them stay so long, and they would bake, and you’d take them out and, oh, those taters would be so good.

Tom: Was this fireplace here original?
Tommy: Yes, sir, but I had it bricked up because, see, we had a furnace put in, and all my heat was going up. I had the two chimneys took off. That fireplace is bricked up. This one, the one in the back bedroom is bricked up.

Tom: So they had three fireplaces.

Tommy: Plus the hole in the chimney here for the heater.

Tom: What about your electricity?

Tommy: Yeah, we had electricity. But, now, when I was little we didn't have this bathroom down the hall. It was on the back porch. Wasn’t nothing but a commode. You sit down on the wintertime, your hinny stuck to the seat. You kept chicken feed and stuff in the bathroom.

Tom: How did you bathe?

Tommy: With a #3 tin tub. You know what that is? You had to put in a #3 tin tub. Before we had that coal heater, we had a big wood stove. Back when we was little, and you had to keep turning in that tub while you were bathing so this side didn't bake. You know what I’m saying? And we always joked was, they wanted to know how you bathed, then. They said, “Pull them britches down.” I got the print of a #3 tin tub on my hinny.

Then, the company come in and put a bathtub, a commode, and a laboratory in the back of the hall. That was just the hall all the way back. And the back porch, when Daddy and them started remodeling, he just had to do it as he got the money because he was the only one working. He took out the wall there and made a counter and took in most of the back porch to make a big kitchen. ‘Cause, see, that kitchen wasn't in there big enough for guests.

These houses were underpinned when they were sold. If you were lucky, you had a linoleum rug. You know what a linoleum rug is? When you got up, you had to be careful not to catch the edge of it, because it's so cold, and break the edge of the rug off. And, then, Daddy, when he got money later, had it underpinned. One winter, we had a rough winter. Everybody's water was froze. No water nowhere. And there was a lady in her family lived off of 252, and she prayed and asked the Lord to give her a house in town. Then, on the way to church, right across from running big old Toro is now, the Lord give her old Raymond House, and she always prayed like, “Lord, this is the way it is.” So she got up on Wednesday morning, and her water’s froze. She's melted the ice in the little ice box. They hadn't made coffee and she said, “Lord, this was the way it is.” Said, “I'm going to lay
my hand on that spigot, and when I pray I believe you let it come on long
enough for me to draw water, I've got to wash out these overalls and my
dress, dry them by the heater, and iron them before the time to go to prayer
meeting tonight.” She laid her hand on that spigot and prayed and her
water to come on to fill everything up with water. Back then, we met in the
Sunday school class for Wednesday night service. Because, like I said,
most of our people were on the side. They wouldn't let them come in for it.

Tom: Why was that?

Tommy: Because they were Holiness. They looked down on Holiness as much as
they did the mill village. You were nothing. Or we were made fun of plum
up in school because we went to the Holiness Church.

Tom: All right, let's talk about that. Were you ever called a Linthead?


Tom: By a Mill Hiller?

Tommy: Called the Mill Hill people. And if you said mill hill around my mother,
she'd flog you.

Tom: Really.

Tommy: My mother's a sweet, gentle person, but don't use “Mill Hill person”
around her. She would've flogged you.

Tom: It was mill village.

Tommy: Mill village. She said, “I don't live in mill hill. I live in the mill village.”
See, most of our people were proud that they had a job. A paying job. You
had a week of vacation, you had insurance that wasn't very high. And once
a year, over here at Chiquola, they stopped for a whole week, and they put
on a barbecue over here. They dug pits, and men barbecued whole hogs all
night. You'd bring your whole family, and you'd eat barbecue, and you had
the all little Coca Colas you wanted. We thought we'd died and went to
heaven to get all those little Coca Colas. And then, they built the ball field
up here. It had a wooden fence around it, and then the swimming pool, the
company built it. The swimming pool is still there. The ball field, now, has
got a wire fence around it.

Tom: The swimming pool now is public, isn't it? Didn't the city own it?
Tommy: It belongs to the city. Yeah.

Tom: So anybody can swim in that pool?

Tommy: Well, you have to pay to go in.

Tom: Oh, you do.

Tommy: See, now, when the company had it, the mill village children were first. They gave you a ticket, and you went in. You didn't have a ticket, you had to pay back then. If your people worked in the mill, you got a ticket, you know what I'm saying?

Now, I can talk all day. But you asked what you want me to say.

Tom: You go ahead. You keep talking. Let me think of something I need to say.

Tommy: We had family grocery stores in the town. We had Banisters, Williams, Stones, Lenses, Cotton Davis. We had a Belt-Sampson, Weston. Of course, a Commercial Bank, and a number of other places. But that just—

Tom: All right, let's talk about pay. When you were working weekends and the times that you worked in the mill, what were you being paid?

Tommy: When we worked that eight hours clean up? I brought $9.

Tom: $9 for eight hours work?

Tommy: Yes, sir. They took out social security and tax. So about $9 is what I brought.

Tom: What about your father? You have any idea of what he was making?

Tommy: Well, his was on production, so I don't know what.

Tom: Oh, really? Strictly on production

Tommy: According to the picks on the loom. There's a clock on there, and as long as the loom is running, the picks are turning, and that's what you would—

Tom: But you have no idea?
Tommy: I have no idea what he made. I really don't. When I started over here full time, I made it on second shift though, when I was going to school. I made $1.15 an hour.

Tom: $1.15.

Tommy: I think it was $1.15. I was trying and think what minimum wage was. I made maybe a nickel over minimum wage back then. I don't know. Something like that.

Tom: What about politics. Were politics discussed in your home?

Tommy: Really, not all that much, except I never will forget the night that Ronald Reagan was elected. My Daddy, in this chair, was sitting right there. He said, “We in for some bad times.” You know, Ronald Reagan put people out of nursing homes in California and everything else when he was governor to make him look good. And, you know, it took us, we probably still paying for some stuff that Ronald Reagan charged. I'm not a Democrat or Republican. I vote for the man. I vote Strom Thurmond. I'd be voting for him if he was still living now. I don’t know if you’ve ever knew him or not, didn’t you?

Tom: Never knew him but know all of him. Yeah, obviously. Yeah.

Tommy: He was Parade Marshall for 30 years at the Chitlin Strut down at Salley, South Carolina, and I met him down there and everybody always said them boys that belonged to and belonged to his aid, there was a spitting image of him. I met him, he pumping his hand like he was 20 years old. Sure did. And he helped poor people in South Carolina. Oh, he was good to help people. And Fred Moore is a House Member. He run The Chronicle up here, the newspaper, the Honea Path newspaper. He helped hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people get their money and everything else. Get a job and everything else.

His daughter, one of his daughters got killed at Chester last week. She was a school superintendent. Abbeville.

Tom: I saw that in the paper.

Tommy: That’s Fred’s daughter, Betty Jo. And her sister, Freda, and her husband, Billy Gimble was mayor up here for many years. He's a magistrate now.

Tom: How about national politics? Was that ever discussed?
Tommy: Not really that much, because when I was little, if you made to Republican and ran in Anderson County, you'd probably been run off. I mean, they were a handful of Republicans in the county. And, then, the Republican Party, I mean, they come into the county now. Now, I'm not being racist or nothing, but what I'm saying is they found out that Democrats was giving blacks all of the free stuff. That's when they started voting Republican. And now we're covered in the Republicans. Everywhere.

Tom: All right. Anybody that knows anything about the textile industry knows about the ‘34 Massacre when the union came in.

Tommy: That’s right. The strike.

Tom: Tell me what you know about that from firsthand talking to people.

Tommy: My Daddy was 17 years old, and they told them to meet down at the old hall at 2:30 in the morning with the police.

Tom: Was he working in the mill?

Tommy: Oh, yes, Sir. And he quit school in the fifth grade to go to the work to help support the rest of the family. Anyway, they made it, and they told them that when they come to work, you could bring a stick. No guns, no knives. But when they got there, all the bosses was armed, and they had hired people and put them up in the mill with guns. And when my daddy’s team of young boys come around this end of the mill here, they got Mr. Johnson off of Carolina. He had a shot gun and broke it, and turned them back toward the house. But when they went around the corner of the mill… You see, the main gate used to be on the other side of the mill. The main door. When they turned that corner, a man stuck a .32 in my daddy’s side, and he said, “Any of y’all move, I’ll kill Shaw first, and then kill the rest of you.”

