

## **Transcript of a Recorded Interview with Albert Burton, 4 Jan 1989**

*Interviewer: Robert Blythe*

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*This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed conversation. The reader, therefore, should bear in mind that he is reading a text of the spoken rather than the written word.*

RB: Let's begin by asking your name and birth date, if you'll give those, please? Give your full name and your birth date?

AB: Albert Burton, born June 9, 1905.

RB: Alright. And where were you born?

AB: Born in Madison County in the neighborhood of Round Hill.

RB: Neighborhood of Round Hill.

AB: Round Hill.

RB: Okay. And can you give just an approximate location of Round Hill. Where would that be?

AB: Round Hill would be about 8 or 12 miles from here and you go out on Old Barnes Mill Road and turn off on Crest Road. It'd take you right into Round Hill. And you get to Round Hill and you turn right and it'd take you down to where I was born which would be another mile. You turn to Round Hill and you'd see these round mounds or hills that were said to be made by the Indians. That was called Round Hill. And in Round Hill, goes about as far as we say to go about a mile and then you'd get to what we call the Cottonburg neighborhood.

RB: Cottonburg.

AB: In the Cottonburg neighborhood, they had a store there and several houses up and down the road.

RB: Okay. Now, who were your parents and I understand you also have some information about your grandparents. Let's start with your parents.

AB: My parents were Sam Burton and I don't know just what year he was born.

RB: Okay.

AB: And my mother was Annie Mathet Bennett Burton.

RB: That was Anna?

AB: Annie Mathet Bennett Burton.

RB: Okay.

AB: Here, it looks like she was born in 1878.

RB: August 30, 1878.

AB: Yes, sir. Because there's AMB. Her name was Annie Mathet Bennett.

RB: Annie Mathet.

AB: Mathet.

RB: Mathet Bennett. Alright.

AB: I have a picture of her up in the little house. An old picture. You might want to see it sometime?

RB: Yes. I would certainly like to see that. Alright. And, let's see, that's your mother and your father. Now, you also have some information about your grandparents.

AB: Yeah. My grandfather's name was George Burton. He died . . . I don't remember when he was born, but he died in . . . George Burton was born on August 26, 1853.

RB: That's when he was born.

AB: Yes. August 26. He was born and his death year . . . He died. I got that out of my old bible, December 24, 1896.

RB: Eighteen ninety-six.

AB: Uh-huh. I don't know why they left it out.

RB: About 43 years old?

AB: Yeah. And he died. He froze to death leaving town on his way home out on what we call the Curtis Pike. My grandmother had had three girls and three boys and the children must've been in teenage life because she said she left them at home and she went on to work to take care of a family, and a white gentleman found him on the road home froze to death in the fence. How I found that out, I was at a funeral \_\_\_\_\_ and I mean, I don't feel . . . I don't feel. I run into this

white fellow and we got to talking. He asked me my name and I told him. He said, oh, yes. I remember you're kin to George Burton. I said it was my grandfather's grandpa you're talking about. He said well, he died . . . I found him going to my house next to the fence.

RB: Hmm. So, that was George Burton?

AB: George Burton. That's my grandfather on my father's side.

RB: Okay. Your grandfather on your father's side.

AB: And Albert Bennett was my mother's father.

RB: Okay. Albert Bennett was your mother's father.

AB: He was my grandfather.

RB: Alright. And he was born . . . This is the one that was born August 26, 1853?

AB: Yes. 1853.

RB: Okay. Anything else about your grandparents that you are aware of?

AB: My grandmother, I don't know when she was born, but she said she remembers . . . she was in slavery and she remembers peaking out the window when the riders came through to buy slaves and bought her mother and she saw her mother sold off the auction block, and a white lady had taken her and hid her in a closet so they wouldn't see her. Said every time they came around, most slaves, she'd take and hide her again, and she'd bring her out and she had a spinning wheel. They weaved in those days. She'd turn the spinning wheel for the lady.

RB: This is your grandmother?

AB: That's my grandmother. Mary Jane Richardson was her name.

RB: Okay.

AB: Before that, she married . . . She didn't marry the first time, but the first time, in those days, she told me that she got to be about 18 years old, at an auction, they put a boy and a girl together to have children and raise as slaves and they'd put them together, and she was carrying her oldest child when the war was going on in Richmond. When they fought the Civil War.

RB: The Battle of Richmond.

AB: The Battle of Richmond. She went out on Lancaster Pike, carrying her baby and she could hear the guns. And she said when they declared the colored were free, then, she said she left this man and married George Burton. In fact, we got the name from the families. The Burtons. She

don't remember her name before she married. They called her Mary Jane. And she married again, Ken Richardson years later. And he died in 1906.

RB: Now, I notice this AMB. Now, would that be the same Annie Mathet Burton?

AB: Yeah.

RB: Married to Sam Burton? Annie Mathet Bennett was married to Sam Burton December 30, 1902.

AB: Yeah. That's right. And I was born in 1905. I had one brother before me. He died when he was small baby and I was born and then another was born after me.

RB: Did you say your grandfather's name, your father's name was . . . ?

AB: Sam.

RB: Sam Burton. And your grandfather's name was . . . ?

AB: Albert Bennett. That was my mother's father.

RB: Okay, your mother's father.

AB: Yeah. And George Burton was my father's father.

RB: Okay, would this GBC, would that be George Burton by any chance or somebody else? We don't know?

AB: I really don't know. Yeah. I don't know.

RB: Okay. Okay then. Alright. Let's go on then. So, you were born around Round Hill. At Round Hill. What else do you remember about your childhood? Anything at all?

