

Date of Interview: June 19, 1998

1998.017.004

Interview of: Carrie Bell ? Crowner Matthews

Interviewed by: Glorious Shenton and Joan Dean

Transcribed by: Donna Williams, June 26, 2004

[Tape begins as Mrs. Matthews' introduction has begun.] .

Q. ...interviewing Carrie B. Matthews -- that's Bowles?

A. That's right, B-O-W-L-E-S.

Q. ...of 1422 Columbia Beach Road, Shadyside, Maryland; and this is June 19, 1998. I'm gonna ask questions, and you answer and fill in anything that you want. Now this...we are interviewing Carrie B. Matthews, and it's Friday, June 19, 1998. Would you please give us your full name, including your maiden name, birth date and your birth place?

A. Well, it is Carrie Bell Matthews, or Bowles, rather;...or should I have said 'Crowner' Matthews?... or is that necessary?

Q. Get 'em all in there [Laughing.]

A. That's true. And my birthday is April 21, 1909 at Fork Union, Virginia. It's actually on

[Type text]

the map in Fluvanna, County.

Q. Fuvanna?

A. FLU - F-L-U...Fluvanna

Q. That's where Fork Union Academy is?

A. That is correct...that is correct. My father helped to build the chapel there, and I played in it...being the first colored person to play that chapel organ for the first integrated, inter-denom-inational Thanksgiving Eve (??) services, which I felt was a great honor to me, an humble person, and?? I?? my beginning... to have been able to share with the people some of the things that I had been taught when I lived in Fredericksburg, Virginia, with my aunt and her only daughter. She saw to it that we got music and that we were schooled; and then after...proceeded from there to Washington to finish my high school. and...must I continue?

Q. Yes...

A. And then in Washington, I accidentally I got ?Irodine - I-R-O-D-I-N-E... the ??pure?? stuff they were making then, in my left eye. And for seven years, I couldn't do any studying.

However, I didn't give up the desire to finish my high school. My mother, at the time, was a housekeeper at the...in the Kasper Music School, also in Washington, and she was quite worried because she wanted me to at least get through high school. So, what I did, I went to night school and completed my high school education in the Cordoza ?? evening high school. I graduated in 1936; this is my class ring [shows ring on her left hand]...my mother gave it to me.

And I felt very elated, and I felt that I had accomplished as much in the evening school as I would've in the day school, because in the day school, it was more or less compulsion

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that I go. My mother insisted that I go. But in night school, I went because I wanted to go and I accomplished a lot musically and otherwise. I enjoyed it a lot. It took...well, from there I started to work after getting my mother all straightened, holding down her job for a couple of years after because of her surgery. I decided then to go into the hair-dressing business. And at that time, I had friends who were connected with the Blue Chemical Company. This was a chemical company operated by the late Dr. James E. Blue. He was from British Guyana. His wife was British; they had two sons enrolled ? Howard/ in college...one of them had a crush on me. [laughs in background.]

And so I was given the opportunity to kind of be manager of this Blue Chemical beauty parlor. I enjoyed that a lot. And Dr. Blue decided...he felt that I was doing such a good job he would expand the business to...out into Virginia and into Maryland...and that I would be a good person to take the canvassers and teach them how to sell, because he said I had a gift of gab. [Laughs in background.] So having had some salesmanship in school, I used that in trying to get these canvassers into the business of selling the Blue Chemical Products. And that is what brought me to this part of Maryland. We would come every two weeks to Galesville, then Shadyside and then Churchton. But we always made Churchton our last stop because of the fact that by the time we had completed our canvassing, it was time to eat a good, hearty dinner...because we had walked so much all day. And at that time, the colored people did not have any place wherein they could eat or drink or recreate themselves except for a little store that was in Churchton, called the Blount's Store. They had a jukebox there, and of course, I used to like to shake a foot [Laughing in background.], and especially the tango...but I couldn't find but one person down here who could seemingly do the tango or something equivalent to that. And that was a gentleman who called everybody 'Cuz' - his name was ? Saggy ? Thompson

Q. Oh, yes!

[Type text]

A. I think everybody knows him.

Q. That's right.

A. And so I had talked with Mrs. Blount as to our expectations...the girlfriend who was one of the agents and I were planning to go to Howard University and study medicine. I was going to be a pediatrician. And so then I'd asked Mrs. Blount, is there any place that we could rent wherein we could serve meals and probably have some house guests on the weekends, because our church and many other churches that we knew in Washington, would be...the members would have...they had nice people who we could recommend in anyone's homes...wanted to come out in the summer and eat a good country meal.

And my friend was Rosetta Harriman??. She and I have never had any complaints about our cooking [Laughs.] Every body thought we could make the best southern fried chicken, and pies and cakes. So she said...Mrs. Blount said to me, 'you know, I know a gentleman who has lost his wife. It's just him and his brother, and they have a nice, big home. Maybe you could rent his house.' So, I said, well...I asked the Doctor what did he think of it, and he said, 'well, I think that's wonderful'. And then Dr. Blue asked who it was. And she said, 'well, that's him sitting over in the corner there now.' Sooo...will you ask him to please come over and talk with us?' So Mrs. Blount called him over, and he [dog barks in background]. started talking with us(??)...'Mr. Crowner, I wonder if there is any possibility that these two girls could rent your house in order to serve meals...and if there's room for overnight visitors since they are connected with so many things...?... choir and so many things ??and church??from Washington ...? very difficult ? they would have a pretty good???' [Dog barks in background again.], both excellent cooks.'

So he said, 'I am an excellent cook, also.' So we said, 'Well, how fortunate.' So if one desires to or if one gets sick, the other...you ??can step in and help out.' He said, 'yes, I

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would be glad to.' So Dr. Blue said, 'well, what would you rent your house for from the first of May, say, to the first of November...about six months?' He said, 'Oh, I don't know. It's nobody now but my brother and me now, but I've lost my wife. I could rent it to them for \$300.' Dr. Blue said 'Do you have your receipt book in your pocket book, Miss Bowles?' I said, 'yes, fortunately, I do.' So Dr. Blue gave Mr. Crowner the \$300 so that we were to begin the first of May, and that our occupancy would last until the first of November. So I gave...I let Mr. Crowner write a receipt instead of having?? [Slight interruption as mailman leaves mail at the door.]