Now, they had to stand there and watch the killing in the beating and the slaughtering. Mr. Rob Carroll, if you go here and turn left on Carolina and go up that Big Boss house up there, he walked up to Mr. Lee Crawford. Mr. Lee Crawford was a huge man. Pot-gutted. He was backing up in the crowd. He weren’t no problem because he had a bunch of kids. And Rob Carroll walked up to him and said, “Dan, I’m going to kill him.” Shot him in the stomach with a 22. Mr. Crawford fell forward rocking back and forth on his stomach. When he went forward, he spit out blood and sand. And two policeman come up. “He ain't gonna make it.” Pow, pow. They shot him.
Mr. Yarborough came out to the main door. There's a sidewalk inside the mill there with his hands up. Wore a black Samson hat, and he was a little short feller and he was going down that sidewalk to get away, and the chief of police go down and shot him in the back with a shotgun.

As Mr. Yarborough was turning forward, he said out loud, “Oh, I’ve shot my best friend.” He killed him. Mr. Peterson was on Daddy’s then team. He had gotten married. He was from Greenwood. He was going in at the same sidewalk beside the mill with his hands up. His boss man shot him out the window and killed him, because he was trying to go with this young man's wife.

Mr. Cannon wasn’t even on mill property. He was on the street over there from the mill with his hands up, going down the sidewalk, and they hired a young man, he was 16, 17 years old, and gave him a high-powered rifle and told him, “Be sure to kill Mr. Cannon.” He shot him on the sidewalk, and he fell dead, and they say that bloodstain stayed there for many years.

Mr. Knight, his son run a grocery store over here for years, and then he moved over yonder. Mr. Knight, Duke Knight’s daddy, saw a man take a bead on somebody else and this young girl walking in the line of fire. He died and not the girl that went and took the bullet and killed him.

Tom: And nobody ever went to jail?

Tommy: Oh, I've got them clippings that tell you all about that strike.

Tom: Yeah, I know the story. Yeah.

Tommy: And there was another one killed. I can't remember who now, but Daddy wouldn't talk. He didn't talk about strike for many years. They even put a monument up here at Dogwood Park. And I asked Daddy if he wanted to go. He said, “No, I don't want to go.” And the Beacham Board, you know, that wrote the thing? When he wrote his first book, he got it from… Leon Thornton was his brother-in-law. Used to live up here. He got his information from his brother-in-law. And Daddy said, “Know where he was when strikes going on? I said, “No, sir.” Said, “He was up in the mill hiding up under a machine.” He didn't even know what was going on down there.” And I told Beacham that when they had that symposium in Greenwood was some time ago. I don't know whether you knew about that or not. I went. And Beacham, this man talked about general strikes. He was about as boring as eating saltine crackers with no water. And, then, this man come up on the strikes of the mills and things, and you know they had strike teams that went around. They were called something, but I don't
remember exactly what they were called. And, then, Beacham got up there. Beacham said, “When I'm through, we've got a microphone. You want to come say something, come on.” I was the first one up there, so I don't remember what all I said, and I sat down.

Some months later, Daddy’s brother in Florida had on the education channel. He said, “Liam, come here quick. Am I seeing Tom?” He said, “That's Tommy on television. Said, “David, are you drinking?” He didn't drink. She just said that. She said, “Lord, that is Tom.” And they showed it, but I've never seen it here on my educational channel.

Tom: Really?

Tommy: But I told Beacham, I said, “The man, you got your first book information from didn't see a thing. He was up in the mill up under the machine. Didn't see nothing. You see, Lollis has got a whole different interpretation of this strike.

Tom: Oh, really?

Tommy: Yeah. And I know my daddy was in it. My grandpa was on the picket line, and some man had got into the boiler room. You know what a picker stick is? Lots to shuttle back and forth on a little hardwood and pass them out to the strikers. And this man tried to go past my grandfather to go to work. When he did, he hit him across his shoulder and knocked him down. Well, another man hit my grandpa in the head and knocked him down. Well, he got up bleeding, and my grandmother heard the shooting and she come on mill property. She said first man she saw said, “Do you know William?” And she said, “Yeah, I know him. I’m Michelle. Why?” He said, “Have you seen him?” He said, “I saw him. He was bleeding,” and he said, “I don't know why he went home the way he did. He probably was just strolling or something.” And she finally traced him all the way home where he leaned on fence posts and telephone posts bleeding but, now, he lived. He lived in the strike.

They had a funeral over here. You know where the Biscuit Barn is? Turn right and go out on the left. Headed out on the field. They would not let them have individual services. Tens of thousands of people were there. The FBI, CIA, State, Local, all of that law, and the Union people come and spoke and that. They had the funerals over the.

A number of them, several of them, are buried over here at East View Cemetery.

Now, this is people that had helped your wife birth a child. They'd help you when you was down and all this kind of stuff, but the shooting was
done, mostly, by the boss and the police. It wasn't done... the strikers didn't have no guns. They didn’t have none at all. And most of the people, have you read the clippings out of the paper? Well, see, most of them didn’t have a way there to testify, and they'd done not one single, solitary day served for that. Even though they killed people with guns, and the people didn't have nothing to fight back with.

Tom: Well, I've seen the photographs of Beacham walking out of the mill carrying a shotgun, and people standing behind him all have guns.

Tommy: That said writer. I don't know where he, I think he wrote some plays and some books and don’t know what all, but he came home one weekend to his mother, and his mother taught us history. Miss Peggy Beacham. And he went in a hall closet looking for something. He's sitting in the floor, and an old, rusty shotgun fell out. He said, “Momma what’s the story on the shotgun?” She said, “You don't need to know.” He said, “Well, I ain’t moving till you tell me.” She said, “That's what your grandpa used in the strike.” Because that old, rusty shotgun fell out there.

Tom: Is it at the schoolhouse?

Tommy: No. At their house.

Tom: Oh, at their house.

Tommy: At Beacham's mother's house. See, Dan had come home to his mother's for maybe a weekend or something. He sat down on the floor of the hall closet looking for something. That shotgun fell out, and he wanted to know, and she said, “You don't need to know.” And he said, “I ain't moving till you tell me.” That's when he got to digging into the strike, but he didn't know who to go to, really.

Let me tell you this. Before my daddy died, he had a big garden. It was hot, and I come home, pull up on my driveway, and a big old black limo pulled up. I mean a long one. And two Italian looking guys got out. Looked like $500 suits, and I done walk away from the truck, and I thought, “I can't even get back and get my gun out of my truck.” He started towards me. He stuck that in, and I shook his hand. He said, “We're from New York, and we want to get the truth on the strike. We don't want to hurt no family or nobody. And we understand that your father's one of the last living ones that was actually in strike. I reckon he would talk to us.”

I said, “He’s coming up at the garden.” We've got a huge great Merle here. And we walked down there and Daddy come up, and they introduced
themselves and said, “Mr. Charleston, would you tell us? And we're not doing this to hurt no family. Nobody. We want the real story. We recording it.” I don't even know who they were. And they looked Italian. And Daddy said, “I'm sorry. I couldn't tell you, because the man that shot that man in the gut, his son and daughter-in-law lived here. They had to move back to Kentucky to take care of the man that shot that man’s wife, Miss Pearl Carroll.” And he said, “I'm sorry. I wouldn't hurt my neighbors for nothing so that I could throw a rock and hit a house or two around here.” And they were the ones that stirred a lot of the trouble up. They went all the way up to $5,000, and that sounded good to me. And my daddy said, “As bad as I could use the $5,000, I still wouldn't tell you nothing.” Because my daddy was just that kind of person. He wouldn't hurt nobody.

Tom: Let me ask you this. Do you think that living in a mill village and working in a mill prepared you for life outside of the mill?

Tommy: Oh, yes, sir. It prepared you for hard knocks and things that was coming down the road. Because that was a hard life. That wasn't no easy life in that mill. There was no air conditioning in that mill. There were kids eight and nine years old, and Miss Nana Gimmer, a good friend of mine, lived down or close to McCoy’s Lumberyard. They tore the house down, and I went to see her a lot. She had a finger missing, and she was a member of our church, but she got shut in, and I'd go see her a lot. I loved her.