AB: Well, after I grew up to some size, I would say around 6 or 7 years old, maybe 7 or 8, in my childhood, I went to school at . . . well, my first school I remember going . . . I was about four when my mother died, and I stayed with my grandfather, Albert Bennett. My father lived there for a while and so, he left and sent for his mother. This was my grandmother, his mother, to come raise me. And she come from Cincinnati. All of them moved to Cincinnati. She came from Cincinnati and we lived in the log cabin on the Burton farm in Maupintown. Had my first childhood memories there. We lived in Maupintown in an old log cabin. It had two rooms and I'd see the logs, you know, see between logs, and a big old fireplace. My father would go out and take a horse and hook on the log and drag it up to the door and those would go in the fireplace and we'd build a big fire. And my grandmother would pull the ashes back at night and bake potatoes on that. And I slept in a bed with my grandmother on one side and \_\_\_\_ on the other side. And we had on the floor an old, \_\_\_\_\_ some kind of raggedy rug on the floor. On the

kitchen floor \_\_\_\_\_ and wash it off with lye water. We lived there, I guess . . . I don't know how long we lived there, but we finally moved from there and went to Round Hill. When I told you I was born in Round Hill. I said I was born in Round Hill down in Madison County. And my father and mother went back to her father's house when she taken sick. That's when she died, in Maupintown. Then, down at the school building, I talked to you some about. That's where they had church and the schoolhouse.

RB: They used the school building for school and for church.

AB: And I remember when she died, I saw her laying in a cot in her room. I remember she died. I remember that. I do remember the . . . It was at the G.S. Hathaway Funeral Home here in Richmond, and I remember having the hearse coming there with the white horses on carrying her on the buggy behind it going to the funeral. But, I don't remember going to the cemetery and coming back. That would've been out on Burnam farm in Maupintown. I got my mother buried out there and my two brothers. My first brother and then my last brother.

RB: Buried on the Burnam farm in Maupintown.

AB: In Maupintown. Of course, in Maupintown, it's about two miles from where the church was. They might call it Madison Road but we called it Maupintown. And my father was living before my grandmother came and, of course, he'd take me to Sunday school and Will Maupin was my Sunday school teacher. And all I can remember of him ever saying anything was that you boys grow up and be good Christians and have a white house with white knobs on the door.

RB: Now, you're talking about the church that was out near Maupintown?

AB: Yeah. And the schoolhouse were the same building.

RB: Did the church have a name? Can you recall?

AB: No. No. We always called it Maupintown and the last member there after I moved to town, of course, years ago, when the Sunday school convention. The one lady's name was Mariah Maupin. You ever heard of her?

RB: Mariah Maupin.

AB: Mariah Maupin. And all the members died out and all the members moved away and nobody there and the church got so they didn't have no church and she would always hold on to it and represent it in the Sunday School Convention she'd come out and represent Maupintown.

RB: She was the last of Maupintown.

AB: Last of Maupintown.

RB: Do you remember her name?

AB: Well, let me sure now. Mariah Maupin.

RB: Oh, I'm sorry. It was Mariah Maupin. Okay.

AB: I believe it is.

RB: Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

AB: And she's got a daughter that lives in Maupintown now.

RB: Still living in Maupintown.

AB: Still living in Maupintown and is the only one down there. She lives down there, not far from church. Up the hill from the church, where the church used to be.

RB: Now, is the church still standing, by any chance?

AB: No. It's gone. I've looked. I'll take you down there sometime to show you the spot.

RB: Alright. I'd like to go down there to see that. Certainly.

AB: Yes, and show you how we turned in and go down to Maupintown and \_\_\_ Cottonburg. In Maupintown, lived several families. My uncle. My grandfather lived. My father lived closer over to him. His daughter had a house down the road from him and Jim Maupin lived in Maupintown with his family. Will Maupin lived over further from us. And two families lived. One family lived up above us. My grandmother, now, lived in Maupintown for one year. With horse and buggy, and we'd drive to town. I must've been about 12 or 13 years old, I think. We lived there one year and then, she said she felt she better come to town and so we moved to town. We came to town I think in 1921. That's when they built the church here. I walked up the steps, wooden steps.

RB: This is the First Baptist Church on Francis and Collins? When they built that church?

AB: Francis and Collins. And they built that church.

RB: Were you living in town when that church was built?

AB: No, I don't think. I think I came to town later that year.

RB: Okay.

AB: I know when they laid the cornerstone, but Z.B. Irvine, Z.B. Irvine's mother was my grandfather's sister.

RB: Z.B. Irvine's mother. And this was which grandfather?

AB: Bennett.

RB: Grandfather Bennett's sister. Okay.

AB: So, we'd always come and spend the night with Irvine's and see, we'd play all up and down Hill Street and play at church and all that.

RB: So, he came to the laying of the cornerstone. And that was in 1921, according to the stone, now. It was 1921.

AB: Yes. And we walked up the wooden framed steps then. We walked up them. I remember going up in there to the service. Some things I lost memory. I went there to the old church to a service before it was tore down.

RB: So you remember the old church?

AB: Oh, sure. I went up in it. But I don't . . .

RB: On the same spot?

AB: Same spot. It was the stone steepled church with the \_\_\_\_\_. You'd go in from the side and go in from the side. And baptism pool was right in the pulpit. It was on a stand raised up. But I'd go to that church forever. I never could remember, you know, coming out, I was pretty small. I was small enough to come down with my grandmother. So, after Pa had moved from there and came down, in fact, he came in back to Burnam farm to the Coy farm. The farm he worked for the Burnams and the Coys. And he came back there and after I got, I guess, about 12 years old. He had . . . Of course, I helped him with tobacco, and I was doing other things \_\_\_\_\_. During that time, they raised rye and wheat. At Round Hill, they had a mill who could take the corn and make meal and take the wheat and make flour. So, the thrasher when it was time to raise wheat, my father would cut the wheat down in a big sickle and had about five of them blades, or seven blades and just one big blade and he cut the wheat in \_\_\_\_ in a nice row and he'd have me come behind, and bundle it up, and I'd tie it up and stack it. It'd be done then. I'd get it all stacked up and they hauled it in wagons and they stacked the wheat and stacked the seed inside. They'd stack real high, higher than this house. They'd have made a row of stacks, probably ten on each side it's have a great big aisle down through the middle. The thresher would come along. Man come along in this direction \_\_\_\_ and folks stacking them for \_\_\_\_\_. He'd come in there and he set the part that done separating wheat from seeds and straw and he'd have an engine \_\_\_\_\_hundred feet with a great big belt and coming over and run it. They'd throw that wheat in there and it would throw the straw out. And then, we stacked straw.

