

Transcribed by: Ms. Treneattia Bowman

Sunday October 19, 2014

Benjamin Franklin Yh / tl "" A u

Interviewed January 20, 2001 by Dr. Evelyn Thompson

(Evelyn speaks)

Today is January 20, 19-uh 2001, and my name is Evelyn Thompson, and I'm in the home of Benjamin Mittman. He has consented to talk with me about his past and history, as he knows it in Surry County. Can you give us your full name?

(Benjamin speaks)

My full name?

(Evelyn speaks)

Yes

(Benjamin speaks)

My full name is Benjamin Franklin

(Evelyn speaks)

And, Benjamin what, uh-

(Benjamin speaks)

Benjamin Franklin Mittman

(Evelyn speaks)

Go- Ok, and what is your age?

(Benjamin speaks)

I was born in June 7, 1925

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, and could you just tell us a little about uh- your past in terms of your grandparents? If you know your great grandparents tell us about them

(Benjamin speaks)

I never did know any of them

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, did you know your grandparents?

(Benjamin speaks)

I knew just one grandfather

(Evelyn speaks)

Ah, alright. Who was he?

(Benjamin speaks)

His name was Richard Mittman

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

They called him Rich Mittman, yeah

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And ah, he died on New Year's Day, ifl aint mistaken, which I'm quite sure I'm not, ah, I was (non-transcribed number) years old

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And my mother, (non-transcribed statement) a Mittman, and my sister Lucille, we would pl-we was at his house when he died, that night

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm,rrilllill-hhlill, you know how old he was?

(Benjamin speaks)

How old was he?

(Evelyn speaks)

He was-

(Benjamin speaks)

He was eighty-five years old

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mrnm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And that's, he wou-he had a, I'm gone, I believe, I can't say where it was his second wife or not, but, he was married to a lady which was named Mittman.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

The beginning I believe she- she come, came from Stuart, Virginia.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Right, I really did-didn't know his last name

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, where did he come from? Do you know where he-he came from, was he born in-?

(Benjamin speaks)

Who my grandfather?

(Evelyn speaks)

Yes

(Benjamin speaks)

He came from Galax

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

He had his sister up there in Galax, uh-

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I really couldn't remember her last name, I believe they called her(non- transcribed family name)
I believe

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, but that's where he was born?

(Benjamin speaks)

Far as I know

(Evelyn speaks)

In Ki uh-huh, -In Galax?, alright a-and how many children did they have, your grandparents have?

(Benjamin speaks)

My grandpa he had- he had uncle (non- transcribed name) and my sister.

(Evelyn speaks)

No-

(Benjamin speaks)

No, no- ah, excuse me,

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

There is Uncle (non- transcribed family name) My father Clint

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

(non-transcribed last name), Clint

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

He had two sisters, who was in Galax, which was younger than he, one was named Maye, Maye love which was her married name, and the other one's name is I can't call it

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright

(Benjamin speaks)

I really can't call it bu-

(Evelyn speaks)

That's fine, that's fine

(Benjamin speaks)

But he had another brother, lived in O-Iowa

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Ah, I can't even remember his name

(Evelyn speaks)

Th-tha-

(Benjamin speaks)

I remember him, just can't remember his name

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, that gives us the number of children they had. Now can we go to your parents? Who were your parents?

(Benjamin speaks)

My parents?

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah

(Benjamin speaks)

My parents was Clint Mittman and Marlene Vaughn Mittman

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, and ah, I jumped ahead on your grandparents; I wanted to ask you what kind of work did your grandfather do? You remember that?

(Benjamin speaks)

Far as I know, at the time when I was knowing him, my grandfather didn't even do anything, but he was-he was sometime he walked with a cane

(Evelyn speaks)

He was probably older at the time you knew him, mmm-hmm. Ok. Alright, ah, what ki-ah, what kind of ah, did your mother come from this area?

(Benjamin speaks)

My mother came from, what you call then, uh Old Ararat

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And uh, which is she's buried up there, in-on Old Ararat Mountain View Cemetary

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, I know where that is

(Benjamin speaks)

Um, I believe that's Mountain View Cemetery

(Evelyn speaks faintly)

Yeah

(Benjamin speaks)

Naw, let me- is that Mountain View?

(Evelyn speaks)

Well, I'm not sure the name of it that's there, Old Ararat

(Benjamin speaks)

You kn-you know where Old Ararat is?

(Evelyn speaks)

Yes, I do, I kn-I know Old Ararat, but I'm not familiar with that cemetery there

(Benjamin speaks)

Now she's buried up there

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, alright, and her maiden name was Vaughn?

(Benjamin speaks)

Vaughn

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh

(Benjamin speaks)

Her maiden was Vaughn

(Evelyn speaks)

Did she have sisters and-

(Benjamin speaks)

Vaughn, Vaughn it was Vaughn Mittman

(Evelyn speaks)

Di-she have

(Benjamin speaks)

(non-transcribed cut in statement)

(Evelyn speaks)

Brothers and sisters-

(Benjamin speaks)

Huh?

(Evelyn speaks)

Did she have brothers and sisters that she-

(Benjamin speaks)

I really don't know

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh

(Benjamin speaks)

Cause, uh- she uh- her and (non-transcribed noun)'s aunt I, aunt (non-transcribed noun and non-transcribed statement); which I don't even think, I don't even know if they was sisters, I aint even quite sure if that they sisters. Aunt (non-transcribed name) well then, uh- let's see (faintly) (non-transcribed statement) West Virginia.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Which is-she, which I'm just putting it this way they owned some property, her and Aunt Verona, they was in ah- Charleston, West Virginia. And we had, she had, uh- she went by, her

last name was (non-transcribed family name) when she was in (non-transcribed noun) I really didn't know all that

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, ah lets go to your parents again, after that they got married here, did they-they got married in Mount Airy?