I went there and one day, and I said, “Miss Nana, can I ask you a personal question?” She said, “You can ask me anything.” She’s call me her boy. She wanted me to shave, and she called me her boy. Anyway, I said, “How did you lose that finger?” She said, “I was nine years old working in the spinning room,” And they had to have a little box to slide along, stand up to reach. They were so little. And she said, “A belt ripped my finger completely off. Do you know what they'd done?” I said, “Uh-uh.” She said, “They bandaged my finger up, and I had to work the rest of the shift.” That's what was going on. Now, when they got a tip that the federal people was coming in to check the mill, they took those kids and put them in 55-gallon drums and covered them in cotton until the Federal people went out. And they had to take them off, blow the cotton off of them and put them back to work. And that's what they were striking for. To get kids out of the mills.

See, they come from Belton. They didn't get on the property. Ware Shoals. Greenwood. I don’t know how many other mills, and stood back. There's a quote in there from, I don't remember where. Some of the men from Ware
Shoals and Greenwood, and told that they saw that hitman man shooting from them mill office over there, shooting in the crowd.

And, Granny Louise McClain used to live right down here. I loved her to death. She went to her grave with shotgun pellets in her arm, and when she heard the shooting, she went over and she had her youngest boy in her arms, and the man shot at her with a shot gun but didn’t hit the baby. Hit her arm. And his name was Stocka. He had a son by name of Virgil. Played Major League baseball. He lived right up here on Virginia. And, later, Mr. Stocka.

Tom: What was your last name?

Tommy: Stocka. And his son was Virgil. He played major league baseball. Not the daddy, but the boy. And later on, Mr. Stocka got saved, and he went to Granny Louise and apologized for shooting at her, but he never would tell her why he shot at. And Miss Louise didn't bother nobody.

Tom: Yeah, I think there's a picture of her standing on the porch that's pretty prominent.

Tommy: They were asking her questions or something, maybe. Yeah, I think so.

Tom: She’s standing there in a dress holding her arm. I have that picture.

Tommy: She was shot with a pistol and a shotgun. Sure was. See, if that machine gun hadn't jammed on top of that mill, they would have killed hundreds, but it jammed. That's the only thing saving from killing all of the people.

Tom: I’m trying to think. Something that—

Tommy: Jerry. Let me tell you this quick. Jerry Taylor was an overman and worked full for many years. He loved my daddy. And I wasn't here, but Daddy was sitting on the porch in a rocker, and he'd come up. He loved talk to Daddy. He'd come on the porch, he'd say, “Mr. Buck, I am going to ask you one more time. If you say no, I am not going to be mad at you, but can you tell me the truth about the strike because you was in it?” And he said, “Me and you both will probably soon be gone” (of course, he wasn't as old as Daddy), “but I'd just love to know.” Because some of his people worked in the mill, too. And Daddy said, “Jerry. I'll tell you.” And he told him all about it. What had happened and transpired. See, Daddy didn't tell us nothing ’til, oh Lord. I don't know how old I was when he told us what had happened.
Tom: Well, I know that was kind of a self-imposed gag-order, and nobody would even mention it. It was a big source of embarrassment to begin with.

Tommy: You couldn't talk about it, no way, when you went back to work. Because if you had said something about the strike, you was gone. You were automatically out the door. They kick you out. And see, for years and years, people wouldn’t do it.

By the way, that the first part of mill over there with built houses, got the name, Hepsidam. I let all the older people die, and I can't find out. Nobody knows where the name Hepsidam come from. But it was told that the Gilmores all lived on the side streets over there, and they drank a lot and fought a lot. And on Saturday, one of the Gilmores, drunk, got on the tree stump and declared, “We’re pulling out from the town of Honea Path. We're going to call it Hepsidam.” Now, I don't know how much truth there was to it. Tell me to shut up when you—

Tommy: We're good. We're good. I was just trying to think of something that I could talk more about. The village life. Did you ever play sports?

Tommy: No. sir. I hated sports. The way they done us in school with them.

Tom: Oh, really.

Tommy: Now, my youngest brother played ball. My oldest brother didn't, but I had to play at Watkins. I played in volleyball in Watkins, but I never did play—

Tom: No textile ball?

Tommy: Oh, they had textile. We had the best team anywhere in the county.

Tom: Baseball?

Tommy: Oh, yes sir. They had that…

Tom: What was the name of the team?

Tommy: I don't remember, but they had a black man. They called him Hot Pockets, and they say he could throw a ball so fast, you can hardly see that ball when it come by you. He worked over here in the opening room. We could see them from here, and they had cotton in bales there, and they rolled that cotton upstairs and undone it in, and that cotton went in the chute, and it
went in a big pipe to the opening room in the mill. Well, if one of those black guys got out of line, two of the others would hold him, and he'd take a strap one of the bales of cotton and whup his butt, right there on the job.

Tom: Really? It's a very interesting life that you have lived, Tommy Shaw. Very interesting life.

Tommy: Wouldn’t take nothing for it. God’s been too good to me.

Tom: One of the comments that the people that I've interviewed have said is that everybody was happy.

Tommy: Well, yeah. Yes, sir. Everybody was.

Tom: Would you agree with that?

Tommy: The man lived here in that store. Everybody called him Uncle Sam Saxton. He couldn't walk upright. He'd bent over, and he worked the garden down there with a hoe. Squatting on his hump. And he raised old mule corn, and that mule corn was that long. Well, he couldn't pull it. He'd take a hoe and pop it off, and we'd take little red wagon and lay it in there. It would just would fit that little red wagon. We've go around and sell it probably a nickel an ear. Then, he'd give us some. He raised little yellow mini watermelons, and we had that spring water, and he had a trough under his house. He got water on them. Just a drip. Make them cold, and he'd tell the kids going down the street holler. He loved children. “Tell kids, come on. Gonna split watermelon.” Little bitty yellow minis. The best thing.

One year, he planted pumpkins on a vine run off down to the branch. A big pumpkin down there. Well, he decided he was going to go down and get it because he wanted it for the kids. He rolled into the branch. Man of the back of the mill jumped in his car said, “Come over here.” And said, “Lonnie, come on. Your Daddy’s in the branch.” And Lonnie, his daughter, this man went there and got him one by one arm and one other. He said, “Y’all won’t carry me out from here unless you carry that pumpkin for the kids.” So the man had to stop, get that big old pumpkin, and take it up the hill and lay it there on that ground and, then, go back and catch him. And he talked fire out of people and stopped bleeding. I don't know whether you've ever heard of that or not.

Sitting between the doorway in between the kitchen, dining room before it was remodeled, I had my feet up, and I just had on a pair of pants in the dead of winter. My mother told my oldest brother to get the kettle off the stove and start washing dishes. “I'll be back. I have to go out to Mama’s
for a minute.” So I propped my feet up to the door and he said, “If you
don't move, I'll pour this hot water on you.” I said, “You ain't gonna do
it.” He poured it on me. Boiling. Down my chest. I was just skin and
bones, then, and I jumped up and ran out the door barefoot, no shirt on,
freezing wet, and run in the front door of Lonnie Nana’s house since
nobody locked the doors. She picked me up, running there and sitting me
in her daddy's lap and said, “Dad, this young’un's scalded or something.
And he started with his thumb, and he's saying stuff to himself and
blowing. When he got done, my chest wasn't even red. You think I'm
shooting some bull now?

Tom: No, I don't doubt it.

Tommy: If a kid got cut in the neighborhood, they ain't go to Mom and Dad’s. They
went to Uncle Sam, and he'd say that and do that thumb. Cut that off just

My oldest brother, when he was a baby, he had colic in the mouth, and
they went and got and picked him up from Grandmothers. And he said,
“Now, I'm going to talk that colic out. Said, “Don't know, every time I do,
I get the headaches.” And Ms. Whitfield hand him a Goody Powder or BC
or something and a glass of water. Mama was holding Ronnie, and he was
a squaller, anyway. Big mouth. And he put his thumb in there, and he
rolled it, blowing in his mouth and doing that. And he quit crying just like
you cut water off. And he told Mama Whitfield. Hand me my powder and
a glass of water. He went off sleeping. Never did have it no more.

Tom: I wish he were still around. I could use him. I'm down in the back right
now.

