

**THE MANSFIELD AFRICAN-AMERICAN
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

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PROJECT STATEMENT

The Mansfield African-American Oral History Project was conducted to provide a record of some of the experiences of elderly African-American residents in Mansfield, Texas, a small rural community in the North Central region of the state. The oral history interviews were conducted in December 1995, at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield. The recollections of the participants born for the most part, in the first through third decades of the twentieth century, were videotaped in a single-day session and transcribed in two versions for reading clarity. Additional interviews were conducted by telephone and transcribed during those conversations. Family photographs were also recorded in the single-day session. Additional primary and secondary research was conducted to provide an annotated history for comparison with the transcriptions. This project provided an opportunity to both record and examine the cultural memory of the participants--one that had been transferred primarily by word of mouth over the length of many generations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROJECT STATEMENT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
METHODOLOGY	3
OUR FOREPARENTS	7
A SOCIETY OF MEANNESS	18
COURAGE, GRACE AND TENACITY	28
BIBLIOGRAPHY	49
APPENDIX A - Survey Instrument	
APPENDIX B - Unabridged Transcripts	
APPENDIX C - Abridged Transcripts	

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Finally, and not withstanding, an undertaking such as this is not possible without the contributions of time and the efforts of many other people. Bruce Jensen and Dwayne Jones of the Texas Historical Commission provided the initial impetus and assistance in acquiring the project funding. Special thanks are due Felix Wong, Director of Planning at the City of Mansfield, who initiated and supported this project throughout its duration. His dedication to the research and to the pursuit and dissemination of historical truth, if not also of civic introspection, is both extremely unique and admirable.

Reginald Loftin provided logistical support, arranged the equipment rentals and coordinated the videotaping session; and made arrangements for a photographer to replace him in his absence during an illness. Doug Hopfer conducted the recording of family photographs, in both color slide and black and white film. In addition, Mr. Hopfer assisted in the equipment set up and the videotaping session. To my friend and associate, Howard Burley, the son of an African-American minister, who oversaw the videotaping of the interviews and who spent many hours interpreting dialogue and preparing the base transcripts for this researcher, I am particularly indebted. To his wife, Mary, who also assisted in the preparation of the base transcripts of the interviews, I give my special thanks and to my friend George Maayeh and his family, who provided logistical support in the final phase of the project and assistance in both the production of the draft and final documents, I am also indebted. Countless additional hours were spent in the editing of the final transcripts. This was provided by my friend and fellow writer, Pam Armstrong. Her assistance on this project has been particularly invaluable. Additional research and writing for Chapter 3, "Courage, Tenacity and Grace" was provided by fellow researcher and writer, Rosa Clipper-Fleming. For her insights and dedication to the dissemination of the truth, I am particularly grateful.

Finally, to the participants themselves, who generously shared their experiences and their life stories, about which this researcher has written, I am very grateful. It is always an honor to sit and listen to a story told by a friend, or to hear the history of a family. To hear the history of a people or of an entire community is something even more special, especially when dealing with sensitive issues. For a community to accept an outsider into their midst and begin to recount a series of tales about their lives is also very unique.

Their statements indicate poignantly the insidious nature of racism and its manifestations in the practices of slavery, bondage, and the segregation that came with emancipation. Desegregation in Mansfield brought out a violent reaction from Anglos against three high school students. The burnings of African-American churches throughout the South during the 1990s is reminiscent of that same level of race-motivated hatred and

violence. Such actions should cause us to reflect upon what is happening in our society at the end of the twentieth century.

Regardless of our ethnicity, the African-American elders of Mansfield describe for us *our* foreparents and *our* elders. They describe *real* Texan and American heroes and heroines. We should embrace them and celebrate their courage in the midst of unbelievable obstacles, whether in everyday life or in their long pursuit of personal freedom and societal justice. We should be inspired to live as they have lived--with courage, grace and tenacity [1].