RB: And take the seed, the grain off.

AB: The seed, the grain off. And my father would sack up shelled corn. So, we'd shell corn. We'd shell corn and we'd take one row down through the middle of the grain and then we'd take a hand and cut it off that way. We'd shell a whole tub full of corn, half a tub full. We put that in

a sac and put it on the horse and then we carried it to the mill. The mill man would take it off and grind my meal up and put the meal back in the bag and put them on the horse and go back home. Flour was the same way. But, I wouldn't bag flour. The flour \_\_\_ and my father would get a sac of flour, and he would have a whole bag or barrel of flour, a barrel of meal. He buried his vegetables. He grew his vegetables and buried them under the ground and all he'd have to buy in the winter would be sugar and coffee.

RB: You said that you would take the corn and the wheat to a mill. Where was the mill?

AB: At Round Hill. Round Hill. It was run by a family called Tussie. He had a store where you buy groceries and in the back of the store. What I mean by back of the store, I'd say about 50-60 feet here's this big mill. We'd take it and go in there \_\_\_ mill. And my grandmother used to wash for that family. She washed all up and down the road for families. When she first started, I was too small to keep up with her walking. She walked pretty fast. She bought me a tricycle. And I'd go on this tricycle and just fly. In the wintertime, she wrapped me all up. She'd take a teacup and she'd put about not quite half full of whiskey with turpentine in it, and sweeten it. Before she done that, she'd take the whiskey and put it in there, strike a match, and burn it. And a lady asked her what she was doing and she \_\_\_\_\_. She'd put turpentine in it and \_\_\_ she'd give it to me so I'd keep warm and wouldn't take cold and I'd get to ride my tricycle \_\_\_\_\_ half drunk. She'd make me turn around and come back.

RB: Old remedies. Old remedies that would cure anything.

AB: And, uh, I had all kinds of fever. I didn't have typhoid fever. I had the measles and I know something else. I didn't take the Diphtheria because we were vaccinated in school for that. But, I had taken a fever there and I was pretty sick and she sent for a doctor and the doctor had come from Kirksville. Because in Round Hill, we didn't have no doctor in Round Hill. He come from Kirksville. So, he had to come two miles. Two miles from Kirksville to Round Hill and a mile to Coys farm and down in the holler where we lived.

RB: This was around what time now? You were about how old?

AB: I would say . . . Well, when I was doing work on the farm, I was just bound to be about 8 or 9 or 10 years old, 'cause they'd make the children go to work at that time. Right about ten years old, I would think. While I was sick with fever, she went to the barn and get the cow and put in the \_\_\_\_\_.

RB: Now, the doctor . . . Was the doctor black or white?

AB: White doctor.

RB: He was a white doctor.

AB: I never seen no black doctor when I came to town until about 1921 when I went to Dr.

Golstein. The first black doctor. I've seen white doctors. Had two other doctors, Dr. Pope and Dr. Combs.

RB: Okay, now, so you came into town in Richmond around the time the church was finished off and the cornerstone was laid. Now, did you go to school before you came to town?

AB: Yeah, I went to school in Kirksville. The schoolhouse is down at the bottom where the church is, down over the hill. And I stayed at a house of \_\_\_\_\_. She was a . . . Mariah Smith. John Smith's sister which was Beatrice's father.

RB: Beatrice Huguely's father?

AB: Yeah. So, me being small, I couldn't walk up to Kirksville. At that time, I couldn't come from Round Hill. Coy's farm was farther than two miles, too far to walk. So, my father brought me to stay at Ms. Mariah Smith. And let me stay at her house. So, I guess I stayed there maybe a couple of years. I finally did walk later on back and forth. Yeah, a couple of years. Ms. Kurt was a teacher, and I stayed there and learned from here. Beatrice was there and Lori Smith and Mariah Smith. She had two granddaughters there. And Beatrice stayed there too because Mr. Smith brought her there and that was when I was four. So, we stayed there and went to school over the hill.

RB: You said the school was located over the hill behind what is now Mount Pleasant Baptist Church out in Kirksville.

AB: We went down the hill, and we had a fence down there. The church and schoolhouse sat right next to the fence at the bottom of the hill. Of course, about half way the hill . . . the hill goes way down. The church was only about, I guess, a couple hundred feet or something like that from the hill. Do you know where the dining room stands now?

RB: Yes. In the back of the church.

AB: In the back of the church. The Sunday school . . . The school house was from the dining room, I guess to the front door of the church. You can see how far it goes to the back of the church. We had all that . . . at recess, we had all that yard to play in.

RB: Do you remember any of your teachers down there by any chance?

AB: Only one, Ms. Kurt. Virgie Kurt.

RB: Virgie Kurt?

AB: Ms. Virgie Kurt. Uh-huh. She was a little heavysset woman and that's the only teacher I remember in Kirksville.

RB: Hmm-Mmm. She was a Kurt? Where'd she come from, do you remember?

AB: Cincinnati.

RB: I was just curious because when you said Kurt, I was thinking maybe if she was a Kirk maybe her name was from the family that started Kirksville. I was just wondering.

AB: No. And when she came there, I don't know. I started in the primer grade and in the primer grade, we'd learn the ABCs and things like that. That was the first teacher I'd run into.

RB: How old were you when you started school, do you remember?

AB: I must've been about five.

RB: About five? Okay. Now, you stayed at that school for how long?