Tommy: My daddy had a patch of warts on the whole top of his foot. He didn't
believe in that, he said. He was down beside the house one day barefooted,
and Uncle Sam said, “Come here. Come here, Buck, son.” He called him
son. “Come here.” He went over, and he said, “Now, Uncle Sam, I don't
believe in this.” And he said, “I don't care what you believe in or not. Just
come over here.” He rolled that thumb, and he blowed on it, and said
scripture verses you say to yourself. So several weeks later, Daddy was
down in the yard with his shoes on and he said, “Come here, son. Take
your shoe and sock off.” He says, “What?” Said, “Just take them off.”
They were smooth. Top of his foot was smooth as a baby's behind.
Weren’t a wart on it.

There were a number of people over that village that could do it. Not a
whole lot of them. And they say you can only pass it on to one person. If
it's a man doing it, he can only pass it to a son. If it’s a woman doing it, she had to pass it to a daughter. I don’t understand all that. They are saying scriptures, and I know it works. It worked on me.

Tom: Okay.

Tommy: They built a very large, heavy material wooden salt box. It was on the house, and it wasn’t underpinned, then. And they salted down the shoulders of the ham and the fatback. You left them so long, and then you took him out. And the ham and shoulders, when you took him out, you brushed the salt off, and you put brown sugar and molasses and peppers and all that on it. And done it up in brown paper bags, and you hung it. Now, you had to smell that good smell for months before they’d ever cut it. But we had a warm spell that come, and every one of the hams and shoulders were sliding around the bone. So there’s a black lady come to help load the wash. You know, they washed outside in a wash pot. They’d boil water. And she’d come to help Mother. And Daddy was facing the door on that ham. And she said, “Mr. Buck, what you’re going to do with the ham? Said, I’m going throw it in the furnace, because I don’t want somebody to get hold of them and get poisoned or something. She said, “No, Ms. Johnson, I’m carrying that home. Ham.” He said, “You ain't about to. You’d die, and they put me in jail.” She said, “No, sir.” Said, “I know how to fix that.” And she went home and cut that bone out, and the meat around it and boiled it awhile and put some more curing on and put it up, and she got several more pieces. She said, “That is the best meat that I put in my mouth.” But she knows what to do. She know.

And Grandpa come out here one Friday evening in winter time. He said, “Be out of the house in the morning, six o'clock. We gonna kill a hog. You want to see it.” And I was just a little fellow. We went out in the hog pen, and he shot it, and he took an ax and split his head open. I’m standing there with my mouth wide open. He said, “Go tell mom to get me a bowl.” That was my grandmother. And I come up, and she’d give me a bowl. I went down there, He scooped those brains out with his hand and put them in that bowl. I’m going up there looking all bloody. Up them high back steps, Momma met me. I said to myself, “I’m going to see what Momma’s going to do with them.” She had a cast-iron frying pan would that fit over two irons, and she’d fry fatback, had grease back that day. She run them brains under the hot water and washed them good, drained them and dumped over the iron, and cooked them. She broke about two dozen eggs and scrambled them in with them brains. And them brains never got cold.
Interview with Joe Floyd Stansell, Jr., Gluck Mill

September 17, 2019

Tom: Let’s go ahead and get started here. Okay. This is Tom Cartledge. This is September the 17th, and I’m at 704 College Street at the home of Mr. Floyd Stansell. Floyd, if you would, state your full name and your date of birth.

Floyd: Okay, Tom. My full name is Joe Floyd Stansell Jr. My birthdate is the third month and the 10th day, 1930.

Tom: Give me a general idea of life on a mill village.

Floyd: Well, let me say first off, Tom—the Gluck Mill Village where I grew up is a little more unique than some of the others in this sense. We were a community of everybody loving everybody. We were kind of like a village. We had everything we needed. We had a little café down at the mill. They would allow, if we were old enough, you could go to the café, and we had everything else on the village that we really needed.

We had two nurses. “Spot” Jordan, who has been mentioned, his mother was a registered nurse, and she took care of the people all around in the village, and they lived right in front of the gym. If something happened at the gym, they’d go across the street and get Mrs. Jordan. She’d come over and take care of the situation, go back, and it was okay.

Generally, the life on that village, for me, was the happiest time of my growing up. My brother, who’s in heaven now, would say the same thing. That’s where we had the most fun together. That’s where we grew real close together.

Tom: What was the address of your house?

Floyd: 4009 Calvert Street. We were on the mill village property, but at the time, we lived on the line. The company gave the church the property for the parsonage, and my father was a minister there. We lived in a parsonage, but we lived on the village. That was part of the village.

Tom: Is that house still standing?

Floyd: It is.

Tom: Do you know who lives there?
Floyd: If he hasn’t moved, Mr. Johnny Burden.

Tom: You’ve already given a pretty good description of your neighborhood. Is there anything else you’d like to add to that? At what ages did you live in the neighborhood? Were you born there?

Floyd: No. I wasn’t born there. From the age of 16 when I moved here 45 years ago.

Tom: Describe your family for me. Your father was a minister?

Floyd: Yes, he was.

Tom: What denomination?

Floyd: He was a Pentecostal Holiness minister. My mother was a godly woman. Her maiden name was Ruby Mae Shaw. Come from a wonderful group of people who, most of them that are still living, live in the Fair Play and Seneca area.

Tom: What kind of relationship did you have with your parents?

Floyd: I had a good relationship with my parents except for one thing, and I’ll discuss that. The one thing was, and my daddy taught them, the church rules were very strict. I made the basketball team and baseball team in high school, but I was forbidden to play, and that caused a problem between me and my father. He would not let me play.

Tom: It’s understandable.

Floyd: That lasted for a while. It wasn’t long after I finished high school, that the Korean War broke out, and I got caught in that. During that period of time, we began to edge closer and closer. As he got older, he got Alzheimer’s, and I took care of him. So, I would say on balance, it was good.

Tom: And you actually went to Korea in the service?

Floyd: No, I didn’t have to go to the front. My brother Jack did. We both were in that. As a matter of a fact, he went in the service two months before I did. He joined but I waited to be drafted. It was two months later. He was in the battle zone, I was not. I helped train people to go to Korea.

Tom: Where were you stationed?
Floyd: Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was a medical service medic so to speak, a clerk. I trained with troops in the 30th Tank Battalion, where I had tank class and that sort of thing. I had the unique privilege to train there when General Patton’s son and General Eisenhower’s son, both who were majors, were there. I had the privilege of going out for two weeks with those two fine gentlemen and being there in case they needed me.

Tom: Great. Was it just you and your brother, Jack? Any other children in the family?

Floyd: Oh no, there are 10 of us.

Tom: 10 children?

Floyd: Yes.

Tom: How many girls?

Floyd: Six boys, four girls.

Tom: Six boys and four girls. Good grief.

Floyd: Jack, who was in the Navy, totaled 44 years. He’s gone on. My oldest sister, Barbara, she’s gone on. My next sister oldest, Francis, she lives a mile and a half from me right up there by Holy Trinity. My next sister, who was born in 1949 while we were living at Gluck, she lives in Jacksonville, Florida. My baby sister, who may pop in at any minute, because she comes see me, Becky, was born in Batesburg, SC. She’s the only one of the 10 who was not born in Anderson.

Tom: Oh, really?

Floyd: I said six brothers. I’m the sixth. In other words, I had five brothers, and I’m the oldest.

Tom: You’re the oldest of them?

Floyd: I’m the oldest. Tom, I don’t know why. Let me explain this to you. It’s a miracle to me. God has been so good to me. Tom, I weighed two pounds when I was born.

Tom: Wow.

Floyd: Way back then.
Tom: Were you born at home?

Floyd: Born at home on 15 C Street. That’s Anderson Mill.

Tom: I know where that is.

Floyd: 15 C Street. Maybe I should tell you how I found out I was born two pounds.

Tom: Yes, tell me.

Floyd: I had been in the Korean War for the whole two years and came home. My mother was having lunch, and my two grandmothers were there. Her mother and my father’s mother. They were close friends. All of them was in the living room talking. Which, like here, her wall was out and the kitchen was open. I was eating, and back then I could hear good, and I began to hear bits and pieces about something I didn’t know nothing about. Nobody ever mentioned that to me. I grew up rawboned. Finished high school. Was the very first one in the family to finish high school, thank you, Lord. I heard little bits and pieces. Well, I knew the doctor who delivered me, Dr. Smithers, so I called him.

I said, “Dr. Smithers, now, I’m going to ask you a question that happened about (at the time) 22 years ago, and you may remember, you may not remember, but you might. I just wondered, and by the way, my name is Floyd Stansell, Jr. I heard that I only weighed two pounds when I was born. Is that right?” He didn’t hesitate. He said, “Something like that.” That was his answer. After that, I felt the liberty to start asking questions to my folks.