Stan Solamillo
The Research & Media Group
1996

INTRODUCTION

Oral history projects aimed at documenting the experiences of Texas' African-American population are not new. The first major project in this area was *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, produced by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration (WPA) as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. It recorded the recollections of elderly African-Americans in Texas who had "come out from slavery."

The project actually grew out of the work initiated by the African-American historian, John B. Cade. In 1935, while at Southern University in Houston, Cade published a collection of oral history interviews which he had conducted in the early 1930s with former slaves throughout the South. Cade later taught at Prairie View State College which was later renamed Prairie View A&M. During his tenure there, he directed the collection of an additional 400 interviews in Texas. Researchers at Fiske University in Nashville followed by conducting two similar projects in Kentucky and Tennessee during the same period [2].

In 1936, the WPA initiated the collection of similar interviews from African-American informants throughout the South. Run under the direction of Mississippi folklorist John A. Lomax, a set of instructions and a list of topics were sent to researchers in the region. The subjects covered included (a) names and dates of birth; (b) descriptions of life under slavery; (c) experiences during the Civil War; (d) Reconstruction; (e) experiences with the Ku Klux Klan; and (f) descriptions of lifeways (work, food, clothing) during each period [3].

Most of the interviewers on the federal project, however, were Anglo-American writers who appear to have been rather uninformed about African-American history in general, as well as the intricacies of the oral history interview process. They did not use recording devices, took only written notes and did not provide field transcriptions to substantiate the accuracy of the finished and edited versions [4].

The final transcriptions were edited both in San Antonio and in Washington and it is impossible to substantiate the validity of their contents. The methodological limitations, combined with a possible bias of the interviewers themselves, unfortunately place the entire work under question. Although the final document received many accolades from Washington, D.C. at the time of its completion, it can now only be regarded as a record of African-American recollections, whose content is somewhat questionable and can only be interpreted using a host of other historical sources.

Other oral history projects have been conducted by a variety of researchers throughout the state--the majority in the 1970s and 1980s. However, they vary in their degree of documentation and some of these projects are only videotaped or audio taped interviews which have remained untranscribed. An example of this was a series of oral history interviews with African-American musicians who had performed in the Deep Ellum section of Dallas, Texas during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Funding cuts during the late 1980s prevented hours of recorded material from being transcribed by researchers [5]. Given the experience with that oral history project and some others in African-American communities in North Central Texas, the Mansfield African-American Oral History Project was developed with particular emphasis on the completed transcriptions.

Questions similar to those used in the WPA interviews--as they related to the early periods of Mansfield's African-American community--were included in the project. The strategy for data collection was carefully planned to insure that there was sufficient documentation at various levels to cross-reference the oral history material with the historical record. In addition, the project methodology benefitted from a fairly developed, standard oral history practice. Recorded on both videotape and audiotape, the interviews were transcribed in

both “abridged” and “unabridged” versions--the former to provide reading clarity. A brief, annotated history was also compiled from a variety of sources, including both primary and secondary research data and was prepared to provide a contextual framework from which excerpts of the interviews could be utilized.

METHODOLOGY

The Mansfield African-American Oral History Project was initially proposed as part of a two-phase public education project which would include a multi-media component. Therefore, standard oral history practice was adjusted somewhat to facilitate this additional requirement.

Survey Instrument

Initial research was conducted to facilitate the preparation of a survey instrument or questionnaire for the interview (Appendix A). The questions that were prepared covered some general topics on Texas African-American history, as well as topics dealing specifically with the community experience in Mansfield, Texas. The congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church was requested to identify potential informants and schedule a meeting of those informants for an oral history interview session.