AB: I stayed at that school until 1919. That's when the heavy flu came. Now, during that time, I was four years old up to 1919, my father during that time married again and I had a stepmother. He was married about, I'd say, about 2-3 years and she had a child. It was a girl and she died. And in 1919, she died probably at home and in 1917 or something like that. But, in 1919, there was a flu came by and they couldn't embalm nobody. Couldn't have no funeral because the flu was so bad. So, my father died and didn't have no funeral. Didn't have nobody's funeral. White undertaker came down and laid him out. They just take him from the casket and took him out to white cemetery and buried him on the farm. So, my father was on the Coy's farm.

RB: Where?

AB: Coy's farm.

RB: Coy.

AB: A mile from Round Hill.

RB: Oh, okay. A mile from Round Hill. You ever been down to the cemetery? Is the cemetery still there?

AB: Yeah. I suppose so. I've been meaning to call to see if can get down there, but I never have done it. And my half sister was buried in that cemetery. Also, I've been meaning to call down there. Now, you remember the time the man and his wife were killed out in the country several years ago.

RB: The Combs'?

AB: Combs.

RB: Yes.

AB: Well, I found my mother buried next to Combs' place. Burnam lived there and my grandpa worked for the Burnam family too all of his life. The cemetery is out back of the house and out through a group of trees called locust trees. And grandpa was buried in town.

RB: So, that's where your grand . . .

AB: That's where my mother and two brothers were buried.

RB: That's where your mother is buried.

AB: Yeah. And two brothers.

RB: Okay. So, the Combs' lived on the old Burnham farm?

AB: Yeah. They lived on the Burnham farm.

RB: Alright.

AB: So, I'm going to call them up and I'm going to try to be able to do it this year.

RB: And your father is buried on the Coy farm near Round Hill?

AB: Yeah.

RB: Okay. That's good to know. Now, let's see, you said around 1919, you said about that time, you stayed school.

AB: And in 1919, my father died, and I was down with the flu myself and my stepmother was living. My grandmother was down with the flu with her other son over in Garrard County. At the time my father died, they was well and so they came over where I was. And my father, when that came . . . during the first world war, he thought he was going to war and he told my grandmother. He said Mama, I'm going to the war, I want you to take Albert and keep him and raise him and don't let anybody have him. My stepmother tried to get me. Finally, I said no, I'm going to do what Sam says. Well, after he died, and after I got well enough, then we split up. So, we divided the furniture. My stepmother came to town and the law give her . . . some of the rule, law, that she had to take two-thirds to my one-third. So, Mr. Coy, Mack Coy and Nay Coy, and Alma Coy, those three was living. Their family was dead except for them three. Two brothers and one sister. They heard about it and Nay Coy told us that no, you ain't going to do that. You ought to divide it half and half. He said when he takes a chair, you take a chair. When he takes a ham, you take a ham. My father had a lot of meat. When he takes what meal is left, what flour is left, well whatever he wants and whatever you want, you all divide and one take one and one take another. We did that on down until we got down to the old family Bible and the dishes. When she was married, my mother married . . . The Burnam family gave her nice quilts and a lot of nice cut glass, beautiful dishes. My father would always come home from church on Sunday and he would get his bible down and he'd sit beside the window, the light on

this side, and sit there and read a whole Sunday afternoon. I'd be down on the floor playing toys. When I'd get too noisy, he'd cast his eye over and I'd know to quiet down. He'd read the bible until we got ready to go back to church. We come to church, sometime in the morning, and we stayed, I don't know what time we came home. We'd go to bed, sang a hymn, and lay down with him singing and preaching. And he'd come back in. He got down bible and sat down and read the rest of the Sunday until time was up, 5 o'clock, and he'd go over and milk. He'd have to do his milking. He would come back in and take off his shirt. Since I saw him reading the bible, I loved the bible. I loved the bible. I said I want the bible. You can have the dishes. Someone said, well, you would never keep dishes. When you move out, you're going to get them all broke. I wanted to take something I could keep. So, I went on then over to Garrard County with my grandma. I'd say two years later, she finally got her pension from Kenneth Richardson, her last husband who fought in the first world war. He fought in the Civil War and then he got her pension. John Black's grandfather was a lawyer and also a member of the First Baptist Church and he got her pension for her.

RB: Wait a minute now. Who's father?

AB: John Black. John David Black.

RB: John David Black's grandfather.

AB: No, great-grandfather.

RB: His great-grandfather.

AB: Yes. I believe I got it right. Yeah. John Black's grandmother was his daughter. And her name was Miss Viola Black.

RB: Viola Black's father was a lawyer?

AB: Yeah.

RB: So, that would be his great-grandfather. Okay.

AB: Yeah. Great-grandfather. So, he got her pension. When he got her pension, she drew \$1,025 \_\_\_\_\_. Her two sons were living in Canton, Ohio. They had a big flood up there and they had come home. They came from Ohio and needed to borrow some money for themselves. So, I guess they asked my grandmother and she gave it to them. And, after that, they bought a horse and buggy and that's when they started driving her around with the horse and buggy. We went around and finally, she decided when it comes to borrowing money, every time she draws every three months, she draws \$90. So, she changed it from \$90 every three months to \$30 a month. They'd give it to her every three months. And every three months, they'd come and borrow \$50 of it. One had come one time and the other would come another time. So, she just told them I just going to move out to my self. She take me and moved out to Maupintown.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1.

BEGINNING OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2.

RB: So, you got to go to Richmond, then?

AB: We got to go to Richmond. She liked being near the doctor. Our first doctor was Dr. Combs. Dr. Golstein.

RB: Dr. Golstein.

AB: Yeah.

RB: When you came to Richmond?

AB: He was the first black doctor around here in Richmond. And we lived on East Main Street. There's three houses beside the Richmond High School.

RB: Okay, so it would be . . . If you were at Richmond High School, you'd come across Maple Street and then up three houses.

AB: And so, we went there and we brought the horse and buggy to town and we kept the horses for about two years. I'm sure she lived around four years in town. She died in 1925. Your grandmother died in 1925. Okay.

