

## **Transcript of a Recorded Interview with Ernestine Freeman**

*Interviewer:* Charles Hay

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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.*

EF: . . . Between here and Boonesborough in a little section called Red House.

CH: And when, if I may ask?

EF: August the 24<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

CH: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

EF: My mother's maiden name was Oldham. And my dad is a Huguely.

CH: Huguely. Okay. Now, I want to know a little bit about them and perhaps their parents and their parents' parents. Have you had a chance to trace them very much?

EF: Yes. I did find my family history on both the Oldham's, which was my mother's family, and the Huguely's. Now, my dad's father was named James Lewis Huguely, and he had one brother, Samuel Huguely. Now, their mother was a slave.

CH: Do you know where they lived?

EF: Not really.

CH: Here in the county?

EF: Here in the county, yes.

CH: Okay.

EF: She gave birth to two sons. One was by her husband and the other, my granddaddy, was by her master. It was my dad's . . . my granddaddy.

CH: Do you remember . . .

EF: I don't remember her name.

CH: You do not remember your great-grandmother's name nor the master's name?

EF: Todd.

CH: Do you know what Todd?

EF: Well, no, but I guess his great-grandson is Talbert Todd.

CH: Could've been Jim Todd.

EF: That was in high school up there with, I think, my daughter.

CH: Okay.

EF: Anyway, this Todd had a daughter and when she married, she married a Huguely. Her dad gave her my grandfather, James as a wedding present and she told her father not to separate the two brothers because their mother was dead. So, she took both of the boys when she married a Huguely.

CH: Therefore, the name Huguely came from that.

EF: And then she gave these two brothers, James and Samuel, the Huguely name.

CH: Roughly, what time period are we talking about, 1850s, 1860s?

EF: Well, I'm telling you, I don't know. I can't remember 'cause I am '81 and I am talking about my dad's father, and if my dad was living, he would be about 104 and so that was his father. So, I have no idea.

CH: Did you ever meet your grandfather?

EF: Oh, yes, yes. I was grown when he passed. In fact, while he was sick, he stayed with us here a while in Madison County.

CH: Did he ever talk about his slave experience?

EF: No, because he was very, very young. And when his mother died, then Mr. Todd had both of the brothers and then this Mr. Todd's daughter married and he was giving her one as a wedding present and she said don't separate the brothers. She took both of them and gave them her married name.

CH: Do you know where they lived here in the county?

EF: I don't know. I don't know where the Todd's . . . what the area they were in that they . . . I don't know whether they were in the Boonesborough, that area of Madison County, and the Lost

Fork Pike, and Brookstown Pike, and down in the area. I don't know if that was the area or not. But, then, it could have been because that was the area that my grandfather lived in when he married, but he married his wife, my grandmother, Everly and she was a Hisle, and she was out here in what they called Foxtown or Woodville or White Hall. She was from that area.

CH: Was she owned by the . . . or her ancestry by the Clay family?

EF: I do not know other than that her maiden name was a Hisle and she had one brother, Hoy but then she had a sister, Nancy, and oh, I can't think, she had another sister. I can't think of her name, but that sister had two daughters, Flora and Cora. Some of her family when to Clark County because my granddaddy, after my dad married, and my older brother and I were going, and they were out on the farm up at Brookstown Pike. Then, he decided that he didn't want to farm any more and that he had gotten old. So, he decided he wanted to live in Winchester. He had been over there and he had liked Clark County. So, he moved to Winchester.

CH: Now, this was your grandfather?

EF: My grandfather. My daddy's father.

CH: Okay. Of course, in 1865, he was free. Since there was no mother or father, I wonder how they existed because they probably were not very old then.

EF: The slave owner that owned his mother took care of those boys and they were still there when they were just about grown when his daughter married.

CH: Oh, they were? Okay. So, when they were freed, then they were adults?

EF: Yes. Practically.

CH: Do you know what your grandfather did then? Did he go farm? Did he get land?

EF: When he still belonged to the Todd's, they worked the farm.

CH: They worked the farm. Did he describe the conditions ever to you?

EF: No, I don't ever recall because when he left Madison County and moved to Clark County, my brother and I weren't even school age. My oldest brother. So, he lived in Clark County until he died.

CH: So, you didn't get a lot of chance to talk to him?

EF: No. Just when, you know, once in a while during the summer or Thanksgiving or Christmas, but the family was so large, we didn't talk about any history.

CH: Okay. So, he married the . . . .

EF: The Hisle.

CH: The Hisle from the Foxtown area. And how many children did they?

EF: Did my grandfather have?

CH: Yes.

EF: My dad's father, my grandpa, had seven sons and Aunt Nina, Aunt Ava, Aunt Patty, Aunt Emma. Four girls.

CH: They lived again initially around the Boonesborough, the Red House area?

EF: Yes. Red House.

CH: Your father was born there?

EF: Yes. Hmm-Mmm. All of them were born out there.

CH: Did they own property out there?

EF: No. No. Tenants.

CH: Then, on whose farm? Do you have any idea?

EF: Uh, I have no idea whose farm they were on but when he left there and went to Winchester and my dad stayed and he farmed for . . . he and my mother lived on the farm for Eugene Parrish and his wife was Tommye Cole Parrish. And then, they later were then after . . . let me see, my brother, Homer is the oldest, then me, then Everett, and David. Okay, when my mother and dad's fourth child was born, they left the farm and came to Richmond.

CH: About what time was that roughly?

EF: Well, I still wasn't school age.

CH: Nineteen twenty.

EF: Yes.

CH: I see. So, your father basically lived in the same area that your grandfather did.

EF: Yes. Hmm-Mmm.

CH: He did not own property.

EF: No.

CH: He was a tenant farmer of the Parrish family.

EF: Yes.

CH: Okay, now, your mother was an Oldham. Is that right?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Can you give me a little information about the Oldham family? As far as you recall.

EF: I don't know too much about the Oldham family. I just know that there were two boys in their family and my granddaddy David and his brother, Zachariah.

CH: Do you remember your grandfather David?

EF: Yes. I was grown and married when he passed.

CH: Was he born a slave?

EF: I don't know. I don't know.

CH: Do you know what part of the county they were living in?

EF: Down in the same area.

CH: Around Red House?

EF: Yeah. Red House. Brookstown.

CH: So, your father knew your mother because she was in the close proximity?

EF: Yes. Yes. They all were attending the same church.

CH: What did they live in? What kind of house did they live in?

EF: Well, my mother and dad, they lived in what they called a cabin there on the Parrish farm.

CH: Was it adequate enough to take care of a large family?

EF: Well, yes, I guess. I can barely remember that house.

CH: And you were born there in the house? Is that right?

EF: Yes. Hmm-Mmm.

CH: By a midwife?

EF: No. Uh, that old doctor's name was Phelps.

CH: Phelps. He delivered you?

EF: Hmm-Mmm. He came from Richmond down there on a horse and buggy.

CH: Well, that's interesting. Where did you come in the family? Are you the middle child? How many children are there?

EF: By my parents?

CH: Yes.

EF: There were ten. Seven boys and three girls. One brother was older than me and I was second one of the ten.

CH: Okay. And there is just you and your sister remaining?

EF: Yes.

CH: I see.

EF: I'm six years older than she is.

CH: You're six years older. Okay. Now, they were farming. Conditions were, I guess, rather crude. Did they travel very much? Do you recall? Or was it pretty much stay on the farm?

EF: Oh, I can remember, I guess, it was Mr. Parrish's horse and buggy that my dad drove. I don't know, whether it was his or not. But, when we were living there, I can remember coming out on the Brookstown Road and coming this way toward Richmond, Kentucky on what they called it the Red House Pike and there was a church down there coming toward town up on the left, back up on the hill, called Otter Creek Baptist Church. I was down there last Sunday at my parents and grandparents' church.

CH: Okay. Alright. Did you go to church there?

EF: Hmm-Mmm. I went to church there. I joined there when I was a child, 12 years old.

CH: You were 12. Where were you baptized?

EF: In the creek across the road.

CH: Do you remember that?

EF: I certainly do.

CH: Was the water cold?

EF: It was October but it was a beautiful Indian summer. We came down off of the hill where the church sat and came down on that level and then there it run, about 25 or 30 little tiny steps all the way down into the yard down there where they would park, but there was also a rock driveway that you could go up in the front of the yard. It come on up and curved around up on the hill and park up there beside the church. The old outside privy, one here for the women and one over there for the men. I was reading an article in the paper here the other day and some town where they were trying to outlaw the privy and people were fighting against it saying they were landmarks.