A majority of the participants identified by the church as being willing to be interviewed were born between the first and the third decades of the twentieth century. Consequently, the survey instrument included questions on the following subjects: (a) Pre-Civil War--what informants recalled hearing as children about how and when their relatives arrived in Mansfield; (b) Reconstruction--what informants remembered being told as children about the period following emancipation and the early African-American settlement in Mansfield; (c) Segregation--what informants recalled being told by their parents and relatives about life after 1891 as well as their recollections from their personal experiences; (d) the 1900s - 1920s and the Great Depression--what informants recalled from personal experience; and finally, (e) Desegregation--what informants remembered from personal experience. Additional questions were also prepared which inquired about the personal experiences of the informants, as well as the general conditions of African-American life in Mansfield during the period of significance. These included topics ranging from employment to food ways (diet) and folk medicine.

The survey instrument was circulated among the participants prior to the interview session during a morning brunch and they were asked before the interviews commenced if there were any specific questions that they did not wish to respond to or have on record. At least two informants indicated that questions regarding the activities of the Ku Klux Klan should be omitted. One participant flatly stated, "I don't know anything about that." The researcher had included the questions to ascertain whether the intense Klan activity in Dallas by Chapter No. 66, as well as in Fort Worth by Chapter No. 101 during the 1920s [6] had any direct effect on the African-American community in Mansfield or whether the informants thought that it had. Subsequent secondary research into the subject later proved inconclusive [7].

Oral History Interview Session

A makeshift studio was set up in a room adjacent to the church hall and the oral history session was recorded with two cameras using Sony (MQST-120) broadcast quality videotape and a third camera using TDK (EHG VHSC) videotape against an azure blue photographic background. Standard studio lighting techniques were provided and a color monitor was also set up for in-progress viewing during the session. The participants were seated in groups of two or three persons to further facilitate the interview process. The interviewer was seated to the right of the cameras and a small number of relatives and other informants were seated behind the cameras. The standard practice of providing release forms for signature by the informants and payment of a stipend was considered inappropriate.

The interviews were conducted informally and participants responded very candidly. One informant became visibly agitated when coaxed by a relative to describe her experiences on a local farm. She declined to comment on her experiences there. A dialogue often developed between the interviewer and some informants, whose answers brought out additional subject matter.

Oral History Transcriptions

The audio tracks from the master tapes were recorded onto audio tape and an initial set of transcripts was prepared from it. Following review of those documents, the master tapes were duped and duplicate tapes were run for compatibility. Changes were made to the transcripts following successive replays with the assistance of an interpreter and the transcripts were edited for clarity.

Since higher education was not possible for the average member of Mansfield’s African-American Community during the first few decades of this century, a seventh grade education was the norm. This fact may have been partially responsible for the survival of a common language form spoken and understood by members of Mansfield’s community. Evident in the audio tracks of the videotapes for this project are obvious nuances of language, of a colloquial Southern English dialect spoken by African-Americans that some linguists have defined as Black English. The dialect was alluded to during the 1930s by government interviewers as being found primarily in the “Negro” or “Black Belt” of the South. It is clearly shown in the “unabridged” transcripts produced from this project. Being a regional dialect however, it is rather difficult for outsiders and the general public to understand. For this reason, a second set of transcripts was prepared, edited and written in Standard English for reading clarity.

Edit Example	Definition
[]	omission of a consonant, vowel, diphthong or an entire word
[. . .]	omission of a group of words or of an entire phrase
[. . .WE’VE BEEN. . .]	omission of a group of words and/or phrase with a substitution
[,], [,]	addition of a period, comma or other form of punctuation
[THERE’S]	addition or replacement of a word and/or phrase
[BE]CAUSE	addition of a prefix or suffix (e.g., include)
COOK[ED]	change in verb tense
YEAR[S]	change in noun from singular to plural
BEIN[G]	change in verb ending for past or present participles
[[C.C. CARSON)]; [12]	insertion of additional information; endnote reference

Figure 1. Index of general grammatical and syntax edits included in the “abridged” oral history transcripts.