My grandma told me, said, “Young man, somebody could’ve put you in a quart jar,” and said, “Grandma Shaw took care of you on a pillow for three-plus months, and you began to grow a little bit.” I said, “Well, how come none of you all ever mentioned this to me while I’m growing up?”

I don’t remember if it was Grandmother Shaw or Grandmother Stansell. One of them said something on the order, “You didn’t need to know that at this time.” Something like that, so I went on. I mainly wanted to know because, at the time, Tom, I had never heard of a baby-

Tom: Surviving.

Floyd: Two pounds. Matter of fact, I’ve got to back up for a minute. Matter of fact, I was not the first child they had. Two years before that, a little
daughter was born to my mother, but she only lived three hours. Dr. Smithers, by the way, told Mamma don’t risk it, and he ain’t going to make it. Well, they ain’t got the last say-so.

Tom: That’s for sure.

Floyd: The Good Lord’s got the last say-so, and I’m still here.

Tom: That’s for sure. So, you mentioned being born over in the Alphabet Streets. Was that in a parsonage there?

Floyd: No, no. His section of work was textile work, as was mine. That was before he started preaching. He didn't start preaching until August of 1948 when we lived at Gluck Mill.

Tom: That's when you moved to Gluck Mill?

Floyd: When we moved to Gluck Mill, he delivered his first sermon there. Why I said ’48, that’s when they gave him credentials was in ’48, but he started preaching before that. His first sermon at Gluck Mill was in the last of November, somewhere near the last of the year in 1946, and we moved into the parsonage.

Tom: So, you and all of your family has pretty much lived in parsonages your whole life?

Floyd: No, not really, because some of the churches houses that they had to offer was not big enough for the family.

Tom: I can understand that.

Floyd: But, for the most part, as we got older, my brother and I… See, all we had to look to, Tom, in my day, was working at the textile plant. That's all we had to look forward to. As we got a little older, I finally finished high school in May. Last year 11 years was required.

Tom: Was it Boys High School?

Floyd: Anderson Boys High School. Could not get a job, and I loved high school so very much, and the reason I did was because of basketball and baseball. Going on through the summer, no jobs were available. You couldn't get one. And I loved school so much. The twelfth year started in 1948. High school, I'd made my mind up that I was going to go back and take the 12th grade. I don't have a job. I love school. I'm going to take the 12th grade
even though I had graduated, I was going to do that. Two weeks before school started, they called me at the plant. Told me, “We have a job for you. Come down and talk with us.”

Tom: That was at the Gluck Mill?

Floyd: Gluck Mill. I went to work in September, 1947.

Tom: 1947. How old were you at that time?

Floyd: I had my 17th birthday. I finished high school and had my 17th birthday. Yeah, we'd been living there almost a year.

Tom: Almost 18?

Floyd: I was 17 when I finished high school and went to work in the mill. Well, I forgot a little part. When I lived on the ABC Streets, I worked during the summer when I was 16, there, first.

Tom: At what mill?

Floyd: It was at Anderson Mill.

Tom: Anderson Mill. Okay.

Floyd: I forgot that part. My regular job, a really regular job once I started in textile business, was September 1947. I worked there until I went in the service in the early part of 1951. The Korean War was going on, and I remained there through 1953. Had I known that that fighting was going to stop in the latter part of June of ’53, I would’ve stayed in the service because I loved the job I had. I didn’t make all that much money, but I loved the job, they tried to keep me. They offered me another stripe. “Stansell, we’ll pin it on, got it ready for you.” I said, “No, sir. I'm going home.” And that was my military service.

Tom: What was your job working in the mill?

Floyd: Well, I had variable jobs. I started out just as a loom cleaner in the weave room, and I worked my way up. Made weaver, but I did not like the weave room. The noise. See, the old looms made terrible noise. I did not like the weave room. I transferred to the card room, and I had to start all over training. I wound up being the Department Head in the card room. I went from sweeper to, now, I'm the third person at that plant in seven years.
I went to Tri-County Tech four years and one semester to help me, because I didn't have the availability when I was growing up to go get a higher education. I applied myself, I worked hard, worked regular. I worked for a good man who noticed.

As a matter of fact, he got me out of a corner where I was doing my job, and he came over. He's a new man, by the way. The other man retired. Mr. Whitlock retired, and Mr. Turner said, “How long have you been doing this job?” “I said, “Well, about two years.” One of them went out on sick leave, and he never came back, but they kept the job open. He had the job I was running, which was sizing up samples of every process, make sure the weight was right, and the blend was right. I said, “About two years.”

He got on my case. He said, “Listen, you need to go to Tri-County, and you need to take the courses. This is going to help you out of this corner, and I will help you any way I can.” He kept his word. I joined and, like I tell you, I went four years and one semester. The curriculum was textile technology and management training. Because of that, every time something was available, I was included in the mix, and the Good Lord kept helping me.

Tom: Did you get a certificate or diploma from County Tech?

Floyd: Yeah, I got a diploma. They didn’t give degrees yet. I got a diploma.

Tom: With twelve people in your house, including your parents, what was a typical breakfast like?

Floyd: Well, we were country-like folk, okay? We had chickens, we had rabbits, we had pigs, we had cow. A typical breakfast was, for the most part, we had eggs and bacon and sometimes sausage, but now you’re going to wonder about this part. I didn’t like meat, so mama’s gravy and biscuits and grits!

Tom: Was your breakfast?

Floyd: My breakfast. I poured it down, and I still, matter of fact, I had vegetables yesterday. And I did break off and eat a piece of meatloaf. It was good, because the doctor told me, recently, he said, “Look,” He called me Joe. “Look, Joe.”

Tom: Need more protein?
Floyd: Yeah. He said, “You need a little meat.” I said, “Well, I eat plenty of beans. They got protein. He said, “You need to eat a little meat.” So I’m not going to fight it. I eat meat every once in a while.

Tom: Okay. Speaking of beans, what was a typical lunch?

Floyd: Oh, Lord, my mother was the greatest cook. You would love to have eaten at my mother's table. I didn’t eat the meat most of the time, but she fixed, this is the kicker. She fixed two meatloaves. The reason being the girls didn't like onions, so she made them a meatloaf without onions, and the rest of the family liked onions. She made a meatloaf with onions. That was my mother. And, then, we had pinto beans, we had cabbage, we had lettuce and tomato, onion, milk if you wanted, or tea, which I'm a tea guzzler. My wife, bless her heart. I don't know. The girls might’ve told you my wife was killed last year in a car accident.

Tom: No, I didn't know that.

Floyd: They didn't mention it? That’s okay. She was right down the street. Right down there in the street. We always ate together, and I found myself sitting there yesterday while I was eating by myself, and I paused, and I was just looking at the benches. I am a solitary man. 65 years I had somebody eating with me. That’s how long that we were married.

Tom: I've been married 55 myself, so we’re working on it.

Floyd: Oh yeah, you'll get there. At the noontime meal, we’d have okra. I love okra. I eat it… My grandson called me at five o'clock yesterday afternoon. He’s a good cook. Well, all my boys cook, All four. I have four grandsons. They all cook.

Michael called me. He said, “Pop?” Said, “You eating yet?” I said, “Oh, no. I had a late lunch. I'm not really hungry.” Then, he said the magic word. He said, “Well, I got a bit of okra over here ready. Lettuce and tomato and all of that.” I said, “I’ll see you in a few minutes.” Because he learned to cook that okra from my wife, and he cooks it just like she did.

Tom: What was a typical evening meal?

Floyd: Typical evening meals for us at the time, Tom, was cornbread and milk, and I had a habit of my Grandfather Shaw, my mother's father. I loved him, I hung with him every chance I could get, he loved lettuce and chopped up tomatoes and onion in a little bowl, and I wanted some of that to go with my cornbread and milk. And he told me once, he said, “You get
a cold, June.” That’s what he called me. I’m a junior. He said, “June, you get a cold, don't go to bed, you always eat onion. Eat onion, and you'll be glad you did.” And I've eaten onion almost 90 years.

Tom: What was your Sunday meal?