And so Dr. Blue took the receipt from Mr. Crowner for his \$300, and so Mr. Crowner looked at it and said, 'you know, this is more money than I've seen at one time in a long time. It will help me tremendously toward my debts because' he said, 'I was just about to lose my home.' He said, 'My first wife had such a big heart, and if somebody would come to her and ask her to go on a note...She had signed her name and my name to it. [Chuckles in background.] And when she died, this is when I found out how much debt we owed, and I had no way of getting out of the debt because my work is seasonal. I'm a fisherman, and I also operate a duck blind, but that...and both are conditional. You don't know how many fish you're gonna catch, or you don't know how many ducking parties you're going to have.' So he said 'the Lord sent you here just in the nick of time.' [Dog barks again in back-ground.]

Dr. Blue said, well, where do you live?' And he said 'I live over in Shadyside, so the next time you all come down, come over to my house and have dinner. I'm not trying ?? ladies society??Christian service??out of their [Shuffling noises prevented me from hearing this??] but he said 'I'm a good cook and y'all come up to my house for the next two weeks and have dinner.' So Dr. Blue asked us whether or not we wanted to accept the invitation, so we said 'yes' So we asked him if there was anything he wanted us to bring. And he said 'no, I have country food, and if you all have something ? fancy? specifically

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that you want to add to it, for yourselves'..he said, 'It's just my brother and me, and he's sickly. So we are used to a lot of vegetables. I used to... I kill hogs, I have cured ham and I want chickens??, I raise chickens, turkeys and guineas, and I provide lots of fish. So, what would you all like to have?' So, we, out of that variety said 'anything that you fix will be wonderful for us. So that next two weeks when we came down, we'd sharpen our appetites for the gorgeous dinner cooked by him; and I used to always say I didn't want to eat a man's cooking because I just thought he didn't wash his hands often enough.

[Chuckles in background.] But I, however, I bridged? over that thought to eat some of his cooking. He looked clean and we got there and his house was clean. [Dog barks again!]

On top of chicken, ham, and he had fried a few fish. I said, 'well'...Dr. Blue said, 'You know, we can't beat this.' So he said to us... Mr. Crowner did, [Dog barks over and over again!] y'all take home with you. Well we felt so??lucky?? So then that two weeks ??? 'come to my house', so we did. Then back on the next trip, that's when we asked to inspect the house to let us see what was available. So then I said to Rosetta, 'You and I could sleep in the attic, since he does have an attic, if there is someone who would need the bedroom that we would be occupying.' So we got the thing all planned out on paper, and then from there on, Mrs. Blount said, 'Y'all don't stop by as much any more.' So I said, 'well, Mr. Crowner's made it so home-like for us, maybe we don't want him to feel we're unappreciative. And that he had...Dr. Blue had paid him for the occupancy of it by us from the first of May. So we'll be coming up to visit your establishment.'

So some times on our way back we would stop by and we'd have the Womens Society Christian service to prepare a plate to take home with us. This way they would feel we ?? ?? down?? So after that then we finally got down here, Rosetta got sick. She had to have emergency surgery, so that left me by myself. And it was just so handy that he, Mr. Crowner, could cook and he could fill right in. So I told him I would buy my chickens

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from him and seafood and, in other words, I would utilize what he had here...as much as I could, 'cause no need to be going out to the store to buy things he already had here. And so this would help him, too. So he was very grateful and of course he said, 'Now Miss Bowles, just take over now. This is your house now... just take over.' And he said 'I assume the way you will do it ?? you are not people who are just out to get somebody.' I said, no, that has not been our aim.'

And so Rosetta had gone back in for her surgery; and, of course, she had major surgery so she wasn't able to do anything the rest of the summer. And so I carried on and I found out that around here the predominant thing in the dessert line that people liked was raisin pie, green tomato preserves pie and sweet potato pie.

Q. Oh, wow! Yes, that's my favorite!

A. Mine, too. And so I have to pat myself on the back, but I've always been a good sweet potato pie baker, but I didn't know the first thing about green tomato preserves, let alone the pie or raisin??pie, or green tomato pie. So he told me he would make those pies. So any way, people would come, fell in love with all the foods that we'd serve them, and so then... I'm getting a little bit ahead of my story a little bit... In all that we'd be identified as to where we were located. I had a big sign made 'Terris Inn' - I didn't see any other Terris Inns around here. So I had the sign put out front so that people...at that time the roads were not numbered...neither were the houses. So because of that sign, that would let people know, you'd tell 'em about how far to drive down, and look on the right side, that they would see the sign to drive down to the main road. And then I had some flyers made, which I have saved, and so this way we had a very crowded seating/ season.

And many people wanted to go in swimming, and at that time Mr. Crowner was the

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overseer of what is now Columbia Beach. The late Admiral Darris?/ Terris used to own that place. And he and his family used to come occasionally and spend the summer or something in this very home ... Mr. Crowner's home that he had with his first wife and so, consequently, people recognized his ability to do things to help people because of his helping with the admiral and other people at the Naval Academy and what not. And this piano [She points to her right.] when he used to play, he...I remember some people from the Naval Academy came down ...they were instructors, and they brought their children, and he'd sit at the piano and try to help these kids figure out ??? on there. So he would play it he knew the song, and then he would teach the children how to play it. He wasn't a music teacher as such, but he was gifted in being able to play almost anything that he had heard. So that became famous. And so meantime, I'm back there sweatin' in the kitchen. [Laughs.]

So after that, as time went on, Rosetta came back to just be there. She wasn't able to do the work but just to be there. She always ??was like a big sister. So we talked about our plans in entering Howard that fall. So I said to her, 'this is so good, I don't know whether we should go in now or wait until the spring and go in for the second semester'. She said 'well, I haven't been able to do anything to help.' And I said, 'well, what I have raised...I have put your name on one half of it, because that was our idea to start off with, and your not being here was not through your fault...it was through your health. It could have been me. So I feel that to look out for you would be the right thing to do.'