The “abridged” transcripts include changes in grammar and syntax, which primarily required the omission and substitution of some words, word endings and/or phrases. The index shown below generally summarizes those types of edits, which are always identified in the transcript text by being set within brackets ([]). The following two excerpts illustrate the editing process and the differences between the “abridged” and “unabridged” texts. Also included is text from the historical context with an “abridged” quote”

“Unabridged” transcript (Addendum C:7):

M.B.: “YEAH, [pause] ‘CAUSE A LOT OF ‘EM WOULD COME FROM FORT WORTH DOWN HERE AND TAKE WHAT WE, WHAT WE, THEY CALL THE HOUSE OUT ON THE FARMS. THEY WERE OLD HOUSES BUT THEY RENTED THEM AND THEY STAYED IN THERE ‘TIL THE COTTON PICKIN’ WAS OVER, THAN THEY’D GO BACK INTO FORT WORTH. SOME WOULD COME ON TRUCKS. SO WE GOT IN ONE OF THOSE OLD HOUSES. AND O’ COURSE MY FATHER WORKED ON THE FARM. THAT’S ALL HE KNEW. AND WE JUST STAYED. AND THEN AFTER. . .WE GOT UP. . .OH, ABOUT GROWN, WE COME FROM BETWEEN LILLIAN AND THEN, BACK OUT, WAY OUT THERE. . .CLOSER TO MANSFIELD. AND THEN. . .WE BEEN AROUND IN THIS AREA EVER SINCE.”

“Abridged” transcript (Addendum B:7):

M.B.: YEAH, [BE]CAUSE A LOT OF [THEM] WOULD COME FROM FORT WORTH DOWN HERE [AND RENT] THE HOUSE[S] OUT ON THE FARMS. THEY WERE OLD HOUSES BUT THEY RENTED THEM AND THEY STAYED IN [THEM UNTIL] THE COTTON PICKIN[G] WAS OVER[.] THEN THEY’D GO BACK [TO] FORT WORTH. SOME WOULD COME ON TRUCKS. SO WE [STAYED] IN ONE OF THOSE OLD HOUSES. AND [OF] COURSE, MY FATHER WORKED ON THE FARM. THAT’S ALL HE KNEW. . .AND WE JUST STAYED. AND THEN AFTER. . .WE [WERE] GROWN, WE [MOVED FROM] LILLIAN [TO BE] CLOSER TO MANSFIELD. AND [WE’VE BEEN] IN THIS AREA EVER SINCE.

Text with “abridged quote”:

The majority of the African-American laborers that came from Fort Worth appear to have only come to Mansfield for work during the cotton picking season. “. . .a lot of them would come from Fort Worth down here and rent the houses out on the farms. They were old houses but they rented them and they stayed in them until the cotton picking was over. Then they’d go back to Fort Worth. Some would come on trucks”.

Figure 2. Index showing “unabridged” and “abridged” oral history transcripts along with sample text with “abridged” quote.

In the process of preparing the “abridged” transcripts the researchers have tried to render a clear, understandable text by making only those changes that were necessary for reading clarity, while not violating the integrity of the interviews themselves. In addition, it is now standard practice in conducting oral histories to submit copies of the transcripts to the informants for their review and approval. This component was also included as a necessary part of the project.

Portions of the “abridged” transcripts were included in the historical context as “abridged” quotes. The transcript content was edited once more. Brackets ([]) were removed and the text was presented in standard

form for reading clarity. This process occurred late in the project, following completion of both the "abridged" and "unabridged" transcripts.

Photography

Although Mansfield's African-American history is, for the most part, an unwritten one, it is perhaps one of the best self-recorded communities in North Central Texas because of a fairly large collection of historical photographs that were taken by unknown photographers during the early twentieth century. The collection consists of a series of black and white images which show: (a) events such as a public baptism (ca. 1912); (b) buildings such as Bethlehem Baptist Church (ca. 1920); (c) portraits of groups of people (ca. 1905-1945); and (d) portraits of individuals (ca. 1905-1945). Some of the photographs are in the collection of the Mansfield Historical Society, while others are in the private collections of members of the congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church. The existence of such resources is somewhat enigmatic as many other African-American (as well as many Anglo) communities in North Central Texas simply do not have extensive photographic records. In oral history interviews conducted in Grapevine, Texas in 1994, the lack of family portraits was explained by one informant as being due to the fact that people just did not have the money to pay photographers to take pictures. Consequently, the existence of the historical views of Mansfield's African-American community was considered to be of great importance and a photographic recording session was undertaken while the interview session was in progress.