(Benjamin speaks)

As far as I know

(Evelyn speaks)

What kind of work did they do?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well my mother, she was a cook, but she done housework

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And my father he got a, I can't name them places in Mount Airy that he worked at then, he stayed around in the military in CC camps mostly. Only parts I- not all together, but ah, I know the names of the places, of the places that he worked at, but I can't, I can- we was talking about that yesterday, I can't call the name of it

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, we may come back to you also somebody else in the family might know once you get there. I- I also didn't ask you if your grandfather ever talked about slavery, did anybody in your family ever mention the experience?

(Benjamin speaks)

If they did then, I didn't pay it no attention, I just didn't-didn't know a thing, you know what I'm talking about?

(Evelyn speaks)

So nobody ne-ever spoke of it-in that you know?

(Benjamin speaks)

(Non-transcribed faint mutter)Not that I-well he mighta have, I just didn-

(Evelyn speaks)

But you just didn't-

(Benjamin and Evelyn in unison)

Know

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, ok.Ok, then um, then-where did you live here in, your parents, your parents where did they raise their family?

(Benjamin speaks)

In Mount Airy

(Evelyn speaks)

Where in Mount Airy?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, ah, I was born over on Old South Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Which the house (non-transcribed statement) I been born in there but, that- that's the house that I re-remember

(Evelyn speaks)

Mm.mm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Bu-th-we was raised up in the oldest, the oldest child of all of us was born in fifty-fifty-four on North South Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Yeah

(Evelyn speaks faintly)

Mmm-hmrn, Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And from then on

(Evelyn speaks)

Did you move, were you thinking, were you moved from there?

(Benjamin speaks)

Maam?

(Evelyn speaks)

Did you move from there? Did the family ever move from there?

(Benjamin speaks)

If they moved from there, well the family moved. My father got him a (non-transcribed noun) in Virginia

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And my mother and father separated

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

And that's when, they moved over on, ah- Linville Road, they build a home, built a house over there. And we lived on Linville Road

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm, mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And we stayed for about, it was actually World War II because later, that's when they started putting in the housing projects

(Evelyn speaks)

Yes

(Benjamin speaks)

And they bough-they-they was buying places out in town

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmm-hmm. Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And I wouldn't know all the (non-transcribed statement) and all that no way

(Evelyn speaks)

Mm.mm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I really doesn't know

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-bmmm, ok ah- bow many children wh-did your mother and father have?

(Benjamin speaks)

My mother had 9 children

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm. Do you remember their names?

(Benjamin speaks)

She had six boys and three girls

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

The girl's names was Lucille Mittman, (non-transcribed statement) and then, then a sister named Romana, or was her middle name Altheia?

(Evelyn speaks)

You mean her middle name?

(Benjamin speaks)

I'm trying to think of her middle name

(Evelyn speaks)

That's ok

(Benjamin speaks)

Romana Mittman, used to have a middle sister (non-transcribed statement) when she-Lucille and Romana, and Lucille and (non transcribed first name) is all buried in Old Ararat

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm (faintly)

(Benjamin speaks)

Old Ararat, I'm used to calling it Old Ararat

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

But my sister Romana, she was born in Harrisburg

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, alright. And the boys?

(Benjamin speaks)

Huh?

(Evelyn speaks)

Who are the boys?

(Benjamin speaks)

Romana had four boys

(Evelyn speaks)

No, you-your brothers. Who are your brothers?

(Benjamin speaks)

My brothers?

(Evelyn speaks)

6, Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

My, I had a brother named Clint, (non-transcribed first name), (non-transcribed name) Brim, and myself, and John Lee, and Bobby Gray, and there-Jimmy. Jimmy, now the other name I can't think of it

(Evelyn speaks)

Yes, that's fine, we-that's fine, alright!

(Benjamin speaks)

He's the youngest, Jimmy's the youngest

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, tell me about the-the schools that you went to when you were a little boy with your-

(Benjamin speaks)

I went to school in Mount Airy through-I didn't do much high school until Mount Airy. I uh- went to-to the nfatb grade here in Mount Airy, which was the Old Jones High School on Ararat, and I quit. When I quit school, I left there and went down to Rocky Mountain, and then they had a school there called uh- what's the name of that school? (*faintly*) I may not can call it (*faintly*)

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm (*faintly*)

(Benjamin speaks)

Ah-

(Evelyn speaks)

Then let me go back, where did you go to elementary school?

(Benjamin speaks)

I went to Mount Airy

(Evelyn speaks)

Bu-wh-wh-where was it located in Mount Airy?

(Benjamin speaks)

In-down there on Virginia Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, and ho-

(Benjamin speaks)

Down there on Virginia Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, and how far did that school go, in grades? How far did it go in grade?

(Benjamin speaks)

That grade, as for the grades went on then

(Evelyn speaks)

Did it go to the 8th grade or?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, No maam. It went to the 7th around me thinking of-

(Evelyn speaks)

ih grade?

(Benjamin speaks)

And, when you graduated from there, you went to the high school. High school started at the 8th grade

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-but on, where-

(Benjamin speaks)

Let me see, 8th, 8th9th, ten, that's right

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And you finish in th-in the eleventh, in the eleventh you need the eleventh grade got to you was through with-

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

High school

(Evelyn speaks)

Hmmm (*faintly*), Mm-hmm, (*faintly*) Mm-hmm (*faintly*)

(Benjamin speaks)

I'll tell you the name of that school in Rocky Mountain

(Evelyn speaks)

OK!