So I told Mr. Crowner as the time approached for us to give up the eatery and I said 'you know, it won't be long before we'll be going...we'll be leaving here.' He said, 'you know young lady, I have noticed the way that you have handled it, and you are one business person.' I said, 'Well, I guess I inherited that from my father and my uncle. My uncle used to have a store down home ...I guess he still did at that time...and I guess that type of thing is just a part of my family, and I don't know much about my mother's family

[Type text]

because they lived over on what we called 'the ridge'. You've heard them say ???
Virginia?

Q. No.

A. Well, they call that 'over on the ridge', which runs a long ways from our home because Papa told me when he and Mama got married, when he went over that ?Sunday? morning to get her, the river was high. The James River was high, and he had to drive up to some place they used to cross the Rivanna?? River. It was high 'cause he said the water came up almost over the wheels of the buggy. He didn't have a car at that time in Virginia

Q. So that was in Virginia?

A. That was in Virginia, so...

Q. How do you spell that river? Y-??

A. R-I-V-A-N-N-A, Rivanna...and that comes from up in the mountains.

Q. Yes, I can visualize that.

A. Yes. And then the floods...in '69, it was pathetic to see the havoc...the deer and the houses, poultry... floating in the water. I took movies of the water when it was coming down. I have a small movie camera, and so it was really pathetic. And so anyways, Papa said he came near getting Mama's bridal gown ruined because, as I said, there were no cars and he had to drive over there for her in the buggy, and then they drove back. He rolled his pants legs down so they wouldn't get wet. And Mama's veil was something, he

[Type text]

said it wasn't cheese cloth, [Dog barks again in background when someone laughs.] but it looked like cheese cloth. [Laughs.] ?? but he got ?? on Mama. However, it didn't dampen their spirits.

So, they got to the church, there was an old lady there... she said, 'Linda, what happened to your veil?' Mama said, 'I don't know.' And the bottom of Mama's dress had gotten this red water tinted around it. So Aunt Martha...we always called her 'Aunt Martha??', she always carried the stove, everything, down to the cook stove, in her pocket book. And that's why my husband called me Aunt Martha Tucker ... something of everything in there. So she had some scissors in there and she clipped off the bottom of Mama's veil and the hem of Mama's dress. And Mama had hoops around it. This lady for who Mama's older sister worked and Mama stayed there with her, 'cause Grandma had died and Grandpa had died, and this lady took in Mama...I've got it in..??the girls..? whose portrait is on the wall [She points to pictures.], and she favored her later. But anyway, Aunt ?Fanny said...she used to stutter...she said 'you know, this is embarrassing.' So the lady whose Aunt Fanny ?? was working?? said well I'll tell you, since your dress does look?? is bad, I have a dress that my daughter was married in. Go ahead and let her put this dress on.' Mama was married in her daughter's dress.

And so when they got to the church, as I said, they had clipped the edge of the veil off so it made it a short veil rather than a long trail. And they were...the minister, I think, my mother told me... when he told Papa to salute his bride...so Papa reached up and took the whole shee-bang off. [Laughs.] He was so nervous, he didn't know what to do. He took off the whole thing. And from the way she described it, she had a wreath around her head, and it went all the way around, and the veil then, and the little flounces, you know. But any way, he took that off and kissed her.

And so they were married there in my church that I'm so very fond of and long to go back

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to ...Thessalonia Baptist Church. It was my pleasure, after we moved back to Virginia, to be instrumental in getting a Hammond organ, and I used to play that for the church. We had a piano there but the lady who used to play had trouble with her wrists, and I imagine it was just like I had with my hands...that Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, wherein it prevented her from playing. So I used to play the organ, and people from the Academy and different ones who were invited to come to our church, they wanted to hear this organ in Thessalonia Baptist Church. So a cousin of mine was studying music, and he was urged to sing a solo, and he sang "Deep River". It was very, very beautiful and effective. And this Music Director at the Academy asked, he said, 'may I have something to say'? The pastor granted him permission. And he said 'I knew Robert?? when he was a little boy and have watched him grow and do little menial jobs around and never thought he'd become the baritone that he is now. He said 'I am just so happy for him', and he walked up to him and hugged him. And others from the Academy who were there did the same thing. They said 'we are so happy to know that people who have...who were born here at Fork Union, and some of them have gone away and prepared themselves in some way to make a contribution to their homeland when they return.'

And this was long before I'd played at the Academy because they were just getting into normalcy of integration, and every body began to feel that the old custom was something of the past. And they felt that people should get together, that they should be...it would encourage the children to... especially the colored children, when they went away to try to make their lives worthwhile...to do something worthwhile.

Q. What year would this have been?

A. Well, let's see...It must have been 1970...around 1970, because we moved down there in '68.

[Type text]

Q. When you say 'we', who do you mean?

A. My husband...my second husband.

Q. Crowner?

A. No, Crowner had died. He and I were married 12 years, but getting back to him...I'm a little ahead of my story.

Q. Give us his full name...Crowner.

A. James Edward Crowner.

Q. And did he live over here?

A. Yes. And that...all of this [Using her arm, she indicates a large area.] was his father's property. From here, I think you know much of this, up to the store up here, and then all the way back. The Dennis brothers...well, the Dennis' owned a lot of this land back here, but then when father Dennis' daughter married a Crowner, then the Crowner portion, that is my husband's portion, is down the road here about... Do you know where Chucky Gross's house is down here?

Q. No, not really.

A. Well, it's about a half a mile down here. So then going over to Cedarhurst Road, [Dog barks in background.] squaring it up, coming up to the Avery Store...not the ...Dean Thompson?... Dean lives between our line and the store. Well anyways joining? the Thompsons was this huge square of land that... going way, way back...my husband...first

[Type text]

husband, Crowner, his father owned it... gave him that portion of land. And before he had given him that portion of land, this spot, right here was the first...the spot on which was the first colored school of Shadyside was erected.

Q. Right here?

A. Right here. I have a block out there that indicates where the line came. There's no writing on it. I discovered it when I had the lawn cleaned off after a big tree had fallen there, and here it was under this big locust tree. And my husband...my first husband told me then if a child batted his ball, which is an old rag ball, out into the road...and the road was far from being like it is now...it was just a dirt road...but that child could not go out in that road to get that ball until the teacher permitted him to do so.