AB: And after she was dead, I went down to cousin Dessie Moberly's down the street. Joe Moberly, the deacon of the First Baptist Church.

RB: Moberly. Uh-huh.

AB: And I stayed there two more years, I guess. Then, I decided . . . She died in February in 1925. So, I decided . . . I went on to stay in town and I decided to go around to cousin, Dessie. My uncle tried to get me to live with him, and I told him no. He said, well, I don't know what you're going to do. I hate to say this, but I don't know what you're going to do. You can't be there by yourself. And I don't know what you're going to do for friends. And I said you went to bed last night, and you slept, and didn't say a word. You went to sleep, and I never felt so bad that night. I was just sniffing all night long, but I went to bed.. But, I got my grandmother all washed up and cleaned up and everything. I was planning to put her to bed. And I said, grandma, now you're clean. Alright. And she had pretty, long hair and I put her hair all up. I washed that day, put out a big washing and everything and put her in the rocking chair and wrapped her up and said, now, I'll put you to bed. I washed up the bed and had everything clean. And she said . . . I had a couch laying there, and I laid down on the couch and opened the Bible, and looked through the Bible, and she said don't you leave me tonight. I said, Grandma, you know I ain't going to leave you tonight. And she went off to sleep. So, oh, I don't know, about 9 o'clock or something like that, I heard some kind of deep breath and I just thought maybe she was snoring. And I went in and it seemed like it was so quiet. I went in and shook

her. When I shook her, her head fell over. I went to pieces. I called Miss Vinie Moore, who lived next door. They were Methodist. Ms. \_\_\_\_ Dean's mother lived over across the road. She was a Methodist woman, and Mrs. Coppa Turner lived across the road, and she was a Methodist. And I sent for my cousin. Now, she wouldn't come. Didn't come. So, they said, let's do what you want to do. Do you want us to take her? I said, well, I don't know. She said well, I'd be willing to tell Boyd, James Boyd and Charles \_\_\_\_ whatever they want to do. So, they came and when they first came, oh, Albert, what are you going to do? And that just made it that much worse. Well, later on, my uncle had come. I'd been sending word all the time that their mother was sick and they never did come. So, only one came and stayed about a couple of hours. I reckon about eleven o'clock said well, I don't know, there's nothing I can do. I guess I'll go home. Another one came, Uncle \_\_\_\_ came. He stayed all night and I went to bed. He woke up the next morning and said you went to sleep in grandma's bed and you ain't going to live nowhere and he went on \_\_\_\_. I said, Oh, Carl, I guess the Lord never spoke up. I said well Carl, when your mother was sick, we's here these few years, you didn't come to her \_\_\_\_ knowing hers drawing \$30 a month and for all the extra money I could get, I'd go out and mow the yards. If I wasn't on a job, I'd go to school. I said I stayed here mighty the whole year around the clock and you never did show up. You know what you're going to do? I said you're going down to the funeral home \_\_\_\_\_. You never did pay that money back, that thousand dollars you borrowed. I said you're going down there and you're going to pay for the casket. You're going to buy the grave. Where ever you have the funeral, you just send me word. And I'll meet you at the church, whether it be at Kirksville or First Baptist. They had it down at First Baptist. So, he said, well, I'm just going to deal with this furniture. I said, listen here, you're going to town and I'm going to school, and you will take a roaster out of here. It all belongs to me.

RB: And this was where at this time? You were living out on East Main?

AB: East Main. East Main. In town, In the time I walked from the house, first, just across the street. The house sat kind of back in the yard. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ the one I'm looking after now, her father. He was the stingiest man in the world. He wouldn't give you a tip or nothing. And don't you know, by the time I got to the gate, he was out there. He'd said, Albert, did your grandmother pass last night? And I said, yes, sir. Have you had anything to eat this morning? And I said no. He said get into the car. I left my uncle standing there and I got in the car and he took me to a restaurant and he stayed there until, it was Parks restaurant. He fixed my meal and he stayed in and paid for it and laid \$3 beside the plate and he said if you need more come by the store. I never did understand that. I don't understand today.

RB: 'Cause you said he'd been stingy up to that point?

AB: He'd been stingy up to that point. And his wife was stingy up to that point. While I was going to school that year, I was going to school, she asked me, she said, how are you getting wheres to eat your breakfast? I said, well, I've been at Cousin Bessie's where I'm staying. Where do you get your lunch? And I said, well, we eat lunch at school. She said, I'll tell you what you do. I want you to come back here when you fire the furnace, stay down and eat your breakfast. You come back tonight, you come in to supper. Then, one morning, Sunday morning, she called on me and I stayed up there until 11 o'clock or 10 o'clock one Sunday morning, laid

on the couch reading the funny papers. I had to put the fire in the furnace on at 8 o'clock and Sunday night, I'd have to go too early, and she saw me leaving the house at 10 o'clock. And on Monday, she asked me why were you leaving here at 10 o'clock? Why weren't you in Sunday school? This is a stingy woman now. And I said, Ms. Mann, I didn't have no clothes. My clothes I go to school. There's nothing clean enough even to wear to church. She said, don't you say that no more. She said, you know where that \_\_\_ store is on First and Main? I said, yes ma'am. She said, you go when you leave here. You go to that store. I'm going to call down there and buy you some clothes. And I'm going to have you a tie and shirts for church on Sunday and I don't want to see you here no more at 10 o'clock. And that's when they started Sunday school.

RB: Alright. Now, so at this point, then, you are attending First Baptist, right? I started at the First Baptist Church, I'd say the next following year after we moved. We started going down there.

RB: So, about 1922, just after the church was up. They got the cornerstone in.

AB: Cornerstone in, and that little church was going well and she would come to Sunday school, grandma would. At that time, Beatrice was living in town. I said, now . . . you know how old folks are, now, I want you to go get Beatrice and you all go to BYPU. I had to go get Beatrice, take her to BYPU, and bring her back. After practice I'd have to take her on home and come back home.