CH: Well, I may imagine landmarks we'd like to forget in some way. As my mother would say, one hole, two or a three holer or something.

EF: So, anyway, yeah, I remember that coming down out of that church yard and walking about, oh, I'd say about 500 yards, feet, down and going down a little grassy hill and that beautiful creek over there and the water looks so clear and pretty, with the fish swimming around in there.

CH: Now, your parents . . . the Parrish clan, was this going to be Jerry Parrish? Representative Parrish?

EF: Now, this Mr. Eugene Parrish and his wife Tommye Cole Phelps. Her maiden name was Phelps. They didn't have any children. And he did have . . . I don't know of her having any sisters or brothers, but Mr., we called him Mr. Gene. Mr. Gene had one brother, but I can't recall his name right now. But he had one brother. They later moved up on Summit and they sold out the farm. They got too old and couldn't get anybody to farm and then they sold out. They moved up there on the Summit. The house they moved into is still up there. My older brother, when my mom and dad moved down, he did not want to come to town with his mom and dad and his sisters and brothers. He wanted to stay out with Ms. Tom and Mr. Gene. And he stayed out there with Ms. Tom and Mr. Gene and he went to a little old country school out there. A one-room school, until he came out of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. And that's the highest they went.

CH: Do you remember the school?

EF: Yeah. They called it the Red House School.

CH: And it was an all black school?

EF: Yeah. And then when he . . . It just went to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and so, then, when he had come to Richmond High on East Main to the high school, there was no way for him to get into school because that was long before they had the busses. So, that's when the Parrish's sold out. Well,

they didn't sell right away, but they eventually sold all their property on the Brookstown Road and bought up on Summit. They moved to town. He stayed up there. He never stayed with his family.

CH: He stayed with the Parrish's?

EF: Until they died.

CH: Was he very close to them, I assume?

EF: Yeah. We always called that his white mom and his white dad. We said he thought more of them than he did his own mom and dad.

CH: Well, I suspect they felt very strongly about him.

EF: Oh, gosh, you wouldn't believe.

CH: He actually lived with them?

EF: Yeah. She went out there to the school a couple of times and raked the principal over about Homer. And, oh, no, he played up there on the Summit with this Dr. Bob Rice as a child up there. Allen Zaring was up there.

CH: Zaring Mill.

EF: Owned the old Zaring Mill and there's another one up there. I can't think of it. I remember Bob Rice lived up there. Allen Zaring lived up there. And there's another one. And those were his friends. And he grew up right up, you know, right up there on the Summit.

CH: Well, when you were growing up in the farm area, and of course, the Parrish's had no children, so, the children that you played with were strictly your brothers and sisters?

EF: Yes.

CH: Do you remember when . . . the first time you came to town?

EF: No, I don't. I just know when we moved to town, we moved on First Street.

CH: You moved on First Street and where?

EF: Well, the house was there, but it isn't there, but it's been . . . I don't know whether it's been torn down and rebuilt or whether it's a prefab or what, but is in the same spot over there at 219 First Street.

CH: Now, you were about how old when you moved?

EF: Well, I hadn't started in school.

CH: Oh, you had not? That's right. You had not started school. When you came here, where did you go to school for your elementary? Was it all at Richmond?

EF: Yes.

CH: Was it all . . .

EF: That was elementary, junior high, and senior high. All twelve grades.

CH: In one place?

EF: Yes.

CH: Well.

EF: In fact, you had the primary. You had 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, up to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

CH: Did your parents encourage you to go to school?

EF: Oh, yeah. I mean it wasn't a matter of being encouraged. You just went to school. I mean, you didn't ask no questions. You didn't say you didn't want to go or you did want to go. You just went to school.

CH: There was no question about it.

EF: No. Hmm-Mmm. That's just like going to church. You didn't say you didn't want to go to Sunday school. You didn't want to go to church. You better not say that. You just knew when Sunday was going, making them boys start polishing their shoes on Saturday night and getting them tin tub baths and getting their clothes laid out to go to Sunday school and church on Sunday. That was just a part of life.

CH: Where'd you go to church?

EF: We went to . . . My daddy had an Overland. Did you ever hear of that car? Overland?

CH: Very vaguely.

EF: Overland. He had a black Overland. And when we came to town, he got a black Overland and we drove down there to Otter Creek to that church.

CH: To Otter Creek Church? Okay. Alright.

EF: They only had services twice a month. The first and third Sundays.

CH: What did you do the second and fourth Sunday?

EF: I'd walk to the First Baptist Church.

CH: So, you've been going to First Baptist Church?

EF: Yeah. Hmm-Mmm. I like church.

CH: Before we explore that a little bit, your parents moved to town because . . . why did they move to town?

EF: Well, the family was increasing and my daddy wasn't really into farming. He did it because there was nothing else to do and he had to, but he didn't like farming. He was telling the Parrish's that he wanted to move. Okay, they had friends, I guess, the Oldham and Powell Hardware Store. Mr. Joe Oldham and Luther Powell. They had a hardware store up there now where that one is.

CH: Yes.

EF: Then, there was a State Bank which is Bank One. And, Mr. And Mrs. Parrish talked to . . . I don't remember which, Mr. Joe Oldham or Luther Powell. Joe was. He had the duties of . . . financial part in the store. Then, next door was the State Bank and Beady Turley was the president up there and his son Spears. And so, my daddy got a job. They hired him at the hardware store plus custodian over at the state bank.

CH: What was he doing at the hardware store?

EF: Oh, everything. Going out into the . . . Of course, he knew about farm machinery and so forth. People from Garrard County and up in the mountains, Clark County, and everywhere would come over here at Oldham and Powell's Hardware Store and out of Irvine and so forth and purchase equipment. Okay, they had a good line of heating stoves and my daddy got to be the best stove man around here in this vicinity. He's gone all the way to Mount Vernon. After he would get off work from the Oldham and Powell Hardware Store, he'd go over to the bank and clean up until the boys got old enough and I'm up there with the second oldest one. The oldest one wasn't there. So, every day, \_\_\_ three boys younger than me. We were all pretty much stair steps. We, daddy taught us how to clean up that bank.

CH: So, you would do some of them . . . ?

EF: No. When he got through with the hardware store, we would be up there at the bank, and the people would be gone and he would let us in and show us what to do and how to do it and he would get on the truck and go up to Mount Vernon or Garrard County.

CH: The company truck?

EF: Yeah, the hardware store truck. Especially in the winter time. Ice and snow on the road. People needing these heating stoves.

CH: He would deliver them and install them.

EF: And set them up. Sometimes he wouldn't get back home at night until 10:30 or 11 o'clock. My mother would be up walking the floor and moaning and singing and cleaning that he would get back safe and sound because of them bad roads. We never had nice highways like we have now.

CH: They were rather tricky.

EF: These old country roads and so forth. Mud holes and all.

CH: Now, he repaired them also. Did he go out to repair them after they had been installed?

EF: No, no, no. He just installed new stoves. The pipes and all. You know, that sort of thing.

CH: Where did he pick that up?

EF: I don't know. My daddy was just like that. I mean . . .

CH: Was he really. 'Cause he didn't go very far in school at all?

EF: No.

CH: Do you know how far?.

EF: I'd say he got to the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

CH: Out in the Red House area?

EF: Oh, he and my mother, neither one did get into high school.

CH: But, they believed in education for you?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Education and church?

EF: Hmm-Mmm. Both of them were good readers.

CH: They'd read to you. They liked to read.

EF: They were good readers.

CH: So, they picked that up in school.

EF: Yes. And they could read their Bibles and there were words that they wrote. I don't know whether they were write or wrong, but they would call in them words and there's some of those words in the Bible now, I can't hardly call them.

CH: Could they write?

EF: Yes.

CH: So, your father, working for the Oldham and Powell Hardware and the bank, so basically two jobs. Did he have any other jobs? What did your mother do?

EF: Wasn't much she could do but stay at home.

CH: With all of you, huh?

EF: Stay at home, but she took in washing, number three tubs, copper boiler. Put some clothes in that water and coal stove in the kitchen. We had a well on the back where you heat water. A four-burner stove and the oven. Set this big old copper boiler out there and boil those white clothes.

CH: Whose clothes did she do?

EF: She did laundry for the Parrish's. Up at the bank, there was Alan Douglas and she did laundry for Alan Douglas' wife, Francis. She did laundry for Ms. Douglas' sister, Mae Snow. She married Keith Snow. I remember those three.