Q. That's right. They were very strict.

A. Very strict.. . but the first children, colored children, who were taught, as he explained it to me, was in a barn...some person's barn down in Shadyside. I don't know if it was on Lerch...

Q. [Mumbles something??]

A. ...but there were Lerchs and Rogers, I think there were Lerchs or Rogers...

Q. ...could be Lerchs

A. ...had a leaf barn/ big barn? down there, and that's where a few went to school... would go. And then after that, the Board of Education bought this lot for \$10 from my father-in-law. When they no longer needed this spot, when the population outgrew the

[Type text]

use of this spot, then they moved the school down to where Lula G. Scott is now, and they had two rooms.

Q. That's right.

A. And I was here on the scene when they moved the school in Churchton down the road and hooked it up to this school. [Uses arms stretched wide to demonstrate.] And then they had these...

Q. I have a picture of it on the card(?)...or whatever it was on, 'cause they had to leave it over night on...by Dent Road. I went up and took a picture of it.

A. How interesting! Well, they came on down... they had these huge...this great big hill with a tent around it, and what not. You know, I tried to recognize the kinfolk. They said I was a 'fur-in-er' [meaning foreigner!]

Q. I know, they would say that.

A. I know that was in any small hamlet, you know, people used these terms and... but...

Q. They loved you any way.

A. Well, I hope they did! I tried to ? myself ?... right along with them I didn't try to make them feel that I was any different from them, but I said... so the one who was taken care of the ?files/ fires? in the school...I called him cousin Jesse, you know?? couldn't make the ??adopted/ doctor's?? son say that. Yeah, ??judge Rizzo?...he was the custodian of the school. Am I right?

[Type text]

Q. Right.

A. So, well, after that...

Q. How in the world did you come to marry Mr. Crowner?

A. Well, I was getting ready to come to it. When we...the time was approaching for us to leave he said, 'you know, I don't think I'm going to let you go back'. I said, 'No...why?'

He said, 'you know, I have observed you, and I have contacts with a lot of ladies, but you are the top. You would be just the type person I need.' Well, it kind of stunned me there for a while, and I said, 'Well, how do you know, we haven't courted'. And usually with courtship, sometimes, people are different like they are when you're having a business deal with someone. So I said 'I don't think we've known each other that long so that we can decide whether or not we're suited for marriage, let alone', I said, 'you're older than my father.' [Laughing.]

Q. That was James?

A. James E. Crowner. And so he said 'Regardless...I'll be a good husband to you...I guarantee you I'll be a good husband to you.' I said, Well, I'll have to write and ask my parents their opinion. So Papa Roblyn?? had met him, and so at that time...'course my mother and father had been divorced since I was nine, but my father was living in New York with his sister. And I wrote Papa, and I said, 'Papa what do you think of me marrying Mr. Crowner? He's asking me to marry him.' And Papa said, 'Darlin', he is too old for 'ya. [Laughing.] Papa don't want you to marry no old man...?? somebody your equal.' So I said, 'but he's very nice.' And I told him all of the nice things I had observed of him. And he said, 'well you don't have to marry him for a home because you have your own home.' Papa had given me a little farm down in Virginia and built me a little

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house on it, and I enjoyed my home. So I was independent from that point of view. So I said 'well, let me write to my mother...or call my mother...and ask her opinion. At that time, Mama was working in Washington at the [Large truck 9or airplane) rumbles by noisily in the background.] Academy of Music School. So Mama used to come down almost every weekend. I'd go up to Wayson's Corner to meet her... the bus used to come down there...and bring her down, and she observed, too. She was a very sharp observer, so...

Q. You take after her

A. Well, a lot of people tell me that. [Laughter.] So, Mama came down...when I called her. She said, 'You let me come down and do some little observing.' [Laughter.] So Mama came and when I went to meet her I told her I said, 'to me he seems to be a nice gentleman...he's old and country-fied; but at the same time, he needs somebody'. And I didn't have no special boyfriend at the time, so I ...because my mind was set on going to college. And I didn't feel that I had time to be wasting on no boyfriend.

Q. Good girl!

A. So then she said, 'What about college?' And I said, 'What about it?' [Laughter.] She said, 'Love can cure?everything.' She said, 'What does Rosetta think?' I said, 'Rosetta said the old man was falling in love with me...I thought he was falling in love with her! So the minister at our church in Washington... he was a widower... and he was in love with her... with Rosetta. But she wasn't paying him too much attention... just pass the time away.. They'd go to dinner, or something like that, you know. So anyway Rosetta said to me... when Mama said 'Do you love him?' I said 'I don't know yet because I love him from one way... he's been very nice.' He filled the gap of a father, like 'cause mother and father, as I said, had been divorced for years. And so I wasn't around my father as much as I would like to have been. And the years that I would have

[Type text]

been...what do you call it?

Q. Forming your ideas?

A. Forming my ideas, that's right.

Q. Feelings about things...sure.

A. And so, you know, when a child and the parents are separated, it's the child who suffers because they want to feel something, gain something from both parents. And by Papa being in New York, I didn't get the feel of the father. I knew he loved me and would do anything for me but I didn't have that close connection with him. And I love to fish. Mama loved to fish. Papa wanted no part of the water but the bath tub.

[Laughing.] And so, therefore, Papa never took me fishing. But Mr. Crowner would take us out in the boat. We'd go down to the Bay and the being a hillbilly, you wouldn't think I'd love the water like I do. But I just love the water. So then Mama said, 'If you think enough of him, if you feel that you can learn to love him, go to it.' So then I answered 'yes'. So Rev. Middleton, who was here then...A. T. Middleton?

Q. The name, but I don't know him

A. Well, Rev. Middleton...Rev. Anderson Middleton, was very nice when I'd go to them for something to ask their advice.

Q. Now was he their pastor at St. Matthews?

A. St. Matthews and Franklin, at that time. Those two churches..??

[Type text]

Q. They had both churches...

A. And so, I said 'Rev. Middleton, Mr. Crowner wants to marry me.' He said 'Well Miss Bowles, what do you think of him?' I said 'I think he is a perfect gentleman.' I said 'he's turned his house over to me and my girlfriend when Doctor rented it for us, and he acted more like we were the owners.' So he said 'Well, Carrie, that goes to show that he has confidence in you.' So I said...then when his brother became ill, and finally died, he didn't have insurance to bury him with. Well, I had saved up some money, so I paid for his funeral.