Floyd: Well, the Sunday meal was a little bit different in that Mama put on a little more of a spread. We always had something good and sweet. Cherry cobbler, strawberry cobbler, chocolate cake. Whatever you name, she can make. So that went along with, plus, sometimes she’d throw in another vegetable in there, because she looked after me. She knew I didn't like meat. She made sure I had plenty of veggies out there. Carrots, squash. I ain't tell you that I don't go hungry.

Tom: What about, for the other people that did like meat, what was your typical? Was it fried chicken?

Floyd: They had chicken and steak. Cube steak. Mamma used to stand here and beat that stuff. We had steak, and we had chicken, and sometimes turkey on Sunday. Little more on the Sunday than during the week.

Tom: With you being the older boy in so many children, where did you sleep?

Floyd: Three boys slept together.

Tom: In one bed?

Floyd: One bed.

Tom: Three boys in one bed? Who got stuck in the middle?

Floyd: The next oldest son. He came after the second oldest daughter. Coming down the line was myself, Jack, who’s gone on, then Bubber who’s gone on, Then Francis, who’s next, then Lamar. His name is Robert Lamar. Business people called him Bob, but the kids, they named him Moe. They watched the Three Stooges all the time, and they named him Moe. We called him Moe. Just like they call me Frog, and that's fine. I've got no problem with Frog.

Tom: So, three guys in the bed together?

Floyd: Yeah. And, also, three girls in the other bed over there. We had two big beds in the same room, and then the smaller children slept on a pallet in
the room with Mom and Dad. The babies, so to speak, slept with my mom and dad. That was our sleeping arrangement when we had all the children.

Tom: Tell me your typical dress. What did you wear at that time in your life? What’d you wear to school?

Floyd: What I wore to school was overalls and union suits under the overalls with the trap door. If my dad caught the trap door down, I got it. “Put the trap door back up when you get through.” He was strict about those kinds of things. Brogan’s shoes.

Tom: Brogan's.

Floyd: We got two pairs of shoes a year. At Christmastime, we got two pair of Brogan’s. You wear one every day. The others you wear on weekends.

Tom: Sunday?

Floyd: We wore Brogan’s to church. We didn’t have dress shoes. We wore Brogan’s. We had the socks. I was born right smack dab in the middle of the Great Depression. Right in the middle of it, so there wasn’t a whole lot there, Tom. Not a whole lot.

Tom: Well, going back to talking about your education, you went to Boys High School here in Anderson, and then you went to work at the mill. You were in the service for a while. Then, you went to Tri-County Tech?

Floyd: Right. Had one building there, then. That was 1968.

Tom: Where was that? In the same location that it is now?

Floyd: Yes. The main, the first building as you go in the driveway. The Anderson building is right there, and of course it expanded, and I’m glad. Anderson building was right there. Just one building the whole time I went. Well, let me quickly say, I say that, but I went back a time later for seminary two or three days a month.

Tom: What about after-school activities? What were your after-school activities?

Floyd: Athletics.

Tom: Sports, sports, and more sports, huh?
Floyd: I played everything they had to offer. Basketball was my love. Baseball was second. I played tennis. I played volleyball. I played kickball. I played golf. Anything in the sports, really.

Tom: Did they have a golf course on the Gluck Mill?

Floyd: Believe it or not, they did, years ago. I didn't get to play it, but it was a nine-hole sand golf course. Back of the mill, there. Mr. John Richard Sweetenburg was the superintendent. He was a golfer and loved to play golf. He helped them fix that. He’d leave all of us at the mill and run out there to play nine holes before he went home. I know where it was. I saw it, but then a lot of kids messed with it.

Tom: You obviously are a handsome guy. Did you date girls on the mill village?

Floyd: Four, at different times.

Tom: Was your wife from the mill?

Floyd: No, I met my wife in that little church at Gluck Mill. They lived in a country town, you know anything about where Ebenezer Community is? She lived in Ebenezer Community. That’s where she went to school, in Ebenezer. Anyway, they eventually moved this way, and her mother was a wonderful mama. Mama Howell, that’s what I called her. Wonderful, wonderful woman, and the Stansell family, my parents, and their family became friends. So, they started coming to church. She was young when I met her, Tom, I’d say I met her when I was 18. No more than 19 when I met her. Of course, she was younger. She was just a young girl, but a pretty young girl right then. But didn’t really click there until the time came from me to go in service. My third oldest sibling went to Edna, my wife, and said, “Edna, write June.” My siblings, called me June. The boys called me Frog but not the girls. Said, “Write June, he’s going to be away from home. He’s going to be lonely.”

She said, “Well, if he writes me first, I’ll answer his letter if he writes.” That’s what she told. So her friend told me, “If you write her a letter, she’ll answer.” So she did. We started corresponding. First time I got out of that place, I went straight to her house.

Tom: All right. What did you do as a family together?

Floyd: We sang a lot.

Tom: Oh, good.
Floyd: Yeah, the Stansells sing. I still sing, believe it or not. My first cousin, Miriam, whose husband is the fire chief here in Anderson, we grew up together; I'm older than Miriam, but sang some together way back then. Recently our piano player’s father passed away, and he had to be away a few weeks so she came to play. I didn't call her Miriam. I called her “Miram.” I said, “Miram? Want to sing with me this morning? It's been a while.” She said, “You pick the song.” That was her answer. So I did. We sang, twice and did well. They had people out there recording it and my grandson recorded it. I asked him about it. I said, “Josh, somebody told me you were recording when Miriam and me were singing.” He said, “I got it.” I said, “How did it sound?” He said, “Sounds great, pop.” I said, “When you come over, you need to let me hear it.”

Tom: Now, were you singing gospels? Church music?

Floyd: Gospel. Now, I used to fiddle around when we were cutting up when we had prom parties and stuff like that. I’d cut loose singing. “The Boll Weevil,” and “Little Black Bug.” And I’d just sing around. I loved singing. Not that I feel I was great at it, but I could harmonize.

Tom: Great. How were health issues dealt with at that time in your home? If anybody was sick. Did you take them to the doctor, or do you use home remedies?

Floyd: Now, Tom, believe it or not, our family was basically healthy. We didn’t have any of the children going, on a regular basis, to a doctor. My mother would do home remedies if something come up like the flu. Now, the diseases that come through Anderson, I got every one of them. I had them all: whooping cough, measles, German Red Measles. Had the Red Measles so bad in my eyes that I had to stay in the bedroom, and my mother put quilts over the windows so the light couldn't come in. I had it really bad. I had a little trouble with my eyes, but growing up, basically, as I remember, I was healthy. Now, for myself, I never took a prescription drug until 1974.

Tom: Wow.

Floyd: I had the flu in 1974. If I had a little sinus trouble, I’d take BC Headache powder or whatever I had for pain or something, but as far as prescription, none. In 1974, I was 44 and for the first time ever, I took a prescription medicine. I thank the Lord.

Tom: What about broken bones. Anything like that?
Floyd: My little finger. See that? It grew back, and how did that happen? I was breaking one of my father’s rules. I was playing street football, and I was running out and my friend threw me a pass and when I caught the ball, it hit my finger, and when it did, the finger did “that,” and it hurt like nobody’s business. Other than that, I didn’t have no broken bones until last year when we had the accident I was telling you.

Tom: How were discipline issues dealt with? Did you get spanked?

Floyd: Well, yeah. When I deliberately disobeyed him, he had a strap belt “that wide.” If he told me, “Don’t do it. Don’t you leave here.” And I broke the rule, Tom, when he left, I made me a pole vault out of a bamboo cane, and I’d vault over that fence down to the ballpark to go play ball. That was my thing. I never did anything else like that. I slipped away to go play ball and paid the penalty. I don’t ever remember. He may have, but I don’t ever remember him switching the girls. Talked sternly to them, sometimes, but he didn’t switch the girls. But myself and my brother, Jack, and my baby brother, who may pop in any minute. He’s the youngest son. He and my youngest sister, they’re the two that come see me all the time. They just pop in anytime. He got it because he was more of an aggravating young’un than I was.

Tom: What about the girls? Did your mom ever spank you or anything?

Floyd: No. My mother switched me one time, Tom. Just for a little bit, and the reason she did, and I regret to this day. I remember it, my sister and I got in trouble, and mother switched my legs. It hurt her more than it did me. I know it did. But that’s the only time she ever touched me.

Tom: So, when you were working in the mill, your father was working in the mill, also?