(Benjamin speaks)

I believe it was the Booker T. Washington High

(Evelyn speaks)

Ah, alright, mmm-hmmm, that-

(Benjamin speaks)

Bo-Booker T. Washington High, if I aint mistaken

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, did you finish from that scho-

(Benjamin speaks)

I believe there was a professor Holmes, was the Superintendent

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm, mm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And-

(Evelyn speaks)

Ben, did you finish from that school, did you graduate from Booker T. Washington?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, I didn't finish

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

I left there, and went to Norfolk, Virginia

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hrnm

(Benjamin speaks)

And worked in the Navy yard

(Evelyn speaks faintly)

Mmm-hmm. Ah-

(Benjamin speaks)

And-

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, can you come back to th-the-the school on Virginia Street and tell us who were the teachers, who were the principal, at that time?

(Benjamin speaks)

The principal when I left?

(Evelyn speaks)

When you were there?

(Benjamin speaks)

L.H Jones

(Evelyn speaks)

Was the principal down on Virginia Street?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, he wasn't no principal down on Virginia Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Who was the principal down on Virginia Street?

(Benjamin speaks)

I believe he was also, but then in the other school, down on Virginia Street, like in high school, like the regular one

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, I know, but they had elementary school, so they had a principal

(Benjamin speaks)

Yeah, if-if I aint mistaken, L.H Jones was the principal then

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, no-who was your teacher?

(Benjamin speaks)

In high school then?

(Evelyn speaks)

No, in elementary school

(Benjamin speaks)

I don't remember in ele-uh-there was a teacher from Greensboro, they called her Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Elsie, and there was Mrs. (non-transcribed family name) which was L.H's fa-mother

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, she was a teacher

(Benjamin speaks)

And there was a teacher, which he was a principal, Fred Davis

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnm-hmmm, ok

(Benjamin speaks)

And there was Mrs. Geraldine Jones

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

She was a principal some time

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And-

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, let's go to the high school

(Benjamin speaks)

In high school?

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, who were the teachers there?

(Benjamin speaks)

There was Mrs. Wilson, and Professor Frank, and there was a teacher from West Virginia, she was about your size, I believe it was Mrs. White, I don't know her first name, Mrs. White

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And Dr. L.H., but he was a principal

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm. Alright and he-yeah he was a principal at the-at the school there. And where did you all go to church?

(Benjamin speaks)

We went to the-the Methodist Church which was we call it a Methodist Church at the time, it was there on Old Virginia Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Do you remember the name of it?

(Benjamin speaks)

No-Afro American, it-lets see

(Evelyn speaks)

Oh, A-M, it was A-M-E

(Benjamin speaks)

A-M-E

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright

(Benjamin speaks)

It was on Old Virginia Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

It was a big church

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-was it the brick church

(Benjamin speaks)

No, it wasn't brick

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, mmm-hmm (*faintly*)

(Benjamin speaks)

Uh-we had two choirs

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I do remember it had two choirs, and they had-the preachers, I remember some of the preachers, one of them preachers name was the Rev. Peace

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, who were the musicians? Who were the musicians at that time? Played the piano

(Benjamin speaks)

Oh the musicians then, Mrs. Geraldine Jones played the piano and Mr. Samuel Williams, he played violin, and I believe that was it

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm, alright

(Benjamin speaks)

Well there was the singers, and there was a lot of people, a very lot of people

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

In the choir, in both choirs

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, uh, the main choir (non- transcribed statement) the other choir was mostly younger people, which they used up the balcony

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm, mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

They had a balcony place and sang up there

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And that was in the old Methodist Church

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah

(Benjamin speaks)

Yeah

(Evelyn speaks)

Can you think of any of the other activities that uh-the church had-ha do choirs, what were some of the other activities that the church had?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well there was, Mrs. Geraldine Jones, she uh-ah, made something Like a Glee Club. Which she kept in school and church also

(Evelyn speaks faintly)

Mmmmrn

(Benjamin speaks)

Which they had, uh, well there was uniforms, the gowns they wore

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And there was, everybody was in different places

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And there was churches in different places you know?

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

To-to perform

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hnnmm

(Benjamin speaks)

There were, I can't remember there was a lot of elder people there, um-which they had, there was people, not only me, or anybody else they looked accustomed to uh-being there and-and the parents then, they carried they youngins-the youngins they went to church. There wasn't no, I'm going to stay at home till 2 or 3 or nothing like that, they all went. I meant the ones that was able to go.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

They went to church. And they was glad to go

(Evelyn speaks)

Was there Sunday school?

(Benjamin speaks)

Maam?

(Evelyn speaks)

Was there Sunday school? Did they have Sunday school?!

(Benjamin speaks)

They had Sunday school also, they had Sunday school, if I aint mistaken, I believe Sunday school started on Sunday mornings uh- it would be either 9 or nine-thirty then they had the main service. Then they had one, the night service, the Sunday night service at 7 o'clock.

(Evelyn speaks faintly)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And then every Wednesday they had the regular pray- and prayer meeting, we had-the churches had different things

(Evelyn speaks faintly)

Mmm-hnnm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, they had, I'm-I can't think of the night per- ah-the night, but they had choir practice

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, it was just different than what it is- *light chuckle*) what it is now

(Evelyn speaks)

Righ-right. Ah, let me ask you why your bringing ah thoughts to my mind about that church, and now Mallilieu Jones. Did those churches merge,come together?

(Benjamin speaks)

It's the same church, the one that's down on South Street now

(Evelyn speaks)

And that was Mallilieu Jones?

(Benjamin speaks)

It's the same church

(Evelyn speaks)

Oh-

(Benjamin speaks)

Its-

(Evelyn speaks)

Just a different building?

(Benjamin speaks)

It's a different building

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

The other Old Mallilieu Jones was a larger church

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-bmm, was it Mallilieu Jones or was it, Mallilieu Temple?