RB: Now, what else with regard to school is going on with you then? Are you in school in then or what?

AB: No, I'll tell you what happened. I went to school and I left that year after grandma died. I went down and stayed with my grandfather for three months. Because I was the only grandchild he had that was a boy. He had kid neighbors. The rest was daughters. So, I stayed with him from June through September. I said, Grandpa, I'll come and stay this summer and I'll go to school back in September. When September come, I went back there and cleaned up some and he wanted me to go to work with him. He didn't do anything, till he went and got a job cleaning out an orchard and it got hot and I was sitting in the shade. And he was sitting in the shade, and I did it all myself. So, after that, when September come. I said, Grandpa, I guess I'll just stay on here, and he said no, I want you to go on to school. And I didn't want to leave. So, I don't need to come on to school, but I think he beat himself to death because in October, he died. So, then, I came on to town and this was a sad thing that happened. Next day come and I was \_\_\_\_. I think I did. No, I didn't. I believe I did. Anyway, I'll tell you what happened. She told Joe. She said Joe, Albert ain't got no . . . We ain't got no children, and said we own three lots. A house sitting on a lot. We own a lot on this side and a lot on that side, right across from the schoolyard. Well, Joe, one house on one lot, another house on the other lot, and her house in the middle, where that brick house is now. Across from the schoolyard. He said, No, no, no, can't do that, Bessie, can't do that. I heard him say it. I was in the other room. So, he went on up the street, walking, and she came in the room, and said, Albert, you heard what Joe said. What you are going to do now, I don't know. I said, Well, don't worry about it. I said, Well, I don't know what I'm going

to do. So, I was on the street and I moved to back to the \_\_\_\_ where Mrs. Moore lived \_\_\_\_, she give me a room there. And I stayed with her then until I went on to school finally. I guess I should have stayed in school and all, got through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and got mixing with... She's a nice girl, Josebelle. Her mammy had choir, Josebelle, my first wife, she sang in the choir and went to Sunday school and BYPU when we married. I guess they kind of encouraged us to marry. She lived about nine months before she died in childbirth. And, then, I said I'm not going to marry any more. In this mean time, I worked for Squire Collins.

RB: Hmm-Mmm. Collins Funeral Home.

AB: Collins Funeral Home. And I was doing a lot of driving for white people. I used to be another chauffeur for white people. Their husbands worked as judges and in banks and businesses and widows and ladies couldn't drive a car. So, they'd have me drive them to the store. And on Sunday afternoon, the different ones wanted to go driving. They'd go to Lexington and all the way to Winchester. Let's take a drive. And I think that's what kept me off the street at that time. So, I done that until about three years was up and I run into my next wife Callie and finally we married, and we had two children. Then, I was living with Reverend Broaddus in the meantime, I was living with him in the meantime, it was during that period when my grandmother was passing and Josabelle and during those few years, I run around to bars and men's clubs. I was the youngest man in the men's club.

RB: The J. Robert Broaddus.

AB: Yes. Hmm-Mmm. And I stayed around his house in my early teen life and I helped Mrs. Broaddus in the house and I helped him paint the house and me and him went to Chicago to a national convention once. It was a Republican political convention. We went the time . . . We went the year that Roosevelt was first president. But, he said, we ought to stay over until next week for the Democratic convention and we'll go home. I went to help him drive. Of course, I was up in my teens. I was only about 17. Well, no, I must've been . . . oh, yes, I was around two months. I was in my 20s because he married me the first time. So, I was married Callie. In between that, Reverend Broaddus left and went to Frankfort. He was called to Frankfort and that was in '33. He was called to Frankfort in '32 because in '33 . . . No, it was '34 when we went to Frankfort and we were there about nine months. And we went to his church, he was pastor in Frankfort, so, we went to his church at that time.

RB: Reverend Broaddus was in Frankfort by that time? Can you recall when you first became a deacon at the church?

AB: Oh, yeah. Alright, let me back up to this. When I was down at my grandfather's, he wanted me to go to the deacon meetings. And I said, Grandfather, that one morning early. I said, Grandpa, you're getting up early this morning. I think it was Saturday. He says, this is the deacon meeting today. No, church meeting. They had all together things. Church meeting. I said, alright, I guess I'll get some breakfast going again and I'll go. He said, no, I'll get the breakfast. You don't have to get up right now. I don't want you to go cause I am going to walk across that field and I'll cut across what we called \_\_\_\_ Road. So, he got up and he got started

and he started out the door and went on down the road on \_\_\_\_ Road, hands behind, walking along, humming an old hymn. I said to myself, Well, if grandpa got that much spunk in him to walk across them fields, and it was quite a field. I hope there's no snake or something. He got a lot of spunk in him. I'll take my chances. And Lord knew I'd be a deacon to take his place. His chair. So, I went on up and come home, and I didn't think no more about it until I guess I got . . . I was married to Callie. We lived on Francis Street. I never did go to Kirksville and didn't have no way to go, just walk and working down at the restaurant then. So, Reverend Brockman came into town one Sunday afternoon. We was sitting there and he got up knocked on the door and come in and sat down. He says, Well Brother Burton, says last church meeting just ended we just voted for deacon and they voted you for deacon. I come to see my new deacon. I said, well, I can't get to church, Reverend Brockman. I haven't got no way of getting there. That's okay. Come when you can, but I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'll be back and work things out with you and I'll let you start a club with members up here. Alright and I did. We did pretty well for about a year and so. In the meantime, I looked in the Bible, and I went home. I said, Deacon Black, I'm the deacon down at Kirksville, and I don't know much about the deacon business. Reverend Brockman didn't say to much about it or what he said he wanted me to do. And he already had important business to attend to. Could I come and sit in on our meeting and see what you all talk about? He said, yeah. When we ain't got no important business we don't mind. I'll let you in. Finally he said, Well, I'll tell you what you do. Read Timothy and Acts, the six chapters. I done that. I told the deacon, I don't know if I'm ready for this. And I'll think about it. In the meantime, my wife was at First. And she was singing in the gospel chorus, trouble number one, and I was going around to these places. I said I don't think I want to be no deacon. I'd really like to get away from that. So, best thing for me's to get out. I always went to usher meeting, when I was at usher meeting, folks come down here and go to this church down here and we had all this ushering and one thing or another and putting on a style in church. So, Gordon Barnett was head usher. No, he was head usher and Mr. \_\_\_\_ him be the supervisor. So, he called me and say I was an usher too at church. See, he liked me. \_\_\_\_\_.