?? & Shade??...I had them in Washington??'cause I knew ?? to ?? owned this place down in the middle of?? Cliffside? behind Norman Hales?? down West River Road

Q. Yes..yes...I know it.

A. We used to call him cus (?) I knew him that well.

Q. What was his name?

A. Melvin. Last name was Melvin...we used to call him Mitch?? Melvin...but we used...

Q. Is that on the water?

A. On the water...and he had horses. And of course my father had given me a Texas pony, oh I guess when I was eight years old, and I loved horse-back riding. Mama made me a riding habit, with a skirt with the saddle on the side. I was a regular tomboy. So then of course 'Brune?? had died five years ago, I didn't have another horse. And so Mr. Melvin... they would come down...always come to the house and get a pie or something or

[Type text]

some kind of take-a meal, he and his wife. So our friendship constantly grew. So then when my first husband's brother...we used to call him Pat, but his name was Alexander, when he died, I asked Mitch? if he would bury him, and I would pay him because the insurance that Mr. Ferguson down here (I think that was his name) used to be the insurance collector. Do you recall him?

Q. No. No I don't know that Ferguson. Had a Ferguson, but I'm not sure he was in insurance...ever in insurance. He was with the Thomas Lumber company...different Ferguson...Judd??

A. He was with the "People's", and they had...Miss Francis had him, for herself and my husband and his brother.

Q. They always had insurance...always had somebody selling insurance...everybody did it.

A. And so...when I contacted him 'cause his name and phone number and everything was on the book. When I contacted him he said 'this insurance hasn't been paid up for I think two years...something like that.' ??out of benefits?? So then he started crying. He said 'What in the world am I going to do? I just don't want to borrow any more money, if I can find a place to bury my brother.' So I said 'Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll loan you the money', because ?I had? my college money I had saved. And Mr. Mitch? charged me \$500 and I gave him a decent burial. And so at that time I don't know whether the other relatives had it or...but nobody came up with any money.

Q. What year was that?

A. That was, let's see, '38 or '39 I have it listed in...

Q. That was the Depression?

[Type text]

A. It was...it really was. And the family Bible I gave to Daisy Thompson??., my brother-in-law's daughter, because she had more children.

Q. Do they still have that Bible?

A. I think she still does.

Q. Daisy?

A. Daisy Crowner Thompson. And so she lives on Cedarhurst Road, you know. So she was my brother-in-law Charles Crowner's daughter...Daisy and Helen...you've seen them...two beautiful girls. And she and her husband see to it that I get to and from the store, now and then They're very kind to me.

Q. Isn't that wonderful

A. Because I know they can't run on water...cr can't run on water

Q. It would be a good thing if we could. Because of where we live and all this rain we've been having!

A. Right, right.

Q. What year did you marry Mr. Crowner?

A. In 19... Let's see...was it 1950? I will...Well Daisy has it in the book, and I think I have it over there [Starts to get up from her chair.]

[Type text]

Q. No, that's all right...that's OK..

A. 19 no, it wasn't 1950...it was much earlier than that. If I think about it, my second husband was '51 that Would have been

Q. 18 something?

A. No, not 18..19...I think it was about 1929 or 30

Q. You were married to him for 12 years?

A. He died...

Q. And you lived right here in Shadyside?

A. Not this one...the one [points to her right.]

Q. That's where we pulled in. [Several people are talking all at once!!] See, I thought you were still there? I hadn't realized you had moved out.

A. No. Well, I sold that...that was my house.

Q. I never got over it yet!

A. Yes. Well, I'll tell you. When my second husband and I moved to Virginia, I rented it to a girl who's Rose Dennis' sister. She had eleven children. I told her how I wiped the floors up [Uses hands to demonstrate.] I don't throw the water on the floor, but I

[Type text]

squeeze...I put the mop and then generously shake it up and down in the water, and then squeeze the water. And then do the floors. They were ? linoleum on all the floors. Apparently, her children just took the water and did one of those things [Demonstrates throwing something as an example!]. But before I rented it to her, I made a contract...a written contract...that's one of my business ?? and I told her, after telling her that and after telling her not to put a lot of paper in the toilet. We had a receptacle wherein you put the paper in that and everything / every day? was burned because the paper would stop up the toilet. This was before the sewage thing came through.

Q. That's right.

A. And she called me up one day and said the toilet was running over, and she wanted me to do something about it. And I told her, I think she could help herself more than my coming up from Virginia, just so those kids could put paper in the suction pump...the pump is out. And then after that, with eleven children and all of them wiping themselves, that must've stopped up anything. So I said to put it in a paper bag, which I had a little thing where you press on the lever and the top come up, didn't have to touch it, just drop it in. And then every day, burn it and put a fresh bag in it. Well, they didn't do that. Then they as I said about the washing the floors as I had instructed her, some of the kids - or maybe she did it - threw the bucket of water on the floor and then it seeped down through the old-fashioned lathes and loosened the mortar...' cause all the rooms were covered...plastered, you know?

Q. Plastered.

A. Plastered, yeah. And so she wrote me, or called me, and told me that the plaster was falling in the kitchen...in fact, all of it had fallen. So I thought that was unusual. So we decided to come up here and see what was going on. So I called Mr. Dennis in

[Type text]

Leonard...they were carpenters around here, you know, at Leather Neck?

Q. Oh, yes in-deed, I know Leather Neck>

A. Well, I told them...I said, 'I want you to meet me over here and go with me over to the house and see what is what.' So Mr. ?Oringin?? said to me, 'Miss Carrie, if I were you, I wouldn't put any more plaster up here because what has happened is they've been throwing water on the floor, and it's loosened up. And if you put more up there, it's just 'gonna loosen that. I'd just put sheet rock ...well, even sheet rock could be loosened...I'd just put plywood up there.' So she said 'if you just put plywood up there, I'm going to report you to the Health Department.' I said, 'Well, Dolly, I tell you what. Get your contract.' [Chuckles in background.] She got it. I said, 'Now look in there...now you read until you see 'if either becomes dis-satisfied, that we will let the other know we are dis-satisfied and move out in thirty days.' So she got the contract. I pointed out to her...I said 'now you're dis-satisfied because I'm not going to put good plaster up there again. So you've got your moving orders.' So I gave her a little note. I said 'Now you find some place else to go. That'll save us both the expense of a lawyer. Because if I get a lawyer, he's going to tell you the same thing. If you get a lawyer, he's gonna tell you the same thing. So consequently, we'll settle that right now.' So then we did. And she moved out.