(Benjamin speaks)

It was Mallilieu Temple

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh

(Benjamin speaks)

It wasn't Mallilieu Jones at the time

(Evelyn speaks)

(Non-transcribed mutter) Uh-huh

(Benjamin speaks)

And because, the new church, which is our preacher always (non transcribed statement) cause it was the A-M-E

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

It was down on South Street, uh which it don't have no bell, they bad a big bell tower in the old church

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Which it had ab-a bell tower, if I aint mistaken I believe the same bell that they have in front of the church now, use to be up at the tower at the old church

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh, yes

(Benjamin speaks)

I'm quite sure it did

(Evelyn speaks)

Yes, well did Mallilieu Temple join with Jones Temple, uh-over on West Virginia Street?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, not at the time. I believe there was joined in together somehow

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I don't know, somehow but I believe they was

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Cause I really don't want to lie, but I aint gone say it was the community or what, I really don't know

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, alright. Now can you tell us a little-a little about the uh-ah the transportation back then. When you were a little boy did your parents own a car, or did you-

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, my daddy-my daddy owned a car to but I can't remember the type. The last one I do remember, was the we had a old Dodge car, the last one. I ju-I just remember that

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

It was a old Dodge car, with the gears and everything different than it was now

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Uh-

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm,ok

(Benjamin speaks)

And, I think it was, the last I remember I believe the last one I remember, the last tags was on it was thirty-three, we was, matter of fact, we was about down on South Street, at the time. We was about, Mr- Mr. Richard Carter which he owned dry cleaning he owned a car, Mr. Lance Jones, he owned a car, because he was a taxi in the taxi business. And my father, I aint gone say how long he owned one, or nothing like that cause, I'm- the whole South Street at the time, that's all I can remember, and I believe that was all

(Evelyn speaks)

Well, the-you started naming business, do you name- other-were there other businesses, black businesses that you remember back there?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well then Mr. Richard Carter he was in the dry cleaning business

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, Do you know about what year?

(Benjamin speaks)

That was in Virginia, I didn't know. That was up on Old Virginia Street right off of main

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And there's Mr. Samuel Williamson, he was a shoe carpenter

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And that was, it can't be on Virginia Street, down on-on Virginia, South Street, was ah-if I aint mistaken I believe Dave Smith run it, then the Tuckers took it over, after so long a time

(Evelyn speaks)

Which Tucker?

(Benjamin speaks)

Coupe Tucker nim, Coupe Tucker is the father, and ah-I believe they call him Calvin, Cal Tucker

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And-and that's (non-transcribed statement) um, organization chairman, I believe there was (non-transcribed statement), and I think (non-transcribed family name), and I believe Masons

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I believe that was-that's all I can remember, or I can think of, but there wasn't no uh, Black American(non-transcribed statement) in Mount Airy, not no (non-transcribed statement). When the first Black American (non-transcribed statement)company was organized, it was organized after World War II

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

In which it was named Mr. Herman C. Johnson (non-transcribed statement)

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmrn-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, I really don't know cause I left Mount Airy, in the um-like we stayed all together a-at one post

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

American Legion

(Evelyn speaks)

Mrnm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I really don't know for sure but, (non-transcribed first and last name) used to be the chief of the American Legion here

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright!

(Benjamin speaks)

And, my brother, Kent he was the Secretary Treasurer, and what they use to do was give a donation, as you call it a prize or something to a graduate

(Evelyn speaks)

And what they did?

(Benjamin speaks)

America-as far as I know the American Legion they didn't do all that much for history. Uh-they did have (non-transcribed noun) and-

(Evelyn speaks)

Did they give scholarships? Did they give scholarships? Scholarships? Did they give money to students going off to school?

(Benjamin speaks)

Oh yeah, they give money when they graduated th-the-them what you call it, them children at school

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmrn-hmm. Mm- k

(Benjamin speaks)

And, uh- I don't know exactly who they gave them all to

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, mm-hmm (*faintly*)

(Benjamin speaks)

Because

(Evelyn speaks)

Mm-k

(Benjamin speaks)

I remember one year they gave the scholarship fund to um-I believe the name was (non-transcribed first name) Stuart.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And that's all I can remember is that

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, alright. Uh- I think you've covered all the business that you remember

(Benjamin speaks)

Maam?

(Evelyn speaks)

You've covered all the businesses

(Benjamin speaks)

As far as I ca-I'm concerned

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah-that you remember. Ah-do you remember a business that was ah- owned by your brother John? Was it John?

(Benjamin speaks)

John, he owns now, he own-

(Evelyn speaks)

N-No, before. Did he bav-wa-was he part owner of a cafe? Ah, With Sunny ah-

(Benjamin speaks)

He use-

(Evelyn speaks)

Sunny Jones?

(Benjamin speaks)

He and Buster Jones used to ow-own part of a cafe down on Old Virginia and South Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-bmm, was that the same one that Coupe had or a different one?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well then, I done even forgot, well uh-let me see I believe they name-they named it J and M

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Cafeteria

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

But I don't know how long it stayed or nothing like that

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmrn-hmm, Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

But, (non- transcribed first name) Jarvis he owned a body shop, it used to be on uh-South Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

But then he moved up on Ararat

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok (*very faint*)

(Benjamin speaks)

And, which they both was doing good- doing very good, and still are as far as I know

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, uh-huh, and your brother, ah-who does he have?

(Benjamin speaks)

How many children?

(Evelyn speaks)

What does he does? What does he do? What does John-

(Benjamin speaks)

He's in the body shop business

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, Where is he located? Where is he located!?