RB: But you were still officially a member down at Kirksville?

AB: Kirksville. So, Gordon said, Burton if you interested in being an usher down at the church. He said, Come on down to our meeting on First Street and reorganize the usher board. I said, Okay. I went down there. So, Mr. Doug New pulled this manual out and said, no, you can't attend this meeting. You have to be a member of this church. I said, Oh-oh. I said well, I don't know what I'm going to do now. So, I went home and I said, well, I want to be an usher. So, if I want to be an usher, I'll move my letter and that'd be one way to get away from the deaconship. So, I sent a letter down there and the secretary, Miss White, wrote me back and said sorry, we can't send you a letter because you're not in regular standing. The rule was you had to pay two dollars and a half a year to be in regular standing. I sent my two dollars and a half and she sent my letter. And Reverend Bennett was pastor then and they had a big revival meeting going on. I had my letter down there. I said I'll get to Richmond now. I sent my letter here and so, the next week or two, I went down to the restaurant one day. A man said, Come here, Burton. Look here, boy, read this. He was looking at the paper. I read that. And all the names down there, Albert Burton, deacon. I said uh oh. I saw Reverend Bennett before I got home. I said Reverend Bennett, they put me as deacon down there. Nobody asked me about no deacon. He

said I didn't have to ask you about no deacon. Since you didn't want to be a deacon, I'm going to put you farther up front. I come around then. So, I went on in to that. So, he commenced giving us a lesson. He sat down and talked to us about what to do, getting us ready for \_\_\_\_, and he'd take a stand in your defense. So, the deacons and I say to the Reverend... who came in? Who came in then? I believe Reverend . . . I can't think of the name now.

RB: Ballew?

AB: No. Bennett had died and then came Grandison and Rogers.

RB: They were between Bennett and Williams.

AB: Between Bennett and Williams. There were two Williams.

RB: Grandison and Rogers.

AB: Rogers was first and Grandison came next. Rogers stayed three years and Grandison stayed one year. When they left, I can pretty well \_\_\_\_\_. When they left, we didn't have nobody and then, we had different pastors coming out.

RB: Now, just a question here. Do you recall where the Reverend Gradison came from?

AB: No, no. I don't know where he came from.

RB: Reverend Rogers?

AB: No, sir.

RB: Because we have no pictures of them and I was just wondering for history purposes, if we could maybe find out something else out about them.

AB: I wish we could.

RB: Okay, now, you actually became a deacon then at First Baptist in Richmond in what year?

AB: Forty-five.

RB: Nineteen forty-five.

AB: My first Sunday school teaching was in '45. Miss Stella Yates asked me since I was bringing my child to school. We got two classes down in the Sunday school and we ain't got no teachers. Junior girls and junior boys. She saw me one Sunday morning in church sitting on the front seat and said, Do you want to teach? I told her, yes, ma'am. I'll be glad to. And then she turned and said, okay, thank you. I said, Miss Stella, no, ma'am, I can't teach. She said, Why? I said I don't know nothing about the Bible. She said, Who's our greatest teacher. I said Jesus

Christ. She said, You get with Jesus and come down here and go to work.

RB: Ms. Stella Yates. Uh-huh.

AB: \_\_\_\_\_ assign me to the girls. Then, they come the same year. It must've been the first part of the year, I guess. She said the convention is going to be in Paint Lick. It was '45. So, why don't you come and go with me to the convention and learn this work.

RB: This was a Sunday school convention.

AB: Learn this work because my year will soon be up and yours ... of course she was in her prime then. She said, I won't be here always and you're going to be the next one. I'm going to teach you and learn you how to be superintendent. So, I went to new petition and that's how come them curtains are up there now. At that church.

RB: The petitions and the . . .

AB: Curtains.

RB: Uh-huh.

AB: Reverend Bennett got up and the preacher . . . the pastor of the First Baptist Church had departmental hour at that time.

RB: In the Sunday school convention.

AB: The Sunday school convention was by itself then. He had the departmental hour and in the departmental hour he talked about an hour, but he was telling about what all he'd done and this, that, and the other. So, he brought this up at Paint Lick and he said, I want you Sunday school teachers to go back and curtain off your church. He said it wasn't going to keep the sound out, but it will keep people from coming in and the children looking around. You'll keep their attention better. So, we came back with that, and I brought it before the deacons as an idea and they looked at me like you are doing now. So, we went through that, and the Reverend Williams came in and we got so confused until we had to get the Reverend ... another minister from Lexington to come in and be our intern pastor for six months, to get us kind of settled down because Deacon Black and Patton went over to Lexington to a revival and run into Reverend Williams carrying on a revival over there. They liked his preaching so well, they went to see him. They thought he would be a good pastor. So, they came back and told the church about him. So, finally, we called Reverend Williams and he agreed to pastor. He came over to talk with us and he come. When he started, we brought this up again about a curtain in Sunday school room. We the pews down there. We finally went for the whole seven years he was here and didn't get nothing done. I said, well, if he past, we can follow him around for another year until we called Reverend Goodloe. He had three men down there. I can't think of their name. I can't remember this person's name. Reverend Goodloe preached here. He preached for about two Sundays, two or three Sundays, and he carried on revival here for us one week. So, he came