And then when she moved out, Augusta Tenn (??) and her husband came down to Virginia to see me about the house and said, 'So I heard about this girl, whatever her name was, I've forgotten now, has moved out of your house. And I said 'Well, she has 30 days to get out, but I guess she's moving now, so that's fine. She said 'We would like to buy your house.' So I said 'Well, since I have a house down here - they saw my house. I had five, big bedrooms. My son-in-law, my husband...my last husband, and a friend of ours put all that up. A nice full basement... 45 feet wide and 60 feet long..

[Type text]

Q. Now where was this?

A. In Fork Union

Q. Oh, I see...back home?

A. Back home. And so I showed it to 'Tig...we call her Tig...her name is August Tigge(?), and I said 'now I built this home so that I could have it after I finished working and I retired, ?? personal care home...not a nursing home, but it would be on that basis. It would be a personal care home.

Q. Ahead of the game.

A. You know, Mr. (?) Minnie(?) Childs...Loren?? Childs??..used to be in Annapolis? well, his sisters came to my house...in fact, we came up and got them because they wanted to go down and see where we lived. I had lots of dealings with them through the time...being married to my husband. And Mr. Childs told my husband, he said, 'Jim, you are very fortunate to have a young lady who will come in and take over, and this young lady doesn't have to do it. She's genuine...don't you let her go.' I think Loren Childs kind of boosted him into asking me to marry him. [Chuckles.] And so then when we flew down to Virginia.

Q. You and Jim?

A. No, no, no My ex-husband.

Q. Ok. Let's go back to your first husband, Jim. You lived in Shadyside?

[Type text]

A. We lived here for twelve years. And then he died Christmas Eve...I think it was 1950 ...Christmas Eve 1950, and...

Q. While you were married to him, what was... he just did the fish business?

A. He did the fish business, then we operated the duck blind... had very good success, because I would cook the breakfasts for the (?) hunters. I would cook the dinner... when they'd come in, their dinner was here, and they enjoyed it so much they said 'this certainly beats going to a restaurant.' Then I gave them all the food they'd want. I cooked enough so there'd be plenty for them and the two fellas, three fellas, actually, who used to help him. They were James (?)Brent, Best? Brent, and Howard Matthews. We could bet on the three of them to help in the duck blind saves ?? climbing in and out...

Q. It's hard work.

A. It's hard work. And I was trying to save him by having these fellas to work for him. And we were very successful, and we had people who come from New York State ?? I think the only Southern state was North Carolina, but the rest of them was from Pennsylvania, Baltimore and New York and New Jersey. But the house was filled up at all times, and I would always have the big cup...the big coffee pot on the stove brewing, so when they came in, there was a hot cup of coffee, and I'd get 'Half & Half' cream so that... and they said they felt so good after it. And then some of them would stay over night. They paid the extra....they paid me for everything, 'cause they engaged in a sport...no need engaging in it if you can't bear the expenses. And they bore the expenses, and it helped me, it helped them. And then sometimes, when they had a lot of ducks...when they were sleeping, I was pickin' the ducks. I said 'Well, now when you go home, you just... all you have to do is let your wives soak the ducks and then cook them.

[Type text]

I would even tell them how to cook a wild duck. I said, Do you want the feathers?' No, they didn't want the feathers. I made a lot of pillows...a lot of pillows out of those feathers. And so, consequently, we had very good success those years. And then with the fishing, I used to go with him and his brother, Charles, Daisy and Helen's father, out to the fish nets sometimes, like in this time of the year..

Q. Pound ? Net ? Neck?

A. Yeah, I'd go out to the Pound Net [Shakes head in the affirmative.]

[Slight 'blip' in tape.]

Q. ...major changes. What would you, after all your experiences in Shadyside, what would change about Shadyside? What would you recommend that Shadyside be changed at all?

A. Well, let me see I think there should be a limit on these houses...so much... I think the place is being too over loaded with houses, because from my observation ??? next door?...lots of cars...room to put them. The next thing is from what I've been reading, the schools, over-crowding of the schools and the earliness that the teachers and the children have to get up to go to school, I think that's breaking down something some where, because ...And another thing... I think that all of these youths should be given some type of constructive work to do rather than running up and down the road just playing. They're not learning anything, and they're not getting any where but in trouble, maybe that would break...

Q. What age group are you thinking about there?

A. The teenage group.

[Type text]

Q. Teenagers?

A. Umm humm. I think it would be very nice if we had something like the CCK, for girls and boys, so that when they get out of school, they can spend a while in these places where they would be learning something, having a good time, and helping. And be taught how to help themselves. And this would...I feel, would reduce this dope and what not, because they would be given a stipend of what they do, and teach them that they won't get rich over night. Don't expect it and that to earn... to work with what you get. And because the Bible says, 'by the sweat of your brow', you'll make your living. And I think we need to go back to some of the Biblical quotations, treating your neighbor as you wish to be treated, which means doing unto others as you wish to be done by. Getting your education, and there's more ways than one of getting an education: teach the hands as well as the feet... as well as the head, because you never know what might befall you in life. And if you don't know how to use both, you're in tough luck.

Just like when I came here, I was ??travelling with? just my head alone??. but then Aunt ??Nick?? taught me how to use my hands in a form that was helpful and it satisfied my curiosity as to where babies came from...actually saw it. When I was in nursing training, I was looking...once we had...I was in the O.R., and the doctor said, 'Miss Matthews, what are you looking for?' And I said ' I want to see for myself, how deep is skin coloring.' He said "well, of all things'. He said, You know, we have the dermis and the epidermis.' I said 'Yes, I know, but then after that what are you?' Laughing.] He said, 'All just alike.' (?)