(Benjamin speaks)

He's up here on-on South Street, I don't know-I guess you call that South South Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Sou-South Street Mmm-bmm (*faintly*)Do you know how long he's been there? Mmm-hmm (*very faint*) If you can't remember, that's ok. We can get that from bim-

(Benjamin speaks)

No-

(Both speak and overlap in next two lines of transcription)

(Evelyn speaks)

Its prob-long time

(Benjamin speaks)

It's been several years because-

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeab-

(Benjamin speaks)

He was alone at the time being when he started there, um- when he started, I can put it this way, when he started, he started with Tim Jarvis

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And then he went off to hisself, and that's when he-wa down on Old South Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Oh, uh-huh

(Benjamin speaks)

But I don't know exactly what year

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, alright did you remem--Did you have any barbers?

(Benjamin speaks)

Barbers?

(Evelyn speaks)

You didn't name any business, right. Any barber shops?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, no we did- we didn't-I di-I went to the barber school, but I never did, I never did-

(Evelyn speaks)

Bu-but was anybody in a business in a barber shop here!?

(Benjamin speaks)

Nomaam.

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, what i-

(Benjamin speaks)

Oh yeah, you mean barber shops yeah-

(Evelyn speaks)

Who was the barber!?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well Raphael (non-transcribed last name) had a barber shop, and ah- he done barber business, and then there Mr. (non-transcribed first and last name)

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

That was back when I was young

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

He had a barber shop, he was doing the barber business

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, later then there was Coupe Tucker put up a barber-put up a building, on-on-on Virginia Street, and he brought a barber there from out of town. He-and I knew his man's name. He was-I done forgot his name

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

He was-he had he was kind of (non-transcribed statement)< possible transcription leads to: peg leg>

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

But that's been years ago, several years ago. I can't remember hi-his name

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmk

(Benjamin speaks)

But he married a Mount Airy lady,

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

They left here. They get married and left here together now, if I aint mistaken I believe she was a Strickland

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah (very faint)

(Benjamin speaks)

I believe she was a Strickland, I believe her daddy was uh-Homer Strickland, I thin-because they called him Rev. Strickland

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

That's -that's-that's been, that's back years ago *Ijus-(s/ight chuckle)*

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, alright. Do you remember any beauty parlors? Were there any beauty parlors?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well the only beauty parlors I ever known was it was (non-transcribed statement) people just went to each other's house

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah

(Benjamin speaks)

Or something uh-, Mrs. (non-transcribed first or last name) she fixed lady's hair, she used to live over on Hadley Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And Mrs. and Mrs. ah-Mrs. (non-transcribed first name) Franklin, she-she put a beauty, she done beauty, she put up a parlor with her husband, Buster Franklin on Old Virginia Street, and Leona McCarther on Ararat, which she put up a beauty parlor. Um-she was McCarther, and it might have been some more around in different places, in which I didn't know

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm. Ah, now I want to ask you about the uh- military. Did your father serve in the military?

(Benjamin speaks)

He was in World War I

(Evelyn speaks)

You know where he served?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, I don't

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

(Chuckling) I'm just telling the truth, I don't know

(Evelyn speaks)

He-be was in World War I, well, what about your brothers, any of them-?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well no he wa-was uh-he did go over in France as far as-ah-over down in France at the time. Then my oldest brother he was in the military, Clint and he sta-ah-he stayed in there, in the military around five years, if I aint mistaken

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And be was in the Pacific, and I had my brother Claude, he was in the military, and he was over in Europe, he served over in Europe, and that was during World War II, I don't know the years now for sure

(Evelyn speaks)

And Clint was in World War II?

(Benjamin speaks)

Mmm-hmm, and I was in the military, and I was in the Navy, I served in the Pacific

(Evelyn speaks)

Ah-and so Claude and ah, Clint was in the Army

(Benjamin speaks)

Clint was in the Army

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And Claude was in the Army

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright

(Benjamin speaks)

And I was in the Navy

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, we-were did you serve, South Pacific?

(Benjamin speaks)

It was Pacific

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright

(Benjamin speaks)

I was in the Pacific, Northwest Pacific

(Evelyn speaks)

Northwest

(Benjamin speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm. Was ah, Clint in the Northwest Pacific in the Army, or South Pacific?

(Benjamin speaks)

Clint was in some part, so many places I couldn't call it

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

But I do know we use-this was the time I was over there, we use to, this is the-half the time they had (non transcribed adjective) letters we use to write one another, at the time being he was i- in New Guinea

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, *(clears throat)*

(Benjamin speaks)

But I was in the Solomon Islands there

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And the island was on, I was on so many of them I can't call it

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, they had-

(Benjamin speaks)

And-

(Evelyn speaks)

Se-several of them there, ah so there were 3 out 6?

(Benjamin speaks)

Maam?

(Evelyn speaks)

3 out of 6 were in the military!?

(Benjamin speaks)

Yes maam

(Evelyn speaks)

There were 3 of you, uh-huh these are the 3 oldest ones aren't they?

(Benjamin speaks)

Yeah, 3, Its-Cla-uh-Jo-uh, John was in the military

(Evelyn speaks)

Oh, John was to?

(Benjamin speaks)

He-he was I thi-I think he was in the Ko-ah after World War II

(Evelyn speaks)

Korean War Conflict?

(Benjamin speaks)

Yeah, he was in the military

(Evelyn speaks)

Did he go to Korea?

(Benjamin speaks)

I believe he was in Korea, ah- but he was in the medics in the military, ifl aint mistaken

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright

(Benjamin speaks)

And-and ah-Jimmy he was in the military, which he-he cam-he left college to Fayetteville State ah- he went to the military, and I don't know what year I can't remember the year, or none of that he-

(Evelyn speaks)

What about the branch, did he go to the Army?