CH: Did she iron too for them?

EF: We didn't have any electric iron. We had iron coals. You put them on top of the stove and then the stove takes and heats them, and carry them.

CH: Did you help her iron and work with the clothes?

EF: No!

CH: Why not?

EF: I was busy in school.

CH: Now, let's talk about school a little bit now.

EF: I was busy in school and then, there was all . . . My mother had those children so fast and while she was doing those things that I wasn't old enough to do, to cook and iron, you know, and

so forth, to do those shirts and those big old white damask tablecloths and all them big old napkins, and all that stuff, I wasn't old enough to do that. So, I'm nursing all these babies.

CH: So, you're taking care of them?

EF: So, these babies are driving me crazy.

CH: She was smart, wasn't she?

EF: That's why I never had any.

CH: You didn't have as many as she did?

EF: I have two and that's enough.

CH: Well, it sounds like that your father and mother were very good providers.

EF: And then, later on, my daddy . . . I don't know how he took it up. But, he got into sanding floors and he bought his own sanders and my brother, Tommy, who was home everyday. Tommy was the fourth son. He liked it. So, Tommy dropped out of school so Daddy said, well, you got to work. So, he was getting jobs over in Boyle County, Clark County, all the way up here in Corbin, and he was scared to go up there. There wasn't many black people in Corbin.

CH: Corbin doesn't have a very good reputation for treating black people.

EF: No.

CH: Did he have any stories about that? What'd you hear about that?

EF: I'm trying to think. When I was in high school, I played on the basketball team and I guess we were going to Nashville, Tennessee. A lot of times we played, like during the year, we would schedule an out of state team, like we have played Dayton. We've gone to Dayton, Ohio and played a team up there. We went into Nashville, Tennessee to play a team, and we had to go through Corbin. And, yes, I wasn't a senior. I can't remember whether I was a sophomore or junior, but I started playing basketball when I was a freshman. But, there was a sign, Nigger, Leave and Run. We were on these two old beat up school buses, because we had the boys team and the girls team.

CH: One of the boys and one of the girls, right?

EF: Yeah.

CH: And that was . . .

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CH: And they debated about . . .

EF: Our coaches.

CH: Well, I guess you got through the town?

EF: Yeah. We went on because we was afraid to go on to a filling station. We couldn't find no place to turn them busses around. We thought hit the gas and speed through here right quick.

CH: And you all knew nothing about that, right?

EF: No. No.

CH: Of course, Corbin has had a rather unsavory reputation.

EF: I had no idea that there was any kind of a sign like that in Kentucky.

CH: Was that the first time you ever seen anything like that?

EF: Uh-huh.

CH: Was that the first time you ever heard the word "Nigger" used?

EF: Oh, no, no.

CH: When'd you hear it used? Was it common?

EF: Oh, yeah. Right here in Richmond. I mean that's why . . . When I'm talking to you about the white kids walked up on that side of the street and we walked up on this side of the street because they called us niggers and we called them "peckerwoods" and "hooges".

CH: Did you all have any fights?

EF: Oh sure. That's why the police were patrolling there to see that the whites walked over there and we walked over here.

CH: Kind of an unwritten type of thing, I guess. Now, let's go back to your schooling a little bit. You're helping to raise your brothers and sisters. Your mother and father are working. You apparently liked school.

EF: Oh, yes.

CH: Right from the beginning?

EF: Yes. The night I graduated, I was . . . when I marched in there, the tears were dropping down on the floor. I thought, Oh, God, this is the end of school. My parents didn't have any money to send me to college.

CH: Let's go back a little bit. I want to explore your elementary and junior high school and senior high school, all at Richmond. Did you walk to school?

EF: Yeah. We didn't have any calamity days either.

CH: No calamity days.

EF: It was 6 or 7 degrees below zero and we walked on First Street out there to Richmond High School.

CH: Was there any transportation at all?

EF: No, no. Not unless somebody in the family. And like there were times when the snow would be so deep that our dad would be up there at the Oldham, Roberts and Powell Hardware Store and he come down in that truck. He was using their truck and he'd come and take us out there. But, in the afternoon, it was warmer and a lot of times the snow had melted and we walked home.

CH: Well, who were some of your favorite teachers there? What did you take at school?

EF: Oh, well, I'd say the three R's. In the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Miss Ann C. Turner. She was an old maid. She never married. She taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade and another old maid, Miss Staddie Gwen taught 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Miss Nellie Embry was an old maid. She taught in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Miss Betsy Irvine, old maid, had the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Miss Georgia Walker, old maid, had the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Maggie Wilson was married, and she had the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. But, I went to school here the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. And when I was promoted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, my mother had an aunt, her mother's sister. They lived in Lexington. When my mother was a little girl, she stayed with her aunt at one time. At that time, her aunt lived in Paris, Kentucky. She and her husband, Uncle Ben, never had any children \_\_\_\_, and she came in to Richmond that summer and talked my mother into letting me go to Lexington and live with she and her husband, Uncle Ben. Aunt Chany. She was my great-aunt because she's my grandmother's sister. My mother had turned thumbs down. I was my dad's name sake. His name was Ernest. Mine's Ernestine. So, I told my dad I would like to go there and live in Lexington and live with Aunt Chany and Uncle Ben and just see what Lexington was like. You know, I wanted to go. So, she said that I could take . . . She'd get me a piano and I could take piano lessons which she did, and I did.

CH: Your great-aunt, right?

EF: My great-aunt, uh-huh.

CH: Well, that was a nice thing to do.

EF: Oh, I mean, I lived hmm.

CH: Where did they live in Lexington?

EF: North Broadway. And I went to Booker T. Washington School on Georgetown Street. And, oh, they had a bathroom. They had a nice dining room. I mean I had my own bedroom. Oh, I lived rich over there. Oh, my.

CH: I believe you liked that a lot, didn't you?

EF: Yes, I did.

CH: Were you there just one year?

EF: I was there three years.

CH: Three years. So, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>?

EF: Yeah. And then, he died the year that I was . . . during the winter, while I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. And he was from . . . It'll come to me in a minute. Anyway, he was from the west. And, during the summer, I came home for a visit and some of his family lived in . . . It wasn't Oklahoma. No, it might have been. Maybe it was . . .

CH: Kansas.

EF: No, I think it was Oklahoma. The city will come to me.

CH: Tulsa?

EF: Nuh-uh. And she went out there to visit and she met Mr. Holt out there. So, she came on back to Lexington and I went over there to start school and before Mr. Holt came to visit her and he proposed and talked her into marrying him and she did. But he lived in California because that was his home back then. And, so, she broke up . . . She owned the home there on Broadway in Lexington and she owned a home in Paris on 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Paris, Kentucky. So, she sold her homes and went to California. So, she notified me that she was marrying and leaving and selling. So, for me to come over there. Well, my piano was over there. So, my daddy got the Oldham and Powell truck and we went over there and got my piano. And, oh, a lot of dishes, and a lot of things that I wanted that I got.

CH: And you brought it back here to your First Street house?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Did you have enough room to put your piano in there?

EF: Oh, we had moved from the north end of the town down to a larger house down here. The third house on First Street before you get to Moberly Avenue. It was a big two story house.

CH: Did they own the house?

EF: No, no.

CH: Rented?

EF: The Breck sisters.

CH: Owned the house?

EF: Owned that house.

CH: And you rented the house?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Was it an all black neighborhood?

EF: Yeah. First Street was. All black.

CH: But it's not that now, is it?

EF: Uh, yeah. No, no. There is one white family down there.

CH: Okay, but it's predominantly black?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Did you know right from the beginning when you were growing up here in Richmond that there was a separation of races?

EF: Oh, yeah.

CH: Did your parents ever talk about that?

EF: Uh-uh.

CH: So, it was just a subject that wasn't discussed.

EF: No.

CH: Was it ever discussed in your school or your church?

EF: I'm trying to think. Not really. Even when I went to Booker Washington School, that was an all black school right on Georgetown Street and that's a black neighborhood. You probably saw where they are tearing down that Charlotte Court housing unit out there. All that area out in there was black. Douglas Park was up there. There was an orphan home also right up from the school.

CH: Well, it's just like here. The east end is predominantly . . . It's almost . . .

EF: Yeah. And a lot of the kids from the orphan home came down to Booker Washington School. But, I do not recall ever in any of my classes, all through high school, I don't recall discussing the races. Separation.

CH: Was there ever any mixing of the races back then?