So I was just teasing?, but I was being careful not to disrupt what he was doing, and I saw for myself. He said 'we all have the same red blood. I've seen patients of all groups operated on. All the blood looked alike to me... it's red.'. So I said, 'Well, if it's red, where do we get white and where do we get black from?', because that's a mixture

[Type text]

there Mixed with something else. I got down to the nitty-gritty of it And I said 'anytime anything that's mixed with another color, it's not a solid whatever you're trying to say it is, because and we went on from there to give our... each of our opinions. So I said 'now I don't know where the origin of the word 'black' comes to when you put all those who are supposed to be black together, and you've got a problem some is snow white, some not so, some midnight call. How do you call a group 'black'? Same thing with white people. Some are very fair, some are dark ...-they're not as dark as I am, but they are dark. Now how do you figure that? He said, 'Now you gonna have to go a little further than me..talk to the Man upstairs.' [Laughter.]

So I said, 'Well as long Africans??as? ? God made all of us. He made us as we are for his own reasons, and we can't change it, and I'm not gonna try to change it. So I'm going to try to conduct myself so that I'll be welcome wherever I go and wherever I'll be. And I'll be the same to other people. And I believe in the Golden Rule...treat me as I wish to be treated, or I treat you like I did...the same thing. But nevertheless, that is a part of my philosophy and I don't think I'll deviate from it.

Q. May I ask you something? After you...after Mr. Crowner died. Did you stay here in Shadyside?

A. I stayed here about a year at the...And it was very funny...he and I adopted this boy.

Q. You and Jim adopted a boy?

A. Ugh huh. As a little child he was unwanted...there's his picture over your head [points with right arm]. He was two years and five months. And I..through a friend of mine in Columbia Beach...she told me about this child, so Daddy said, 'You go up and see about this child, because we would like to have a child.' So I said 'Well, we'll go up and then if

[Type text]

he's a child that you can manage, while I'm gone out on maternity cases, then this will be fine. But I didn't want to get an infant because I knew he couldn't take care of it. So I went up to Washington and brought this child home. (His?) mother said...just one of these young teenagers, you know, having babies. She said 'I'm glad somebody wants him because I don't want a child.' I said, 'That's quite all right'..

So I brought him down here, and Daddy came out and he said 'poor little precious thing', took him in his arms and patted him. And the first thing he asked for was a hotdog...that's all he knew was eating raw hotdogs. So we took him. He has never asked 'where's my mommy?' He has never shown any signs of wanting to go back. So then I went up to Mr. Childs and explained things to him and he wrote up the papers for the adoption, and we adopted him legally.

And so then I said 'let's get a...choose someone to be his godfather and godmother, should anything happen to us. So my cousin, who died two months ago, was his godmother and then he said 'you know I think I'm gonna ask my cousin, Hiram, to be godfather. Because I know he'll be a good godfather. I don't know of anybody else that could be...that I could recommend'. So all right then...

[Slight interruption as mailman comes to door and Mrs. Matthews thanks him, some laughter, too.]

My husband told Matt...called him Matt...his name was Hiram that he would let him, in the event anything happened to him, he asked him would he always look out for Tony, my mother and me. Matt made that promise to him, but I didn't know it. But he used to tell me that in the event anything ever happened to him, I had been such a good wife to him, he didn't want any more of my life spoiled by my marrying another old man. [Laughter.] So he said 'you try to find somebody who is more near your equal.' And the description he was giving was like his cousin. So I said 'well I'm not thinking about any more

[Type text]

marriages, maybe I'll go back and go to college.' And I kept that in my mind, and he said 'No, I want you to accomplish your dream; but at the same time, if some real nice person comes and offers to take care of you and Mama, I don't want you to pass it up.

Well, not knowing what he'd said to Matt and Matt didn't know what he had said to me. So when he died, Matt...I didn't know how to reach him to let him know that Daddy had died, and Daddy was his cousin... his mother's first cousin. And so when the girl who he was engaged to died in Boston, he came with her family down to Virginia to bury her. Then he stopped by his aunt's bakery to see them, but on his way back to Boston. And they told him about Daddy having passed. So then he said 'well, I'll wait to go back to Boston tomorrow.' And he and his aunt drove down here. I had Tony at Johns Hopkins to have a cyst taken off his hand and when I got back, Tony said 'oh Mama, there's Aunt Lorraine's car. I'll bet she brought some buns from the bakery.'

So we got out of the car, and he rushed in the house, and when he got to the door, who should meet us first was Matt. And he took...picked Tony up and kissed him. And then when I walked in the house, he gave me a peck. [Laughter.] So I said 'what are you doing down here?' Absolutely had no idea of seeing him again because I thought him and the girl was getting married. So I said 'well what happened to Eva?' He said 'She died, and I went to Louise, Virginia to her funeral with her family. And Aunt Lorraine told me about Cousin Jim and how he'd died.' And so then he said 'You know, Cousin Jim told me something or asked me something, and I'll explain it to you after I get back to Boston.'

So all right...whatever it was...I thought Daddy wanted him to take over an old boat or something like that. So when he got back to Boston, he called me and told me what Daddy had told him about...or had requested of him about looking after Mama, Tony and me. So then he said 'Well Carrie, don't either of us have anyone now, and what...you

[Type text]

give some thought to it.' And I said 'Well, right now, I can't think about anything except the loss of him and so I just don't know where I stand now. I don't know what I'm going to do'. So this went on, oh, for a couple of months. And then I began to... my pastor, at the church that I was?? always?? Annapolis, Cecil Memorial, Rev. Johnson...I told him about it, and he said 'Well, Carrie, you know a lot of these old dudes [Laughter in background.] are looking for nurses. And don't you accept any of them. That's all they want. There's just one Mr. Crowner and he's gone. Don't you let any of these old dudes fool you.' And I laughed and I came home and told my mother, and we had a big laugh...everybody I told it to...we all had a big laugh.