(Benjamin speaks)

Now, I don't kn-I don't know if he was overseas, went overseas or not

(Evelyn speaks)

With the Army?

(Benjamin speaks)

He was in the Army, him and-

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, he went after he graduated from Fayetteville State?

(Benjamin speaks)

Ah-He played football, I don't know where he- just to tell you the truth I don't know but, he was going to be a teacher ah- or something like that

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

But he nev-I don't know, I don't think he wa-but he-he ah- after he come out the ser-when he left the service, he married, and lived in Greensboro

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah

(Benjamin speaks)

And ah-I-the family sai-he ah was in- manager of a construction business or was,

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, that's right (*faintly*)

(Benjamin speaks)

And that's about all I know about it

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-k, ah-Can you tell me ah-, as we were talking about the businesses, I dido'task you about the social life back there; what did young people to entertain themselves on Saturday, and Friday, or-or after church? What was social life like when you were a young boy?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, they did-well the social life now, around then ah-it really wasn't anything to do, or nothing. Um-I use to stay out all night

(Evelyn speaks)

Well, what did you do?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, just about the average things, bout the- no- nothing the meanish things, but not the average things

(Evelyn speaks)

Which is?

(Benjamin speaks)

Ah-well then kids-

(Evelyn speaks)

Did you go to the movies?

(Benjamin speaks)

When you-when you go out and get drunk and go in

(Evelyn speaks)

Ye-they would?

(Benjamin speaks)

They didn't

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, but wha-what did you do?

(Benjamin speaks)

Nothing

(Evelyn speaks)

Were there places to go for entertainment?

(Benjamin speaks)

Yeah, it was a lili-a little places to go. Just like you go to a-a date, or carry-you went to a theater

(Evelyn speaks)

S-so-

(Benjamin speaks)

Ub-or go to a place to- and pl-play the Piccolo

(Evelyn speaks)

Where was that? Wh-name that place in Mount Airy that you went to, do you remember it?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well there was mostly the cafes that was they (non-transcribed statement) we had the Piccolo there in (non-transcribed statement), and Mrs. (non-transcribed last name) had a place, a dance in the basement

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And ah-they use to have warehouse dances

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Large dances, which they bring large bands in Mount Airy, bring large bands there, and there was never no real (non-transcribed statement)

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, bu-where was these warehouses dances held, ah-wh-where, where were these warehouse?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well it was several warehouses they- well they had- *(long pause)*

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, ah- *(faintly)*

(Benjamin speaks)

Well they had a warehouse over there on Rockfor-, one close to Rockford Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

And over on South Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And matter fact (non-transcribed verb) they did have around 8 firehouses around that (non-transcribed statement),

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

But you never did see no-

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm (*very faintly*)

(Benjamin speaks)

Nobody out-out after midnight.

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah

(Benjamin speaks)

Not no young folks

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah

(Benjamin speaks)

Cause the aver-most average young folks, even the couch potatoes, ah- cause it was after elev-eleven o'clock

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh, mm-hmm. You mentioned the theater earlier, tel I me about that

(Benjamin speaks)

It wasn't but one theater here

(Evelyn speaks)

Where was it?

(Benjamin speaks)

It was, not just one, I mean this was way years ago

(Evelyn speaks)

That's what I'm-

(Benjamin speaks)

This was the old Grand Theatre,

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh

(Benjamin speaks)

And-they stayed (non-transcribed statement) at night

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

By eleven o'clock you was back home

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, where did you sit, in that theatre, where did you go to sit?

(Benjamin speaks)

That was discrimination

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, where did you go to sit?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, I use to go around to the back

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmmm

(Benjamin speak)

And we- (non-transcribed statement) and everything, and they had colored help there,and-

(Evelyn speaks)

So did you just walk right in the theatre, did you have climb some steps or, how did you go in?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well we had-I just like-um-ah wa-(non-transcribed statement) was like the fire escape, bu the steps was, they was descent and everything, we went down in the back they had places for the colored to sit, and places for the white

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

The whites sat, the colored sat up and above the white

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm. So when you went to the back you went up steps, and it put you up-up high?

(Benjamin speaks)

It was the ba-ba-balcony

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmrn, Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

I imagine you've been there

(Evelyn speaks)

I re- a lil-a little bit, 1-1 recall it

(Benjamin speaks)

Huh?

(Evelyn speaks)

I recall it

(Evelyn speaks)

I-I didn't go often, my pa-my parents didn't allow us to go to the mo-

(Benjamin gestures)

<Laughter>

(Evelyn speaks and gestures)

<small chuckle> Movies

(Evelyn speaks)

Ah-was there, tell us about back in those days, other kinds of things that were in the city, that was discriminating, you said this was the-, during the days of discrimination. What was it like in other things?

(Benjamin speaks)

It was-colored had we had two uh- baseball tea-they had a baseb- baseball teams. Ah-um, which to tell you the truth, I don't think they even had a name, but th- it was good.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And ah, (non-transcribed first name) Carter he-they played ball, uh-on Riverside Park, which was a big park, and some of them-the (non-transcribed family name) is still living now, and I think Mr. Tim Jarvis, he played ball, and (non-transcribed family name) is still living, and ah, and, ah, I remember, I just can't think of all they names right now.