EF: No. No. There wasn't a white student, Caucasian student, when I went to Booker T. those three years, and the whole time I was at Richmond, from beginning to end, there was never a white student there.

CH: Do you have any white friends?

EF: No. Not really. Because I wasn't around them. There were all black teachers and the principal . . .

CH: Who was the principal?

EF: Mr. Lassiter. We called him 'The Great White Father'.

CH: 'The Great White Father', ah-ha. Did he ever know that?

EF: I doubt it. He had a beautiful white. He was stately. We called him 'The Great White Father'.

CH: And he was kind of a bigger than life type of thing?

EF: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

CH: How was he as an administrator, as principal?

EF: So far, as I know, he was a pretty good superintendent.

CH: Of Richmond High School?

EF: Of this town. Of the city schools.

CH: Oh, the city schools.

EF: He was the superintendent of the city schools. See, that was long before the schools were integrated.

CH: Okay, but Lassiter was a white man?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: So, the highest level it went at Richmond High was a principal and that principal was responsible to the superintendent. Lassiter.

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Who as the principal at Richmond High then?

EF: At that time? When I graduated, P.L. Guthrie.

CH: What kind of a leader was he?

EF: Oh, he toed the line. Football players and all, they didn't give P.L., didn't give no slack. I mean he didn't take no slack. You toed the line.

CH: Okay. Did you ever have any teachers and people at church that did not make you toe the line?

EF: Um, well, all of our teachers were . . . .

CH: Were pretty strict?

EF: Yeah. They were pretty strict. But, yet, they were concerned. You know, they cared about you learning and they would help you in areas, you know, where you were falling short and so forth for those who did. And I never had to have any help because . . . .

CH: You did well in school, didn't you?

EF: Yeah. I'd say I did because I didn't fail. The only thing I failed in was first year French and that was because our principal, Guthrie, taught it and I couldn't stand him.

CH: Why didn't you like him?

EF: Because I got in trouble and I had to go to him.

CH: What'd you do?

EF: I smacked a girl.

CH: Why'd you do that?

EF: Because one of my girlfriends was going . . . Her boyfriend was in my science class and she wasn't in the science class. She gave me a note to pass to her boyfriend. There was a girl in the class that liked him. The note had to go through her. She read it and then passed it on to him. We were in Biology. And I was sitting in the back, and I just got up and went up and slapped her.

CH: And the teacher was in the room?

EF: I said it wasn't meant for you. And Mr. Handy, my basketball coach . . .

CH: And biology teacher.

EF: And math. He was Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, and biology, and general science, and I loved the sciences and I took them all. And he told me, get out of my room and go to the office.

CH: And you did?

EF: Yeah.

CH: And what did Guthrie do to you?

EF: Asked, well, why are you down here? And I said, I slapped a girl. Well, why did you slap her? Well, I told him. Well, you were wrong to bring the note in and to be passing it. So, I just sat there and looked at him and I said, Hmm, and just looked at him. And he could stare at you, but I could stare at him. And I stared at him. So, finally, he said, suppose I should walk up and slap you. And I just looked at him and he walked toward me and he said, I don't think you believe it. And I got up and I just looked at him. He told me to get out of his office and go home.

CH: Do you think he was going to really hit you?

EF: He better not. He'd have had to fought my daddy and my daddy was a little old short man who weighed about 128 pounds.

CH: The principal was a little guy?

EF: No, my dad was.

CH: Your dad was a little guy, but the principal was a big guy?

EF: Yeah. Yeah.

CH: Did he ever hit anybody?

EF: Not that I know of, because I didn't go to his office two or three times.

CH: What'd you do for them?

EF: I was in my history class and we were having a test. They had those old ink wells with those pens stuck down in them. This crazy cousin of mine was sitting behind me. She kept wanting me to tell her the answer to a question, well, I'm in front of her and there was Mr. Parks. And I couldn't turn around. There was no way that I'm going to have my paper torn up and get an F. So, I wouldn't do it and she took the ink pen and stuck it in my back. And I jumped up and took my little bottle of ink out of the ink well and I turned around and I poured it all over her.

CH: And he, of course, saw you?

EF: And I had to go to the office. The next day, that afternoon with soap and water and scrub brush, scrubbed up the floor and the seat and get all the ink up.

CH: Did your parents ever find out about this?

EF: Hmm-Mmm. Yeah. Oh, yeah. Momma, you know, she was \_\_\_\_\_. And I mean, my daddy was kind of a firecracker. He was kind of temperamental. A little bit too much temper for a little man and I had a little bit too much temper.

CH: Did you all clash?

EF: Well, to a point, but then I knew when to shut up and back off.

CH: Did he ever switch you?

EF: Oh, sure.

CH: Did your mother switch you?

EF: Sure. They didn't spare the switches. Oh, yes, indeed.

CH: You didn't consider that abuse, did you?

EF: Oh, no. I remember I was mouthing them back and she'd say shut up, and I'd keep on mouthing and under my breath and so forth.

CH: Okay. What were some of your favorite courses in school? What did you like?

EF: English. I'm crazy about English. I took all of the English courses.

CH: Good teachers. Did you have good teachers?

EF: I took all. There was one course, English Literature, oh, we had this neurotic old maid up there and, you know, those nasty kids, they'd say she needs to get a husband or get a man or something. The way she was hollering and screaming and going off in the classroom, you know?

CH: What was her name?

EF: Rebecca Dixon. Come to find out, that was the year I was done taking English Lit, in the junior class. Come to find out, she wasn't as bad off as we thought. She would walk around the \_\_\_ pregnant. By the school was out in June, she went home to Cincinnati and the baby had grown too, and she and the baby both died. Pathetic. But, ohhh, that lady. I mean, she was . . . .

CH: What was the feeling of people, somebody, you know, teenagers, getting pregnant or something like that?

EF: You know what? I don't recall from the time, in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, until the time I got up to know about teenage pregnancies and so forth, at that high school, I don't recall but two girls becoming pregnant while they were in high school.

CH: Was it considered great shame if they got pregnant?

EF: Well, no. I don't know, because when they got pregnant, they just stopped school.

CH: I mean, was the general attitude of the students or your classmates . . .

EF: No, I mean . . . One of them was on the basketball team and we didn't even discuss it or anything. You know, it's just something that happens. But, you know, I think now about how prevalent teenage pregnancy is and through that high school. You know, the four years that I was in high school, I only recall two girls being pregnant.

CH: Now, you said you played basketball.

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Who was your coach there?

EF: Mr. Handy.

CH: Okay. What else did he coach? Did he coach . . . ?

EF: He coached the . . . Now, Guthrie, I think, coached the boys' basketball team, the principal, for a while. Handy was the girls' coach. And Parks was the football coach. Parks was also manual arts instructor.

CH: Now, basketball. When did you start playing basketball?

EF: When? When I was a freshman.

CH: Why did you just . . . For something new?

EF: Well, when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I would hang around the gym during basketball season and watch those girls play basketball, and then, I had all these brothers. And when I got home in the afternoon down on 1<sup>st</sup> Street, there was a little place under the hill where there was a grassy spot up on the far side where my brothers would go down there and play football and then over on the same side where we lived, there was a croquet court down there. And the guys and boys would go down there and play basketball with a regular basketball around. Okay. There were three or four girls on First Street, but they were girlie girls. They played with dolls.

CH: Were you a tomboy?

EF: With all those brothers, I had to be six to their half a dozen because they gave me a hard way to go, but they couldn't handle me. I could whip 'em. So, I was just a part of the game. And this, Mr. Handy boarded down there at the board . . . um, the funeral home was down on First Street, and he was from Tennessee so he boarded there. He was a single man, and he'd come walking down the street in the afternoon after he would leave school and so, there I would be out there with all these brothers and Mr. Boyd's young son, and James Asgood, we'd call him Flick, he's just like my brother. And all of them boys and I'd be the only girl out there. And he'd say how you boys doing this afternoon. You know I'm not a boy! Then, one day in class, I'm in high school. Brother Huguely you going to play football with the boys this afternoon. Ohh! I could have cut his throat. I'm in high school and I'd look at the boys, you know, and everything, and he comes to talk to me about me playing football with the boys. But, yeah, I was a tomboy. And, so, when my daddy was working up there at the hardware store, they had those dolls up there and the doll buggies. And those boys got cap pistols and holsters and scooters and those things, and I woke up on Christmas morning and there was a little old doll over there in that buggy and it stayed there in that buggy. And my daddy ended up taking it back.