to be our pastor \_\_\_\_\_. He came and talked with us and said, well, Reverend, do you want to know how much we charge for... what will your salary be? He says, I'm not going to set no salary. I'm going to let the you and the Lord take care of that. And he wouldn't do it. Reverend Williams was \$50 a week. And we started him off at that. So, Reverend Goodloe came and we brought this up again, and he said, okay, elect a committee. So we got the committee. The first committee, they didn't do nothing. So, Reverend Goodloe said, what shall we do to committee in the church meeting? I offered a motion for that committee to be s\_\_\_\_ed. So, he did and that passed. Then, what shall we do? I said, well, pastor, all the motion to elect another committee. We wanted to put the curtains up and put the rods up and all that, and building needed painting on the inside and on the outside. And the concrete floors were ...we wanted to put Congoleum on the floors. So, we got it going and Charboard [?] Holden was the chairman. When Charboard [?] came, he said, Deacon, he said, I want to know what about these curtains. What did you want? I told him how we wanted it draped off. I said, Now, deacon Ross told us \_\_\_\_ to make individual rooms to put doors up. He never got to it. I guess for the time being, we'll just use the curtains. So, the pastor said okay. Well, Reverend Goodloe wanted . . . he said another curtain. You see the kitchen there up there. He said, we borrowed \$5,000 from the bank to get curtains up, lay a floor, do all the painting, and that's enough to do that. In the meantime, Reverend Goodloe's committee was also . . . This wasn't the same committee, but he was on another committee and Sister Arla Stone was chairman of that committee to build on that part of the church. The Sunday school . . . How come you're so tender? My Sunday school \_\_\_\_ We'll have to knock out that wall there. Reverend, we have such good crowds, about 80 or 90 Sunday school people until I had to go uptown and my car was parked uphill. That building across the street, the car had backed out, and the car come up First Street. The car come up this way up Hill Street and a whole lot of children were coming down the street and couldn't get across. So, I said, Reverend . . . I asked the deacon, lets go up to the city council and see if we can get police up here to help the children get up town. Well, none of them go and I went by myself. I went there, and Bill said, you see a colored youngun here. What's your name and what do you come for? Do you have anything you want to bring to the council? And I said, Yes, sir, Mr. Mayor, I said I'm the superintendent and deacon of the First Baptist Church and I wanted to get some of the brothers to come with me, but they didn't come, but I said, we have a little situation up there. The cars are parked up there and so forth. I wanted a policeman up there to help the children cross the street. He says good idea. The chief called me and said I ain't go no police that would go to that part of town. So, I'm sorry. I can't help you out. I said, Mr. Mayor, I didn't mean for one of your men to help out. I'll get one of my own out of the church. So, he said, if you got the body. And, so, T.C. Maupin, we great friends. He said, good T.C. works around us up here. So, we'll get him a cap, pistol, and badge. He can't arrest nobody, but he can take their number if anybody gets run over. So, he came over about two years. Then, later on, the children crossed the street anyway. And I said now they're jaywalking, and they're still going to get hurt. So, I called the city and the street commission, and told them who I was and I said, sir, I would like to have a . . . You got some white paint up town, keep children walking in line. And said can you take some across the church up there from Irvine Street on one side and across from our church so people can make it across the street. Sure! He came up there and he painted two lines coming from the church and up to Hill Street. He painted the lines that go from Hill Street up and crossed over to the Hill Street and when the lines were old, they painted them again. So, that's where I came along up. During that time when Miss Georgia resigned and told Reverend

Goodloe one Sunday morning. She was helping him and she said she's giving it up. She couldn't carry it no more. She didn't tell me what she was doing. So, Reverend Goodloe came to me one morning and I was teaching Sunday school. He came to me and he said, Brother Burton, Ms. Georgia resigned this morning. She told me about it. You're the next man up. I've been watching you for the last five years. You've been helping around here and you're the only man I know can handle it. He said you're the superintendent. I'm going to recommend you to the church and I'm going to tell the church, you all do what you want to do. Recommend anybody you want to, but I'm going to recommend Brother Burton. And I said, Reverend, I ain't gonna be bothered with that Sunday school. I ain't going to be the superintendent. There's too much to it. He says, that Sunday school over there in that church belongs to the Lord. Now, you talk to him about it. Don't go away from Him. I said, I won't let that alone. So, I went on down to a church meeting the following Thursday night and I came back and my wife said, what about that superintendent \_\_\_? I said, \_\_\_ call it off. I ain't messing with the Lord. So, that's when I started.

RB: So, you've been there now as deacon and superintendent, and other capacities for more than 43 years.

AB: Yeah, 43 years. I was a janitor for about five years.

RB: A janitor.

AB: How come I got to be a janitor. Augustus was a janitor and he would wax the floor and the children would ski on it and other things around there. He wore them out and they got mad and they done me that much worse. So, me and my wife come to town one day and run into \_\_\_\_ and he said hey there, Deacon, wait just a minute there we ain't got no janitor. I said, you haven't. He said the church needs cleaning up. That was on a Friday. I said well hand me the key. Me and my wife will clean it up. You're going to have to clean it up. So, I said well, I'll take over the janitorship. So, I told deacons in the pastors study I said I'll take over the janitorship, but I won't take no \$10 a week. I think you all can raise it to \$15 and I was mowing the yard. They said okay. In the meantime, whenever we vote on a raise for another \$5, lets vote to give Reverend Goodloe ten more dollars on his salary. They said Okay, we'll do that. So, that's when I started the janitorship. So, when children do something to me... Of course, I was teaching the girls and I had pretty good control. And I'd say boys, you all can't do things like that. They'd quit and they got so they'd help.

RB: Okay. We're just about at the end of this here. Let's see, if we've got a few more feet of tape here. Now, you're 83? Your birthday's in what month?

AB: June. I'll be 84 in June.

RB: So, 84 this coming June. What kind of advise would you give to any young person who asks you for some advise? If they would ask you what should I do, what would you tell them?

AB: I'd say the first thing to do . . .

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2.