Floyd: He did to start with, by then the little church began to be able to help a little more. Then, of course I’ll just tell you this, I made $24 a week and every Friday I went home, I gave my mother a twenty-dollar bill to help out. That’s how it was. I did that the whole time I worked, and then when I went in the service, I sent half of my pay home, because we were a large family. I loved my mother. There wasn’t nothing I wouldn’t do for my mother and I did do for my mother. I tell folks, every once in a while, something you people need to understand, until you lose your mother, you don’t know. If you got a mother, I’m going to tell you, I did all I knew to do, I reckon, to help my mother. I was good to my mother. But if I had her back, I guarantee you I could find some other way to help her out. That was my answer.
Tom: With a family that large and everything, were finances ever discussed openly?

Floyd: No. When a situation came up between my mother and my dad, of course they talked [about] it. There was a time, I’ll tell you, when the situation come up that my dad needed a better car to get around to do his business, and something was said right there. By that time, Jack had gone to work in the mill, too. When that come about, he started pitching in. He never did give Mom as much as I did, and I never did resent that. As long as my mother’s satisfied, I’m happy. That’s the only time we were included in finance business at all. They kept things going. They did well to be a couple to have 10 kids and raise all of us. I would say this, Tom, in their own way, all 10 of those children wound up being successful. This is not the greatest home in the world, but this is my home. I paid for this by taking money out of my check, I never saw it. Then, one day when the time come, they hadn’t sent me no paper, and I go up to the bank. I said, “Hey, I paid my house off. I want that piece of paper.”

Tom: I suppose the family never did receive the benefits of a pounding or anything like that?

Floyd: No, no. Well, wait a minute. When Dad had a country church, they weren’t able to pay him much money, but produce and all of that kind of stuff that’d come from the garden, and sometimes they would give him the meat that they’d done worked up. That counted. It was, as far as a family pounding coming our way because of the need, from somebody else, we didn’t have that.

Tom: All right, describe your church experiences. Being the son of a preacher—a PK you know, usually preachers kids are the worst, meanest kids on the whole block. They are the toughest, usually.

Floyd: Yeah. Well, I had a fellow tell me that one time. My answer to him was because we played with the deacon and member’s children. That was my answer to them. Tom, a couple of years. I’m the only one, and that was because of the denial of me playing high school sports, I rebelled. I’d go to Sunday school, and I’d slip outside the door. They’d see me next Sunday morning. I’m not saying that’s good. I’m saying that’s bad. That went on until I’m nearly 18. About then, I guess, or maybe I am 18. The C-Team Basketball. Let me back up, the gym at the mill---

Tom: Yeah, I know where that is.
Floyd: But before that, the gym was a converted warehouse. It burned down about the time we moved to Gluck. About the time, Spot Jordan lived across the street and he stood on the porch and watched that thing burn to the ground. He was just a young fellow. Then, they built the other gym back. When they built the gym back, in my job in the mill at the time, I could go to the window and look out there and see them laying brick and stuff, and I would say, “Can’t you-all hurry?” and all that kind of stuff.

Back to the sports. At the end of my rebellion or habit to rebel, I went out for the C-Team Basketball. There wasn’t a doubt in my mind that I was going to make it. I knew I could, so I went out. They gave me a big old fancy uniform, warm-up jacket, warm-up pants, slick as a duck, rolled up under my arm, I went home, and, dang, I walked in the door. My dad was standing at the kitchen door, and my mom was inside. He saw that uniform. He said, “You take that back where you got it.” I never had talked back to him. I looked up at him and told him, I said, “No, sir. I’m going to play.” I went into my bedroom at the front of the house. I kept waiting on that wide strap. Waiting. Waiting. He never did come. Well, I found out, later, why he never did come.

My mother gave him a good dressing down. Part of what she told him, I was told, she said, “Floyd.” She called my dad Floyd. She said, “Floyd, let me tell you something. June is a good boy, never has given us any trouble, no problem, he comes home every Friday and hands me a twenty-dollar bill when he only made $24. He absolutely has done nothing to be denied, now, that he ain’t playing. It don’t make no difference what them church rules are, I’ll tell you.” I wasn’t the only one. Another son, he didn’t get to play either. His father Preacher Charles had gone on and his wife had gone on. But his sister, Treenie, she called me Joe, she said, “Joe, I got caught in the same web you did. I made the girls’ basketball team but couldn’t play.”

Anyway, that ended the rebellion, kind of. And I told you already, after I come out of the service it got better, and it got better. I made the team, and they took me along. I played with the B-Team some. Not that I was great, but I was good enough. I started playing against college basketball players when I was 17 years old. Played against them because I slipped and played, now, I had to slip and play. Coach Bill, was my coach at Boys High School, when I slipped and played, Tom.

I played under the name of Joe Smith. I played from the midgets on up until I made the C-Team at Gluck Mill. With Anderson Mill, all except one year, I played as Joe Smith and then the time came when I had a very good game one night, and they put my name in the Anderson Independent, and they used my right name. It said, “Frog Stansell leads so-and-so to
victory over Appleton.” I guess that’s who we played because the mills played each other. That’s how I got caught but that was all right. My mom knew I was playing. I found out later that my mom knew it, she kept it to herself.

Tom: Describe the physical condition when you and your dad got off work. Did your mother ever work in the mill?

Floyd: Oh, yeah. She worked between babies. She’s a spinner and a good one. They hired her on the spot. She’d go ask for a job. Because her record was so good, they’re hire her.

Tom: Describe the condition when you’d get off work. You were worn out, you were wet from sweat, or what?

Floyd: Well, in summer, when I made my way to the first shift, and I got off of work, the new gym was completed. I’m off at three o’clock, five after three, I’m taking laps around the court. Nobody took more laps around that building down there than me, because of my size and because the other guys were tall. I was getting my legs in shape, I was getting my lungs in shape, I didn’t smoke, I didn’t drink. When we hit the floor, at the end, I’m breathing just as good as I was when I started, but the other guys got their tongue hanging out out there. That’s why I was able to do what I was able to do. So, first of all, I stopped to do that. Then, my mom knew what I was doing. When I got home, she had my food placed in the stove, oven, whatever. She pulled it out and I would eat. I’d go back down to the gym for a game at night if we had a game. If we didn’t, we practiced. We played two-on-two championship. Trying to think. It’s been so long since I’ve played with them. Tommy Christian, Tom, he and I teemed up. One afternoon we started playing about four o’clock, and when they closed the gym that night, we had not been defeated, and we had played all during that time. Just little twenty-minute games.

Then, when baseball season was on, of course, I’d go home first to eat because practice didn’t start until 5:00. I’d go home and eat a bite. Then, I’d just go across the street to the ballpark, and practice. By that time, Daddy was resigned to the fact that I was going to play sports. He later said to my brother, who moved to Seattle, when we flew him out there when his health deteriorated and he wanted to see his son. So, we flew him out there. While he was out there, he told Jack, he said, “Jack, I was tougher on you and Frog than I was the rest of the kids, I know I was, and if I had my time to go over, Frog would’ve played ball at the beginning.” He didn’t tell me, but he told Jack. Jack told me.
Now, explain to me how you got the nickname, “Frog.”

Oh, boy. That’s a good one. It sounds like a tale made up, but it’s actually the truth. Mr. Carol F. “Frog” Reames was principal of Boys High School when I finished, but when I started school, I was in the third grade. At that time, Mr. Frog Reames was the athletic director for all of the city schools in District 5. He’d go from school to school to school to school.

Frog was over at our school that day, we had him for PE. We were running, and the playground was two levels. Then, you’d go down a little lip, and there’s another level. Well, I’m eight years old, I didn’t have no sense and I called him Frog, boy, he took off after me. Yeah, he was coming fast and he caught me. He made a swoop at me with his boot, shoe whatever it was, like he was going to get me. He might’ve got my overalls but I didn’t feel it, but my classmates saw him do it. They said I jumped like a Toad frog and called me “Toad Frog” for about a week. The Toad dropped off, and I’ve had Frog ever since. I know that sounds like a tale. It’s the absolute truth. John Daniel, who’s a Pastor Emeritus. His son’s a pastor at West Anderson Church of God. He was out on the field with me that day. He said, “Frog, I was there that week, but don’t remember that.” I said, “You just didn’t see it.” I said, “That’s exactly where I got my nickname.” He said, “I knew you had it, I didn’t know how come you had it.” I said, “Well, that’s how it come about.”

How long did you actually work in the mill?

42 years counting the two years in the service. They count that. 42.