CH: Were your parents object to you being in a tomboy role?

EF: No, because I had all them brothers around there and so, there was a lot of difference between my sister and me and our ages. So, I played with my brothers.

CH: Did you like basketball?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Now, this was in the '30s? You go through all your high school playing basketball?

EF: Only three years.

CH: What happened? Did they stop?

EF: Uh, let's see, why did I . . . I said I started playing as a freshman. I didn't. I started playing as a sophomore. I went out as a freshman but I had an afternoon job for the Douglas'. Alan Douglas and his wife over on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Come right down 1<sup>st</sup> Street and go across the lane, and then climb over the fence. And my mother didn't want me to play basketball. My mother was a real Victorian. She didn't want no lipstick on me. She didn't want no short dresses on me. She didn't want me playing basketball out there with them shorts on. And I didn't get to play my freshman year. Then that second year. I got around my daddy and I told him I wasn't going no more to that school, that I was in high school, and I wanted to have some fun and enjoy high school. I want to play basketball, and so, I got around him. Of course, I had him around my finger. And he told my momma let me play.

CH: And that was that?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Did he usually reign supreme in the family?

EF: Well, he would always say . . . Well, if I would ask Mother something that I wanted to do, go ask your daddy? So, I'd go ask daddy, well, what did Muddy say? He called her Muddy because when they were on the farm with the white people and Mr. Parrish and Mrs. Parrish said Ernest and Annie, well, my brother, Homer, he said Mother and Dad. And I took after the white folks and I said Ernest and Annie. So, my mother started saying Daddy and my daddy started calling her Muddy, so I would drop that Ernest and Annie. So, he would say what did Muddy say. Okay, they'd give me this one around, but there was this lady next door, a good friend of my mother's and I called her Aunt Belle and I'd get a controversy over that and neither one of them would make up their mind. So, I'd go over there and I'd talk to her. So, I'd say, now you talk to my dad. You talk to my mom. Well, I got my way. My mother never went to see a game. She just didn't want to see them girls out there running up and down the floor naked. I mean, my mother . . .

CH: I guess your dad and brothers went to the game, right?

EF: Oh, yeah. Right.

CH: How were the teams back then?

EF: Huh?

CH: How were the teams?

EF: Oh, we had good teams.

CH: You know, it's really interesting because I know, for instance, that the white high school girls' basketball pretty much ended about 1932 or 1933. But the black high school girls' basketball continued on. Is that right?

EF: Oh, yes. For a long time because . . . See, we played all black schools. Dunbar over in Lexington. Oh, Danville . . . .

CH: Oh, I know, Peyton, no . . . I know what it is. Bates.

EF: Yeah. Bates High in Danville.

CH: Yeah.

EF: Okay. Down at Frankfort. We played down there. Over here at Winchester, Oliver High. Over in Paris, Kentucky. We even went to Ashland. I played up there and then we had that game down in Nashville, Tennessee. We had a game in Dayton, Ohio. But they were all black. See, we had . . .

CH: I know there's a separate black high school athletic association.

EF: And we had the boys' tournament. I think it was in Louisville at Central and the girls' tournament was down at K. State College on campus. That was the state high school, uh, we had a bluegrass tournament. That would either be in Danville or Lexington or here. We have had it in Ashland. Then, the bluegrass winners would go to state.

CH: It is very interesting. Not much of this is recorded in the Richmond newspaper, was it?

EF: Nuh-uh.

CH: How'd you find out what was going on in the other schools? There were no black newspapers were there around here?

EF: Yes. There was one coming out of Hopkinsville.

CH: I know the Louisville Defender, of course.

EF: Yeah. And then, there was one coming out of Lexington. It came out, but I can't remember what it was.

CH: Did you all have access? Did you read those papers?

EF: Oh, yes. Hmm-Mmm.

CH: Did you read the Richmond Register also?

EF: Oh, yes.

CH: Because there was what they called "The Colored Column", but they didn't . . . maybe occasionally might mention a ball game or something like that.

EF: But they didn't play up the sports too much in that column because Richmond High was doing more in their football and in their basketball than the whites at Madison High was.

CH: So, it was a conscious effort, you think, to minimize?

EF: I suppose, to play it down.

CH: Because they had some very good teams here.

EF: Oh, yes. They did.

CH: Do you recall any particular players that were very good, both men and women?

EF: Oh, yes. Oh, in football, we had a little boy George Boyd. George Boyd looked like a little mosquito. His dad, Jim Asgood was one year behind me, in fact I called him my little play brother, and he was just like a brother. He was at our house so much, when we were up there cutting up, he was up there. And when my mother switched us, she switched him too and sent him down that road down to his own mama. He was a little . . . little. George, he couldn't be over 5' 2" or 5' 3". And he couldn't have weighed a little more than 110 pounds. But he was like a streak of lightening.

CH: Fastest person you'd ever seen, right?

EF: Yeah. He was good. On our basketball team, we had a guy that . . . I don't know, something. He had a little infirmity in his wrist. Bobby, Bobby Blythe. But, he could dribble that ball and be on watch and I was telling you that ended up being the coach's board in Tallahassee. He was very good. Alright, that was . . .

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2.

BEGINNING OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1.

CH: Okay, who were some of these now? You mentioned Mr. Wyatt.

EF: Wyatt Walker, Leon Watts, Randy Watts, James Asgood Boyd, Louis Runyon.

CH: There were some good female athletes, too, weren't there?

EF: Oh, yes.

CH: Of course, besides yourself, who were some other good ones?

EF: There were some better than me.

CH: Who were some of the good girl athletes?

EF: Francis Black was a good one. In the upper class, there was her sister, Arnetta Black, Ann Merritt, Patty Miller Banks, Hannah Ballew, and then coming on down in my area, Ida Jett and her sister, Lillian Jett. Josephine Magget. Oh, Mabel Magget was it. Mabel was a couple of years behind me. Mabel Mackey. Then, behind us, there was Betsy Embry, Catherine Black. A little bit farther down past me. But . . .

CH: Well, it certainly sounded like there was a really rich tradition. Did the black community supports the high school athletics with big crowds?

EF: Yes. Yes.

CH: Now, I want to explore a little bit about how life in Richmond, you've of course hit upon it. Of course, you grew up here in the, really, in high school, during the Depression time. What affect did the Depression have on Richmond in particular, in general, and in the black community in particular? Do you recall?

EF: Well, I'll tell you what, really, in that Depression Era, there was along there, who was it Dewey and Al . . .

CH: Al Smith?

EF: Yeah. What was his name?

CH: There was Franklin Roosevelt.

EF: Mr. Dewey, Dewey was the man that put Al Smith in the garbage can. Was that who ran against him? Was it Dewey?

CH: Dewey ran against Roosevelt in 1940. Thomas Dewey.

EF: Do you recall who ran . . . Was it Hoover?

CH: Hoover. Hoover. Okay.

EF: Okay. That was the little slogan. I was in Lexington at that time.

CH: Okay.

EF: During the Depression. It didn't touch me.

CH: It never did affect you or your family at all?

EF: See, I was living over there.

CH: But even after the Depression was over. So, about a decade, from about 1940s to about

1950s.

EF: No, not really. I remember that little slogan that we had coming along from school and the day of election or prior to that. Hoover, Hoover, is the man who put Al Smith in the garbage can. They made up all kinds of little things. But, by my parents, by my dad, having two jobs. My mother taking in washing and ironing. Okay, the people at the bank and the people at the hardware store. As kids, we didn't suffer.

CH: You always had enough to eat?

EF: Oh, yes. My daddy, he, at that time, the city classification was so that my daddy had hogs. We had a deep backyard and he had a hog pit, and he killed three huge hogs every year.

CH: Did he kill them and drain them?

EF: Yes.

CH: Right on the property?

EF: They killed them out there on the property, yes.

CH: Did they hang them and drain the blood out?

EF: Sometimes, they would take them out to the slaughter pen and kill them and bring them back.

CH: Okay.

EF: But, oh, my mother . . . rendered lard, ground sausage. She'd take the hog head and make what they'd call the hog's head pudding. Some parts of it to make souse meat. Daddy would cure these hams and these shoulders. We were never hungry. In the summer time, if you weren't careful, my momma would stick you in a jar and can you. She'd can . . .

CH: She did a lot of vegetables, right? Had a big garden?