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh

(Benjamin speaks)

And Pilot Mountain had some good players come from Pilot

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, mm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, a matter of fact arou-around Westfield and all they-they had good players, and over in Sandy Level, what we called it, they had good players from over in there, the Gwyns and I can't call all they names

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, ah, le-lets go back to-could you back in those days when you ha-took your date out, for restaurants did you go in any restaurants to eat?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, ah the on-on-only reason ah I could carry someone out to dinner, we didn't, wasn't no cafes or nothing like that, Oh you could do it, but it wasn't no advertisement or nothing like that, uh, you like you could like you could go over someone's house, if you was invited

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Then, that was just about it

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Evelyn speaks)

Well do you remember about the restrooms, and traveling around the area, restrooms and water fountains that were separate too, were there anything like that? Did that exist?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, just like the theatre, ah, when we went to theatre there, there wasn't no restrooms for the coloreds, or no water fountains or nothing like that

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm, yeah (*faintly*). Ah-

(Benjamin speaks)

As for other places it was about the same

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

It was the same everywhere then

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Which in you had to name up, like when you was out in public, and we would go to use-use the rest-the restroom, we had to use colored and white.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And I can't say it still aint going on which I doubt it, but, that's the way it was then

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, ah I just lost my thought (*very faintly*). Di-did you ever have an experience, ah-

(Benjamin speaks)

Maam?

(Evelyn speaks)

Did you ever have any experiences of discrimination where you, a-any-any place you went in Mount Airy, and you felt or you know you were discriminated against personally?

(Benjamin speaks)

Not me, but I guess several others have, because-actually you knew ahead of time that, in a way of speaking you wasn't really invited

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, yeah, but su- suppose you went in the store have you ever been discriminated against in the store?

(Benjamin speaks)

WeU stores, which for instance if you went in the public in the store, like (non-transcribed statement), which back then (non-transcribed statement) they had for black and white

(Evelyn speaks)

Black and white belts?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, no back in the old days if you-if you had to use the restroom

(Evelyn speaks)

Oh, ok, mmm-hmm, but what about purchasing things? Have you ever been discriminated-?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, it wasn't no, it wasn't any trouble with that

(Evelyn speaks)

No?

(Benjamin speaks)

Not as far as I know, it wasn't

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, you were always treated wi-

(Benjamin speaks)

You was always treated right as a purchaser-

(Evelyn speaks)

<coughs and overlaps answer from Benjamin>

(Benjamin continues)

That's with purchasing anything

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, alright ah-

(Benjamin speaks)

Purchases and change, there wasn't no-wasn't no questions asked

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm mmm-hmmm. Can you think of places where uh at that time when you colored, where colored people could not go?

(Benjamin speaks)

Maam?

(Evelyn speaks)

Were there places where colored people could not go!?

(Benjamin speaks)

Oh yeah! There were a lot of places colored people couldn't go.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

There was churches, churches an-and most of all-all public places which colored couldn't go. Just for instance, when people ride the bus from here to Winston you normally here was supposed to get on the back. And-

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm (*very faintly*)

(Benjamin speaks)

And around here, they had a passenger's train, if you would ride the train, you got in-I-if I aint mistaken you got in the first coach

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

You didn't get in the fi-first coach close to the engine.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

You didn't get in that back quit; on the back of them, you got in from the smoke stack, from the-on the first coach,

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Which-if I'm-ifl'm quite-quite sure.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

In which, in Mount Airy, back then they had several colored railway people here, which they had nice homes

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, do you remember any of those people?

(Benjamin speaks)

Yeah, I can remember-

(Evelyn speaks)

The names, do you?

(Benjamin speaks)

I can remember a few of them

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

But-

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I think some of them Galloways

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Then there was ah, (non-transcribed statement) Galloway then it was his daddy, he was a older man, ah he was, his name was Andrew

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

He was a railroad man

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, al-a whole lot of them Rawleys were railroad people, um there was a man who use to live on Virginia Street, which he had a nice home there. He was a railroad man, and I believe he-he was a conductor

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, it was several other colored people around Mount Airy

(Evelyn speaks faintly)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Ah, um, all over in Mount Airy from Ararat to Sandy Level

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, Mount Airy, around town

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, the majority of the people, they-they left Mount Airy

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, a-after the railroad?

(Benjamin speaks)

Huh?

(Evelyn speaks)

After the railroad closed?

(Benjamin speaks)

After the rail-no, I aint gone say after the railroad, because some of them left during the railroad, and ah-

(Evelyn speaks)

Ben, do you remember where the station was?

(Benjamin speaks)

The old railroad station?

(Evelyn speaks)

Right

(Benjamin speaks after coughing)

The old railroad station well then, was down at the lower end of Granite Street,

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

They use to have furniture factories all aro-all around. We had a-a large railroad station.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

They had a passenger station; it was larger than-it was larger than our building you see here

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

It was up sitting on a hill, it was a nice, a little ole nice place. It was famous I believe it was made of stone

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, I-I believe it's still standing, that thing was thick-

(Evelyn speaks)

Wha- granite?

(Benjamin speaks)

The old railroad station, I believe it's still standing, I don't know what they use it to

(Evelyn speaks)

But, is it granite? It-on Granite Street

(Benjamin speaks)

Down on the right hand of Granite Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

It used to be a Presbyterian church up above there, on Granite Street there, before the aluminum company had-I think the lumber yard right up above that

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And, must be (non-transcribed statement) ah-Presbyterian Church, it was- it was the largest, might as well say it was the largest (non-transcribed statement), A-M-E, A-M-E church that was on Virginja Street.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Which it was used-it was used for (non-transcribed statement), because I do remember that-

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

After- school, which the school was already in use for, not Sunday school, what did we use to call that? Ah- the Sunday school meetings, all the kids-

(Evelyn speaks)

Sss-Sunday school-after-you mean after school?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, this was when the litt-this was after -school was out

(Evelyn speaks)

Oh, ah-like vacation Bible school?

(Benjamin speaks)

Bible school!