Did you ever think about going into the ministry, yourself?

I run from it. I’m ashamed to tell you how long. I run from it for 16 years. I’m ashamed of that. I knew at the age of 18 that he had called me to preach. There was no doubt in my mind, but I said because of the rules and some things I had seen. I said, “I don’t want to do any of that.” Tom, you don’t tell the Lord you won’t do something.

For sure.

He’ll get around to spanking you, enough. You get to the place. Wasn’t my dad that influenced me. He preached for all those years. Roy Allen, a great athlete himself. I guess I have to tell you the whole thing about Roy to get into my situation. By the time, we had our oldest daughter who was about two and half, and my wife was taking her to church every Sunday. To the same little church because Roy followed my father as pastor down
there. He comes see me, Preacher Allen, he just loved me. He didn’t push me. He said, “Frog.” He called me my nickname that suited me. He said, “Let’s see you come on in Sunday morning. Get on down there.” I said, “Well, I don’t know.” That kind of thing. Went on, went on. He kept coming. He didn’t push. He just loved.

Then, he came to see me one day. He said, “Frog, I need a favor from you.” Well, I done learned to love the man because he loved me first. I said, “Oh, Preacher. You know I’ll do anything I can for you. Whatever it is.” He said, “Well, I’m having revival at the church next week, and I need somebody to lead the singing, and you can do it.” I said, “Oh, no, Preacher. I can’t do this,” because I hadn’t been going to church. See, I was running the other way.” I said, “I can’t do that preacher. No.” He said, softly, to me, “Yeah, you can. And, son, I need you.” That “son” did it, you know?

Finally. I said, “Okay, I’ll try but if I mess up, it’s going to be your fault.” That’s what I told him. He said, “You ain’t going to mess up. “I went. Got done singing. I was the first one out of that church after altar call. Out the door I went. I was used to getting out the door of that church. I had done it for four years when my Daddy was around. Anyway, that went on and on. On Thursday night of that revival, I started like I had done all week, but I got back to about the fourth pew from the back, Tom. And the tug and the feeling I had was so strong, I thought I was going to pop out of my skin. I’ll just be honest and tell you how I was.

I fell on my knees bawling. Crying for the longest time. I finally said, “Lord, I just want you to forgive the way that I have been living. If you help me, I’ll do the best I can.” I didn’t give in to the preaching part. I knew he had called me to preach at that time. So things began to get better. I mean, if you put the Lord first Tom, he’s going to take care of the rest of it. Things began to get better, and things began to get better.

They moved Roy out of the church. That broke my heart, because I worked with him 15 years. That’s part of the 16 years I run. I’d do all this, I didn’t preach. That was good what I was doing, but that’s not what the Lord said he wanted me to do.

Shortly after that, I was going home, it was during that same revival and the last night of the revival, I was driving home. We had such a good service, and I was feeling like I’m a different person. This is a different Frog. you know. I was singing, always singing something. And while I was singing, I said, “Lord, you’ve got to bless me in a special way. And then, I said the word. “If I preach, I’ve got to be especially blessed.”
Tom, I had a feeling come over me like I had never had before in my life. I felt strength like I had never felt before in my life. I went back down to the church instead of going home. I turned around and went back down there. The organ man was still there. I went in, and I told him. He hugged me real tight, and here’s what he said. “I always felt like the Lord had something special for you to do, but you had to be the one to decide it.” That’s what he told me. He told me right. I loved him good. I preached his funeral. Oh, man, I didn’t preach his funeral, I said some things, he preached his funeral his whole life, really. We became close, the Stansell and the Allen family. I preached for all of the Allen’s that passed away. I have preached their funerals except the oldest sister, and I couldn’t do it because the same day at the same time, I was preaching my brother-in-law’s funeral. I couldn’t be both places. Of course, they understood that, but all the rest of them, I preached because we were just like family.

Tom: At what church?

Floyd: At the Pentecostal Church. Roy was up at Anderson Pentecostal Church.

Tom: Where was the church you pastored?

Floyd: North Anderson Pentecostal Holiness. Well, I preached first, Tom, my first assignment was at River Heights. They called it something else. A little church behind the Highway Department over there? There’s a little church behind it.

Tom: I’m not familiar with it.

Floyd: They called it River Heights at that time. I followed my father there. That’s another story. When Roy left the Gluck Mill, it was some disgruntled people caused him to leave, and that broke my heart. I said, “I’ll just go over and help my daddy.” I’ve been helping Roy. I said, “Now’s the time. I’ll go over.” So I did. I went over there. Unbeknownst to me… I was licensed at that time. I had already been licensed. Not ordained. I was sitting on the front pew that morning. The superintendent came. I thought he was there to preach a homecoming sermon. He did do that, but when he was through with his homecoming sermon, he said, “Please remain seated. We have an item of business to take care of before we’re dismissed.” Well, I was sitting there. I paid no attention to that. I sat there looking at him. Then, he said, “Rev Stansell Sr. has decided it’s time for him to retire and go back to his home church,” which was Taylor Memorial. Glenn Street at the time, and the church board, they had already met. “This is settled with the church board with whom his father is the
chairman, and it’s already settled. They want his son, Floyd Jr, to follow him and take the church.”

I am sitting there, Tom. All of the sudden, I’m looking up and to myself I said, “Oh, Lord. I ain’t ready to pastor a church.” You know, I’m talking all kinds of stuff. Always trying to make excuses to get out of it. Anyway, he said, “Now, the church needs to speak. I need to hear a motion from somebody.” Lord, they motioned. “Oh, we make a motion. We receive him.” Just like that. “Second, second. Anybody oppose? Nobody oppose? Everybody in favor? Yeah!” All of the place. All of a sudden, I have a church that I didn’t know I was going to get.
Appendix F

Interview Consent and Release Forms
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Joe Allen
Participant’s Signature
10-2-19

AtCLedge
Researcher’s Signature
10-2-19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Signature]
Participant’s Signature  Date  7/30/19

[Signature]
Researcher’s Signature  Date  7-30-19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Participant's Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

Researcher's Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Participant’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: 9-27-19

Researcher’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: 9-27-19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Signatures]

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Thurman H. Haggin
Participant's Signature

7-26-19
Date

Thomas H. Cartledge
Researcher's Signature

7-26-19
Date

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

\[\text{Participant's Signature}\]
\[\text{R. J. Jordan}\]
\[\text{9-23-19}\]

\[\text{Researcher's Signature}\]
\[\text{M. Cartledge}\]
\[\text{9-23-19}\]

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Participant's Signature: ___________________________  Date: 10-2-19

Researcher's Signature: ___________________________  Date: 10-2-19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Signatures and dates]

Participant’s Signature
Date

Researcher’s Signature
Date

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Participant’s Signature: [Signature]  Date: 7/14/2019

Researcher’s Signature: [Signature]  Date: 8-14-19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Signatures]

Participant’s Signature: [Signature]

Date: 09/16/2019

Researcher’s Signature: [Signature]

Date: 07/16/19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Signature]
Date: 8-13-19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Participant's Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Researcher's Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Signature] [Date: 7-16-19]

Participant’s Signature Date

[Signature] [Date: 7-16-19]

Researcher’s Signature Date

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of
requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my
role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future
management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at
any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson
University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my
questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this
study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Claude Eugene Powell 7-16-19
Participant's Signature Date

Jeff Cartledge 7-16-19
Researcher's Signature Date

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Signatures]

Participant’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Researcher’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcrtl@g.clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

\[Signature\] \[8-15-19\]

Participant's Signature \n\[Signature\] \[8-15-19\]

Researcher's Signature \n\[Signature\] \[Date\]

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@clemson.edu)
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT LIFE IN A TEXTILE MILL VILLAGE

I agree to participate in a research project conducted by Thomas H. Cartledge, for fulfillment of requirements necessary for his Masters degree in History at Clemson University.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project and I understand my role. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future management of my data has been explained to me and is clear.

2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time and receive no remuneration of any kind.

3. I have the right to not answer any question that makes me uncomfortable.

4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded, transcribed and archived at Clemson University libraries.

5. I understand that all information I provide for this project will be treated confidentially.

6. I have read and understand the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

[Participant’s Signature]  [Date]  09/17/19
[Researcher’s Signature]  [Date]  9-17-19

For additional information, contact: Thomas H. Cartledge (thcartl@g.clemson.edu)