EF: Yes, my daddy had a big garden and then, on Christmas, I mean, our house looked like a store because the bank people would get a huge turkey. Of course, they knew my daddy would kill hogs and we had the ham. A huge turkey. They would send two or three huge fruit baskets. The people at the hardware store. They would let Daddy pick out a nice toy for every child. Now, it didn't have to be the smallest one. A nice one. Then, next door to the bank was that Oldham's Dry Goods Store and what do they call the guy . . . Busy Bee Oldham? I can't think of that man. Anyway, they had that big old . . . We called it a dry goods store, but they had everything in there. Shoes, blankets, hunting jackets, bolts of material, thread, clothes. You know, baby stuff, sheets, pillow cases, blankets. They had all of that stuff. And I don't know how that was connected with Joe Oldham over there in the . . .

CH: In the hardware store.

EF: The hardware store, but at Christmas time, they had my mother and daddy come up there and pick out an outfit. A complete outfit for all of the kids.

CH: And gave them to you?

EF: And gave them to them. So, the Parrish's would come down and bring stuff. My daddy was a good worker. He was honest. People liked him.

CH: It sounds like to me that your father . . . the family was well-off, would certainly be, if you want to call it, the middle class or maybe even a little higher. Were you . . . In the black community, you were a respected family?

EF: Oh, yes.

CH: Would you say you were . . . you were not at the highest level but you certainly were far from the lowest level?

EF: That's true.

CH: Who were considered some of the high class black people then? Wealthier ones? High class?

EF: Okay. Mr. Rankin and his wife Pearl Rankin. They had a funeral home. Okay. Squire Collins and his wife Albert had Collins Funeral Home. Harvey Gentry, he and his wife, Betsy, had one daughter. They both were members of my church and their one daughter, Bernice. We were classmates. She is an Alzheimer patient in Cincinnati now.

CH: Hmm. What'd he do?

EF: He was a tailor. He had his own tailor shop. There was not really no upper class actually. Because they didn't have too much more than the people right below them.

CH: Were there any that were really poor?

EF: Not when I was a child. I would say not when I was a child.

CH: Were there any people in the Depression that would come by your house begging handouts?

EF: Oh, no. Never.

CH: Never had that?

EF: Not when I was a child.

CH: What about, you know, some of the major businesses? The black businesses? You've already mentioned several, the funeral homes, the tailor, what were some others that you recall?

EF: Okay. I had them all in here. [papers rustling] There was the one blacksmith shop. Mr. Henry Patton had that over on 3<sup>rd</sup>. There were several beauty salons.

CH: And they were all in the black community now?

EF: Yes.

CH: Which roughly . . . What was the border of the black community? What would you say?

EF: Okay, that's mainly . . . This is Irvine right here. One block over is Main. Okay, across the railroad, beginning with Short Street, the first one is Short Street if you turn to your left after you cross the railroad. From that, all the way down on both sides to Lake Street, there was black. And then everything from this Irvine Street back this way, and all the way out to Lake Street was black. Okay, then, after you got out on East Main and go out Big Hill, and then when you got to that first street going to your left, which was Race Street, then, all up the hill is Altamont and Steep Street. All that was black. And then, coming down Main Street past where the old Richmond High School, all up there, there's Maple Street, Short Street, then, Fairview, and then Maple, Oakland, on down to Holly, Lake Street, and they ran over to Linden Street, and everything on Linden Street, all the way from Estill Avenue, all the way out to Lake Street was black. And, then, the same thing over on Irvine Street.

CH: So, that was essentially . . .

EF: And then, going out West Main, after you pass the Catholic church and what was the library down the corner, then, that was Parrish Avenue, turning to your left going down Parrish Avenue. Everything down on Parrish Avenue was black.

CH: That was kind of like a whole enclave right there. It was all white around it, wasn't it?

EF: Yeah. Hmm-Mmm.

CH: I wonder how that developed.

EF: I have no idea. It used to be called 7<sup>th</sup> Street when I was a child. Now, I don't know when it was changed to Parrish Avenue.

CH: Okay, now, within this black community, you mentioned some of the businesses.

EF: Okay right down here was Barbara Stone's Beauty Shop. Larkin Blythe had a restaurant there on the corner. Mary Duncan had a café over on this corner right here after the Baptist Church. There was H.K. Ice Cream Parlor. Johnny Huguely, Burt Kavanaugh, and Richard Harlan had that. Harvey Gentry's tailor shop was on East Main just before you get to the

railroad. Vulcan Irvine's tailor shop was up here on West Main up over a building.

CH: They were not all in the black district. Some of these were in the white district like the . . .

EF: Yeah. They was in the building what is now, I think Sherwin Williams' paint place. They were upstairs.

CH: Mr. Ballew, the Glyndon tailor.

EF: Down on 3<sup>rd</sup>. I can't think of anybody else.

CH: Were there any lawyers or doctors?

EF: Not a lawyer.

CH: Do you remember some doctors?

EF: Oh, yes. Black doctors?

CH: Hmm-Mmm.

EF: Okay. The dentist was Dr. Biggerstaff. Dr. Parks. Were they the only two doctors? Biggerstaff and Parks. Then, the medical doctors. There were no surgeons. But, there was Dr. Gholston, S.R. Gholston, Dr. J.O. Harris, Dr. C.B. Doty. Dr. S.R. Gholston had the building over there on 1<sup>st</sup> Street called the Arg [?]. It had an downstairs and an upstairs. Okay, after his death, Dr. C.B. Doty had his office in there, but there was a Dr. O'Neil. I think he was kin to Dr.C.B. Doty. He had a pharmacy in the downstairs area. Mary Carson Miller had her beauty shop on the upper floor. Okay? Across the street there on 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Mr. John Boggs had a shoe shop. Alright, around the corner there on Irvine Street, next to where the old fire station used to be, Edgar Embry, my sister's husband's father, had a shoe shop.

CH: Where was the hospital?

EF: The hospital was over on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Where the hospital is . . . It has burned down. So, that's a vacant lot there now. I lived two doors from the hospital. So, I was seeing everything that went in alive and came out dead and vice versa.

CH: What was the general type of medical care back then?

EF: They had . . . The nurses were live-in nurses, and the first one that I recall when I was a child was Ms. Nannie Arthur. She had a niece that lived there. There was a teenager that went to school and she was one year ahead of me. Then, after Ms. Nannie Arthur passed, then, the one that came there, her name was Bessie. I forgot her name. I can't think of it right now. As I say, none of the black doctors were surgeons.

CH: So, if a black had to have surgery?

EF: Yeah, they used Russell and Mason Pope, which were brothers. They had a little hospital over there on 2<sup>nd</sup>, the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Irvine.

CH: So, what happened if a black person had surgery and was recovering and a white person also had surgery? Were they in the same room?

EF: There weren't any whites over there on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. There were only black patients in that hospital.

CH: The Pope Hospital?

EF: No. In the black hospital . . . .

CH: If they had to surgery at the Pope Hospital, a black person. Now, you said there were no black surgeons.

EF: Right.

CH: If a black person needed surgery, where would they go?

EF: To the black hospital, but the white surgeons would come to the black hospital.

CH: Okay.

EF: Yeah. The white surgeons were Dr. Gibson.

CH: And they did surgery actually at the hospital?

EF: Yeah. There was a Gibson Hospital on Main Street where that filling station and so forth is up there now. Okay, old Dr. Gibson would come down there on 1<sup>st</sup> Street and do surgery at the black hospital.

CH: Okay. Okay. Growing up in that particular time, were there any problems of black people going into the white stores to buy things? Was that permitted?

EF: Well, that's the only store there was.

CH: You had no choice.

EF: You had no where else to go.

CH: They didn't mind serving you?

EF: Oh no. You didn't go into eating places.

CH: That was absolutely forbidden?

EF: Right. But you went into stores.

CH: That's kind of interesting. They would take your money in the stores but they wouldn't let you go eat.

EF: No, you couldn't. No. No.

CH: Did you think that was a bit strange?

EF: Well, if you were brought up in something and that's all you know, you never . . .

CH: You never had anybody . . . Were there any people questioning what was going on?

EF: Not that I know of. It never caused any problems. It's just like people say, you stay in your place. I just never dawned on us to even think about going into a white restaurant.

CH: Did you have white people go into your restaurant?

EF: No. Not that I know of. Nuh-uh.

CH: Was there ever any interracial dating?

EF: And our restaurants were not like full menus. They were like sandwiches and chili and soup, but not fried chicken dinners or turkey dinners or ham dinners or anything like that.

CH: I see. Was there was ever any interracial dating that you know of?

EF: No. None that I know of.