So Matt called...he was calling three and four times a week, to make sure we were getting on all right. And so I told him about it. And he said 'I'd like to meet this Rev. Johnson. And I said, 'I think he'd like to meet you, too.' So then he came down one Sunday and I carried him to church and introduced him to Rev. Johnson. And so then he told Rev. Johnson, ' you know Cousin Jim asked me to look out for Tony, Mama and Carrie should anything ever happen to him.' So Rev. Johnson sized him up and said 'You know, young man, you meet my approval.' And from then on, when he went back to Boston, he'd call us all through the week and talk to us. So I didn't have any mind to look any place else 'cause I figured I had it made. [Laughter in background.]

So then, when he proposed to me, over the phone, I said 'well, you'll have to ask Mama.' So he asked Mama and Mama said, 'She's a grown woman now. There's no need of me saying no, because you all are gonna do what you want to do anyway.' But she said 'You know, in my home we didn't marry into the same family two or three times.' He said 'Mama, we're living in a different age now, and Carrie needs somebody, and so does Tony and so do you.' He said 'Well, you remarried.' And Mama said, 'Yes, but I didn't re-marry any body in my first husband's family.'

[Type text]

He, Mr. Joe, at the time when Mama married him, she was working for the ??Luther Gadd Movers, she was the housekeeper there. 'Cause she worked for your mother and father for a while...for a short while when she was here. And then somebody I think one of the Glovers, you know, the owners of ?? Riggs National, there at 14th and Pennsylvania Avenue?

Q. I know the banks but I don't know the Glovers.

A. Glovers...Mama had been working for them. But they had moved down to Orange, Virginia, to their big estate down there, and Mama didn't want to go down there. And so they recommended her to the...well, people in the Justice Department who handles Mr. Hoover=s requests. And so then when...they said we have a lady who we think you'd like a lot...she worked for the Glovers. So then Mr. Hoover said 'I'd like to interview her.' So then Mama went up there for an interview, and they sent her because?...They had called down... Mama called down to get in touch with us??...at the time I don't think we had a phone going then, and they called down to 'Miz Leatherbury's store...from the Justice Department...or come down...one or the other...I think they called?? She ??? we didn't have a phone...'cause Mama, for some reason there. And so 'Miz Leatherbury called said 'Miz Elizabeth, there's a man from the Justice Department wants to see you.'

Well, at that time, my stepfather used to play numbers, and Mama thought this is what it was all about. So Mama said 'so send him down'...'cause she was in the clear but Mr. Joe was trembling. And so, he was a nice old guy, but this was his habit before he married Mama. And so when he came, Mr. Joe went upstairs. Mr. Reese...I can never get his name... he said 'are you Mrs. Cooper'...Mama said 'Yes I am'. And then he went on and interviewed her and old her Mr. Hoover needed a housekeeper, and she was highly recommended to him. And so right from there, Mama...they accepted Mama because of the fact that she was highly recommended, and Mama went to work for J.

[Type text]

Edgar Hoover in his home as his housekeeper. So then Mr. Joe...

Q. J. Edgar?

A. J. Edgar Hoover...and around his house were so many little beeps and peeps and lights coming on and off. And I'd go up their house, and I wondered what was going on. And Mama said 'well, we don't have any guilty conscience, so...' But Mr. Joe was the problem! He didn't want to stay up there because he felt that something was looking for him! [Laughter in background.] So Mama said 'you go on right about your business.', and he did. And so she just stayed right there until she got sick. And then I put her in the hospital here where she died from diabetes; but they thought the world of her.

Q. Do you marry Hiram then and how long did you live here with him?

A. He and I were together two months less than 44 years...that's his obituary on my organ there [points with her left hand]

Q. And you lived in Shadyside?

A. No. I lived in Boston part of the time. And then we came back here, and then we decided, after I had finished my nursing course, to go down to my farm in Virginia and open a personal care home. That was my aim when I first...after I got my house built. But when I got there, there were two ladies who had gotten together with HUD. And a Dr. Shepherd at University of Virginia Hospital about opening a clinic for three counties that had never had a clinic before. And that was Fluvanna, which was my county, and Buckingham and Cumberland County. And HUD approved it. And then when HUD...excuse me...approved it. And then someone recommended me to Mrs. Wylie about the nursing service...I had gone...I had gotten this job at the Cedars Nursing

[Type text]

Home...I was charge nurse for two floors at the Cedars Nursing Home in Charlottesville; and when I was approached about becoming, resigning from Charlottesville and going into the Cumberland area, to be nearer to my home, Then I talked with the owner of this nursing home and I told him how much I had enjoyed working with him, and so on, but that this was nearer my home. And I was driving 74 miles a day, back and forth to Charlottesville, so then he said 'Well Mrs. Matthews, if you ever want a job again, I'll see that you've got a job here...if you ever want to work here again.', which I thought ?? go back. I expected he could understand easily having to drive eight miles a day round trip to this home. So four of us nurses set up this clinic in Buckingham County, Virginia, and I worked there till I retired.

Q. And what year was that...what years would that be?

A. My...74...1974. And then I was having trouble with my big toe, so instead of it getting better, it... gangrene set in. And then it was treated for, oh, two or three years by this podiatrist there in Charlottesville. But the toe just would not get well. So a friend of mine, Dr. Corbett, he and I used to work together. He said, 'You know, Kay'...I allowed him to call me Kay, for short...'I'm surprised your letting your foot go that long without coming to me and asking me my opinion.' I have pictures that they send me Christmas time...I hear from him every year. He said 'I'm gonna call one of my instructors in Hopkins and have you to go up and have him look at that foot.'

So he did...a Dr. Ernest at Johns Hopkins So Dr. Ernest told him to tell me to come prepared to stay a few days. And so I went up and this was in 1980, and he looked at me...took an angiogram of my foot and blood poisoning had come just about half way up my leg, and he told me that if he amputated the leg now, he could do it below the knee; but if I wait another month, they'd have to go above the knee...they didn't know how far up. So I cried and I prayed and what not but my inner sense told me to have it done

[Type text]

now.

So I stayed there, and the nurses were getting ready to go on strike at Hopkins. So he said, 'Mrs. Matthews, I'll tell you what I am going to do is to transfer you over to City Hospital. Now I know you don't know???very much?? because old City Hospital was terrible, but he said 'that's where my main office is, and I'd like to have you near me so I can see you any time of day and see how...make sure everything is going along fine.' So they transferred me there. They amputated...

[Tape stops abruptly.]