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speak)

Bible school

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

There would be alo-a lot of people there from all over.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm, ok

(Benjamin speaks)

They bad-they bad teachers, well I aint gone say they was school teachers. All the school teachers they had teachers, teachers they bad some-they ha- hea-heads of the church in the churches, which-which then-they actually didn't minister or nothing

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

It was something just for other heads

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm, ok, Ben tell me, ab-I didn't ask you, who are you married to, and who are your children?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, I'm married to ah, Lorene Penn Mittman, Lorene Penn

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And we had one son, ah and bis name is Benjamin Will Mittman, and we lived in Greensboro

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

Ah, which he has a church down there, he's a minister, and I can't remember the name of that new church

(Evelyn speaks)

Did he-

(Benjamin speaks)

He's a Baptist-

(Evelyn speaks)

He's a Baptist minister

(Benjamin speaks)

And, we were married in 1950, ifl aint mistaken

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

We were married nineteen, we married November, November 4th 1950 ifl aint mistaken.

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, now I want to ask you some other just thought questions that tell me about how, ah-ah things that might have affected you or-or experiences you had in life, ah, who in your family, or that you remember had a great influence on you, who influenced you a great deal as a young man, a young boy, a person?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, to tell you the truth aint no one really have an influence on me

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

My mother, had an influence on me, so did my father; but otherwise, my brothers and sisters, I just, they were just brothers and sisters. I didn't take them for no influences

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm <*slight chuckle*> ok, ah can you tell about a time that you were very happy in life, and what happened?

(Benjamin speaks)

<*slight chuckle*> Um, I couldn't say now, it's been off and on

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, can you name one thing that made you very happy in life?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, I really can't say nothing about happy cause, I was kind one of them what you call not bragging or nothing, but I was kind of what you call, happy go lucky

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, ok can you name a person in your life that you admired, and what-what is it about that person you admire?

(Benjamin speaks)

Oh there were several people I-I talked about a whole lot

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And which I thought about a whole lot, which sometimes I think about them now

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

<*tape breaks*>

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, can you think of a person in your life, whom you admired, and what-what is it about that person that you admire?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, I liked Mr.- I admired Mr. Richard Carter

(Evelyn speaks)

And what was it about him?

(Benjamin speaks)

And he was just, always just ordinary (non-transcribed verb) or something

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

And he wouldn't never tell you he was wrong, and he wasn't no, want to be Mr. do well, which they call it. And if he couldn't never tell you anything great, he wouldn't tell you anything.

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, ok. Alright, did you ah-ever have sad times in life, that you can share with us?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well uh, I guess so <tape breaks> when my <tape breaks> passed, and my mother passed, and when we separated, we had sad times some.

(Evelyn speaks)

Who separated?

(Benjamin speaks)

Me-me and my wife

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok, was the-di-did something ever make you really angry? Can you think of things in your past that re-you got angry about?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, no,no, not really

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, ok. Is there a national event that happened in the country that had an effect on you in a special way? Anything happen in the United States?

(Benjamin speaks)

No, no

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, did you have ah-something, ah-to share about a time that you really felt proud to be Ben Mittman?

(Benjamin speaks)

Well, I- I wouldn't exactly say a hero or nothing, but I was-I was proud

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

I was glad just to be old Ben

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, when?

(Benjamin speaks)

Now, and really all the time I guess

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, what things are in life are the most discouraging to you that you can think of? Anything in life that's discouraging

(Benjamin speaks)

Discouraging?

(Evelyn speaks)

Yeah, to you

(Benjamin speaks)

Not really

(Evelyn speaks)

Uh-huh, did something funny ever happen to you, that you can tell us about?

(Benjamin speaks)

There's plenty of things that happened, I just can't think of them

(Evelyn speaks)

Ah, yeah, I understand. Tell us about something that you think would, ah- be important to our youth today, and improvement in our society that would be important to our youth

(Benjamin speaks)

(Non-transcribed statement) <tape breaks in between answer> that's about it

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm, ok. Alright Ben, can you tell me what keeps you going now? What keeps you going?

(Benjamin speaks)

What keeps me going now?

(Evelyn speaks)

Mmm-hmm

(Benjamin speaks)

The only reason I can say is the Lord

(Evelyn speaks)

Ok

(Benjamin speaks)

That's the only one I knew is keeping me going, although I wear a pacemaker and <tape breaks>. And I know I been sick several years, the-that's not, the Lord is the onliest one I can think of

(Evelyn speaks)

Where do you go to church?

(Benjamin speaks)

A-M-E, cause [have-

(Evelyn speaks)

What's the name of it?

(Benjamin speaks)

Is it Jones, is where-

(Evelyn speaks)

Mallilieu-Mallilieu Jones is it?

(Benjamin speaks)

Jones is that A-M-E?

(Evelyn speaks)

No, the-is the church that I-I, you came from the other Sunday is that your church?

(Benjamin speaks)

Is that's-

(Evelyn speaks)

Is that your church?

(Benjamin speaks)

Uh-huh

(Evelyn speaks)

Mallilieu Jones

(Benjamin speaks)

That's the same one that use to be on Virginia Street

(Evelyn speaks)

Alright, ok, Ben is there anything else that you can think of that you'd like to share?

(Benjamin speaks)

(Non-transcribed mutter) I can't think of anything now-now to tell you the truth

(Evelyn speaks)

So we have worn you out huh?

(Benjamin speaks)

I-I know he's not worn me out

(Evelyn gestures)

<Laughter>

(Benjamin speaks)

Cause what the man think of, it aint worth a dime no way

(Evelyn speaks)

Oh, yeah! You've given me some very good information here today

(Benjamin speaks)

Maam?

(Evelyn speaks)

You've given some very good information

(Benjamin speaks)

Well you very welcome

(Evelyn speaks)

And I thank you very much Ben

(Benjamin speaks)

And I thank you, I thank you

<tape breaks>