CH: Alright. We've got a rather good picture of Richmond, of the black community at this particular time. You graduated in 1937?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: What were you going to do with your life after you graduated?

EF: Get a job and go to work and maybe somebody . . . some man would fall in love with me and sweep me off [laughter].

CH: Ah-hah. But did you want to go on in school?

EF: Yes, I would love to have gone, but there was no money for me. See, at that time, the closest place to go to school was down at K. State in Frankfort. And my parents with all the other children. See, I'm the second oldest of ten. They just . . . My dad was doing a beautiful job taking care of his family and there just wasn't any money for me to go to school. Okay, I was . . . I didn't fail in school, and I didn't do as well as I could have done because, as I said, I played basketball. I took music lessons.

CH: You were into a lot of things.

EF: Into a lot of things, and I did not apply myself like I could have. Now, when there were things or subjects that I liked, I mean, I just breezed through them, you know. But where those things that took a lot of studying . . .

CH: So, you might've had trouble to get in academically in the first place?

EF: Yeah. Oh, I think I could have gotten in, but I don't think I could have gotten, at that time, a scholarship.

CH: They didn't have one of those.

EF: No, no, no, no.

CH: Did you ever meet Rufus Atwood?

EF: President at K. State. No.

CH: Okay, you graduated and what'd you do? You got a job? What'd you do?

EF: What'd I do? I worked. I was at the Douglas'.

CH: What did you do there?

EF: I cooked, cleaned. My mother was still doing laundry for them. Then, when I was over there...

CH: Do you know how much you got paid there, roughly?

EF: About a dollar and 50 cents.

CH: A week?

EF: Hmm-Mmm.

CH: You were living at home?

EF: Hmm-Mmm. Mr. Douglas had a cousin, Elmer Douglas who come there from Oregon or somewhere, and they had one upstairs bedroom. And he was going to school at Eastern, and he would come down there at lunchtime and eat lunch. Well, I wasn't supposed to fix his lunch and clean up after him and they just had one bathroom downstairs and they had their pots. Slop pots we'd call them upstairs. And he came home one day and he came down and he had this guy with him. He had a student with him, and so, he says, Ernestine, be sure to empty that pot upstairs. Temper. Like Hell, I will. You used it. You empty it.

CH: Did you tell him that?

EF: Yeah. So, he said that he would tell Alan and Francis. Be my guest. So, I left, you know, before he got home. I didn't go back any more. I went home and told my momma and dad, and I said I'm not going back anymore.

CH: What did your parents say?

EF: My dad, you know . . . mother says, oh, well, now . . . No, no, no. My dad says leave her alone. He said she was working there before Elmer came there, and said he was there free. He said Alan's not charging him nothing. He's just helping out a poor cousin. And so he said, no, she don't have to clean up after him. So, then, I went from there on Summit and took care of . . . there was a guy up there, Hazelrigg, who was the assistant manager of J.C. Penney's, and Mr. Witherspoon up there on Summit and he was the manager. And I went up there and worked for Todd Hazelrigg. He and his wife had two kids. That was just . . . Well, at that time, they had an upstairs. Mrs. Parrish had her apartment. They had an upstairs made into an apartment. And, I went up there and he was a \_\_\_\_\_. I think she was teaching or something. And I went up there and took care of those two girls. I worked for her. Then, the boy came and by that time, they had a black woman, she was a classmate of mine, Lavenia Turner, married a Runyon, at J.C. Penney, upstairs on the ready-to-wear floor and when you got down into the basement to unpack stuff, he'd bring it up and she would press these things and your clothes in the ready-to-wear department, and hang them on hangers. Okay, she married Louis Runyon, and he went into the service, and he was in the bomber squadron.

CH: The black squadron?

EF: Yeah.

CH: The Tuskegee people?

EF: Yeah. So, she left Richmond. So, then I got the job up there at J.C. Penney.

CH: Hmm. What did that pay?

EF: Let's see, that was . . . I don't think at that time there was even minimum wage. That was back there during World War II.

CH: Yeah, there was minimum wage.

EF: Or '41, '42.

CH: Yeah. There really was. The government passed it in the '30s during the New Deal. There was minimum wage.

EF: Okay. That's what I was making up there at J.C. Penney.

CH: Minimum wage?

EF: Minimum wage.

CH: And you were still living at home?

EF: Yes. Let's see. When I... Okay, that was when my grandfather got sick in Winchester and we had him over here living with us. We were living on Short Street.

CH: You moved again?

EF: Yeah. On 1<sup>st</sup> Street to Short Street.

CH: You moved to a larger house by then?

EF: Yeah. And we had him staying with us. He was [cackle] kind of hellish in his old age and my mother and my sister and myself, we would have the radio on. We didn't have TV then. We'd have the radio on listening to Helen Trent and Our Gal Sunday, the soap stuff on the radio.

CH: Was it a black soap opera?

EF: No.

CH: White? They didn't have black?

EF: They had Amos and Andy.

CH: What did you think of Amos and Andy?

EF: I thought it was stupid.

CH: Why?

EF: I don't know why. I just didn't... their type of comedy just didn't sit with me. I thought it showed ignorance. I don't know. I just felt that...

CH: You were listening to soap operas?

EF: Yes. Helen Trent and Our Gal Sunday. And so my grandfather wanted that dad blamed thing turned down. Okay. So, there was a fight on. My dad and my brothers left home to go up the street to a neighbor's to listen to the fight on the radio. Well, my mother and my sister are up there and so, my granddad says isn't Joe Lewis fighting tonight. And I said, yeah, grandpa. Well, where's Ernest and the boys? So, mother said they went out a few minutes ago. Well, why ain't you got that dad blame radio on. So, my mother said, oh, I thought the radio made you nervous and you didn't want the radio on playing. I want to hear that fight. Okay. We turned the radio and we listened to the fight, and in the morning that radio is going to wake you up, 'cause we are going to have Our Gal Sunday and Helen Trent on. And the next day, he never opened his mouth because we were ready to jump all over him. Anyway, he wanted to go back to Winchester. So, he had a daughter that was working in Dayton, Ohio at the Y, Aunt Ada and so, she lived in an apartment up there. So, she came to see her dad and so, she said she would take . . . If I would go up there and hold her job for her, she would come to Winchester and stay at her dad's home and take care of him.

CH: So, you went up to Dayton?

EF: So, which she did until he died. So, I went up to Dayton and I stayed in her apartment and I held her job then at the YMCA.

CH: How long did you work there?

EF: I was up there about . . . when he died, let's see, I went up there in the fall around October and I was up there through Christmas, and I think he died around March or April. So, then, when she came back to Dayton, I decided to stay up there and she went back on her job and then, the Y was down on 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and then, I thought well, I'm going to stay up there, so I was walking up and down 5<sup>th</sup> Street and they had a grocery store run by these Greeks, I guess, Zawaya's up on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and William and they had a sign in the door, help wanted. I had an uncle who lived up there and he and his wife and daughter . . .

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1.

BEGINNING OF TAPE 2, SIDE 2.

EF: But, they were very nice. The old man Zawaya and his nephew, Francis, and son, Bill, and his daughter was . . . Oh, I can't think of her name now. But anyway, they were just great. And I worked there and I guess I stayed up there, oh a year.

CH: Did you notice any difference between living in Dayton and Richmond?

EF: Oh, all the differences in the world.

CH: What was different?

EF: Well, there was mixing of the races up there and I don't know, it was just all together different. We lived on Forest Avenue which was off of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and it just wasn't like a black neighborhood.

CH: Did you feel more comfortable there or less comfortable?

EF: Well, I never was afraid.

CH: Were there any problems when you were growing up here any problem with crime in the black neighborhood?

EF: Not too much. I mean, what little crime was with . . . it wasn't with young people. It was with older people, what little crime was committed.

CH: What type of crime typically would you find here?

EF: Huh?

CH: Burglaries?

EF: Uh, I don't remember. Moonshine.

CH: Moonshine here in . . .

EF: Yeah.

CH: Tell me about that. Where was the moonshine?

EF: I don't know. I know when the revenue men came in here one time we had the Crystal Slipper dance hall up there.

CH: What was that dance hall?

EF: The Crystal Slipper.

CH: Where is that located at?

EF: Up on Irvine Street.

CH: Okay.

EF: And it was run by a guy named Bob Black and he got that big fine home over there on the corner of Hillsdale and the street that comes through there.

CH: Oh, yes. That big house. The big old Telford. The old Telford.

EF: Well, it's down from the Telford. The great big white one there on the corner. And he was a big shot. He had a big fine long blue car, convertible. His wife had her furs.

CH: But he was a moonshiner?

EF: Yeah. He'd been selling that moonshine for years and them revenue people come in here on a Monday. They were up on there on their dance hall, up on the platform where the band was all morning long. They couldn't find it. They went out to lunch and whoever the squealer was got to them at lunch and told them what to do.

CH: Where it was?

EF: Where it was. And they went right back from lunch and up under that platform, the raised platform where the band . . . It was the bandstand. They found the little screw or something, pulled it, and the floor slid back. He went to Atlanta.

CH: They sent him to the pen in Atlanta.

EF: Oh, yeah. He went to Atlanta. The wife had to come out of that big house over there and go to work over at Old Pattie A. Clay Hospital over there on Glyndon there. She went over there as a maid.

CH: That was a real stepdown, wasn't it?

EF: I guess it was.

CH: So, there was moonshine?

EF: Oh, yes.

CH: Was there much problem with drinking? Intoxication? Public intoxication? Or drinking in the black community?

EF: Well, I mean, they were careful not to get arrested.

CH: You had the white police. There were no black police.

EF: No black police.

CH: How did the white policeman treat you? Treat the black people?

EF: Well, I never heard of any abuse. I never heard of them beating up anybody at that time. It was just here after I'm grown and married with children that I recall any police brutality.

CH: So, when you're growing up, you really didn't . . . Were there any examples of the Ku Klux

Klan? Was that around here when you were growing up?

EF: They were. I don't recall them being in this area, but they were around up in the mountains and kind of all around us, but I don't ever recall them being in this area. Now, the only trouble that I ever known about anything like that was up here at Berea, a group called States Rights people or something, they had a camp up here in Berea one Sunday or one weekend, and on Sunday afternoon, there was a killing up there.

CH: Was a black person killed?

EF: A black and white.

CH: Black and white. This was a number of years . . . When was this?

EF: Okay, I'll tell you . . . Oh, let's see, my daughter is 50 and my son was four years . . . She was around 16 and he was about 12.

CH: Okay. I know when it was. About 1967. Around that time?

EF: Yeah. Because . . .

CH: Yeah. I remember that. It was on the college campus, wasn't it?

EF: Huh?

CH: It was on the college campus. Wasn't it around there?

EF: No, it was out in the field. He was, you know, in that vicinity but not on the campus property. They were out on the highway actually between here and Berea. And I know one black was killed and two whites, but it might've been two blacks, but I've forgotten. But, anyway, when my kids and I came home from church and Sunday school, I turned on the TV and I got that. And so, my son stayed out of church for something and my daughter had come home and then one of her girlfriends had a car. And when I got there, oh, I lived out on East Main right across from Old Richmond High School, I locked my door and I put my feet in the room and I came over down here to my church and my pastor. The wife came out next door and she said that Eddie had been there and that the Reverend had rounded up some guys to go up there and he's got them in there and talking to them and so forth. She was going down to the store.

CH: Is this Reverend Goodloe?

EF: No. Reverend H.L. Parks, Jr. up at the Methodist Church.

CH: Methodist Church, okay.

EF: And so I said, well, he doesn't have to take care of mine 'cause I can take care of my kids.

And so I opened the door and I told Eddie to come out of there. And so I came on down the hill and I am looking for Diana, because somebody told me that she was in the car with a friend of hers Ramona Miller, and my niece Marcia and so forth. So, I said if you see that car, tell Ramona to come to East Main Street and let Diana out. And I mean come straight there and let her out. So, then, after that Eddie and I walked back home. Oh, he was so upset because he... I said listen. Somebody said Reverend Parks said, I'll take care of him. I said listen, I don't need you to take care of my child. I'm taking my child home with me. I will take care of my child. Oh, he was upset. Then, we had been home about five minutes and I was out there walking and looking and looking and then finally Ramona drove up. I said Ramona, you need to go home and Marcia you need to I'll see your mommas. And I said you all don't need to be out because you don't know what's going to happen. But we thought we'd drive up. I said Marsha, you better not even look like you want to stay in that car and Ramona go toward them vehicles. I'll call your daddy and he'll come get you. Well, then, Diana got out and came on in. So, I said we are in here for tonight. You guys are not going anywhere. So, that was that. And then later on in the news that night, you know, we heard about . . . but we had heard about the killings that afternoon but we could get a report and so forth on TV that night. But that's the only time I have ever heard of anything like that in this area.

CH: Now, when you were growing up in church, you would going to . . . Otter Creek, but you probably started going to First Baptist? Is that right?

EF: No.

CH: You went to the AME?

EF: Yes.

CH: Okay. Why, was there any reason for going there as opposed to the First Baptist?

EF: Uh-huh. I stayed at Otter Creek until I was twenty years old. Otter Creek is a missionary Baptist. This up here is a missionary Baptist. All my family folks' side, my daddy's side, my momma's side, and grandparents on both sides were missionary Baptist. I had a friend, a dear friend that belonged up here at First Baptist.

CH: First Baptist? Okay.

EF: And she went to K. State her freshman year and came back, and that summer when she was gone, her high school boyfriend, she got pregnant. So, she didn't get to go back to K. State, and she had a son. They had a policy back there then, if a woman had a child out of wedlock, they'd turn you out of church.

CH: At First Baptist?

EF: Hmm-Mmm. Called it withdrawing the hand of fellowship, which meant your name was taken off church roll. You know, not a church member.

CH: Right.

EF: So, you have to come back before the board of deacons and apologize and go through all of that. Okay. I went up there with her that night. Her mother was incapacitated and couldn't go with her. She and I were good friends, and she didn't want to go by herself. Her sister, she had an older sister. Her sister didn't want to go. Yeah, her sister should'nt gone. One of the deacons sitting up there in judgment on my friend that had the baby, he was the janitor or something up there on campus and my friend's sister was a maid up there and they were having an affair and his daughter graduated with me in my class and he's up there judging and then, my high school boyfriend's dad was passing by my house down on First Street and he with his little half pint dollar in his pocket going to see his girlfriend down there when his wife was . . . He was a mail carrier... the janitor at the post office. His wife and his family out there on East Main. I went in with her, these very pointed questions. These old gray-haired men up there drooling and wanting to know all these minute details and I got hysterical. I jumped up screaming like a wild animal and I ran out of that church and I was outside just screaming to the top of my voice. Finally, she came on out. She lived on East Main Street. I walked to the railroad with her and I came back this way and I lived out on First Street and I was screaming and yelling and running all the way. About three or four doors from my house, I know I had never screamed so loud. My momma and dad . . . It was in the fall and, you know, warm. The doors and screens were still open. My dad come running to the porch, because he heard my voice and he knew my voice, with a shot gun. He was coming to meet me. What's wrong? What's wrong? What's wrong? I was just coming in and calmed down some and I started talking about the old man, the old man that had an affair on campus, the old man that passed down past my house, my boyfriend's dad, having an affair down there and they sit down there in judgment. There's the high school boyfriend. Her only boyfriend and they were planning to get married, which they got married, and they raised four sons and three daughters and they lived together until they died. I said to my mom and daddy, I'm living under your roof, and I'm not grown. I'm just 20 years old, but when I get 21, if you put me out in the street, I'm going to go up there and join the St. Paul AME church. I am coming out of the Baptist church.

CH: Your parents were going to First Baptist, right?

EF: No, they stayed at Otter Creek until they died.

CH: Okay.

EF: They were still members there when they died.

CH: Okay.

EF: So, I was 21 on a Thursday and on Sunday, my mother said, Ernest, she's going up there to the Methodist church. And my daddy said let her alone. I'd rather she be in church than not in church. So, if she is going to be happy up there and let her go. I just want her to be glad she's going be in somebody's church. And so I joined. My mother never set foot in that church. I think she went to her grave not really forgiving me. Of course, my dad, I was his namesake, had

Father's Day up there and different things.

CH: And he would go?

EF: My dad was right up there supporting me.

CH: Otter Creek was a Baptist church, is that right? She was pretty hard shell Baptist.

EF: Hard-shell, yes. Hmm-Mmm. But my daddy went.

CH: He was a little more liberal about that?

EF: Yeah. Hmm-Mmm.

CH: You know, I think this is probably a good point to stop this interview because we are going to have to go back and do another one another night. But I think this is a fine point to stop because the period is just out of school and going to Dayton and everything and we are going to carry you some more from here. How about that?

EF: Well, that's okay.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 2.