Members of the congregation were asked in advance to bring the photographs that they regarded as important to the oral history session. A standard copy stand, illuminated with tungsten lights, was set up in the church hall and eighty-three photographs that were available at the time were copied using 35 mm black and white (Ilford FP4) and color slide film (Fujichrome ASA 100). The photographs were later culled based upon their historical significance. Some of them have been used to illustrate the text and fifty photographs from the period of significance (1900-1960) are included as part of this document in Appendix D. The remaining images (post-1960) have been included as part of the final document package for submittal to the Mansfield Public Library.

Archival Research

Archival research was conducted so that the data collected in the oral history interviews could be compared with historical records and a historical context was prepared to provide a framework into which some of the narratives could be inserted. Archival research included investigations into a variety of sources including nineteenth and twentieth century census data and agricultural schedules for Tarrant County, death records from Blessing Funeral Home and the Mansfield Historical Society and documents provided by Bethlehem Baptist Church. Additional sources, including U.S. and Texas State Government studies on "Negro" education and independent reports for the state that were conducted by The Association and Tuskegee Institute during the period of significance were also consulted. These were supplemented by Texas Board of Education bulletins published between 1911 and 1956, as well as Texas Constitution and Texas law sources. Various issues of the *Mansfield News* and *News-Mirror*, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and the *Dallas Observer* were also reviewed. Finally, additional research conducted by historian, Robyn Ladino in 1993 and 1996 as well as a document prepared by Mansfield author, John Howard Griffin, for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith in 1957 were used by the researchers in the preparation of text recording the events which occurred in the city in 1956.

OUR FOREPARENTS

Mansfield's first African-American residents, referred to in the vernacular as ancestors or foreparents, are reputed to have arrived as slaves sometime during the mid-1800s. However, there are no actual dates for their initial settlement in the area [8]. Oral tradition indicates that there were seven African-American families who initially came to the township and its environs during the Antebellum Period. They are reputed to have included the Briscoe, Deitz, Lawson, Lewis, Manning, Moody and Porter families [9]. The principle out-source areas for these families were the same as those for the early Anglo settlers who arrived in Mansfield--principally from parts of the Upland South or from other parts of Texas.

One informant stated that "My parents said they originated from . . . Kentucky and my grandfather. . . used to sit down and talk to us about his childhood and . . . describe how he came up. His mother was sold as a slave when he was around. . . eight or ten years old [10]". Other families such as the Moody's were said to have moved to Mansfield from areas along the Texas Coastal Plain such as Galveston. "From what my grandfather used to say, . . . the Moodys came from Galveston when they were slaves" [11].

The Antebellum slave population in Mansfield, like that of other rural communities in Tarrant County, was small. The Census of 1850 listed Tarrant County's overall slave population as numbering only 65 individuals. This was insignificant when compared to the number of slaves held in Dallas County. Dallas County's slaves were counted in the census of the same year and recorded as 821 individuals [12]. The members of Mansfield's African-American population that chose to remain in the area after emancipation, were the progenitors of a population that grew over time to become the community that is present today.

The largest influx of African-Americans into Mansfield appears to have taken place after 1900 when families arrived from other Texas cities such as Corpus Christi or Fort Worth [13]. This coincided with a general population increase among African-Americans in Tarrant County as a whole during the early twentieth century. Unfortunately, there is little information, whether in the oral tradition or in written documentation, about this nascent period of Mansfield's African-American history.

An analysis of gravestones and markers in the African-American section of the Mansfield Cemetery as well as death records from the Blessing Funeral Home, was conducted to cross-reference some of the information that was presented in the oral tradition. An index of the recorded families (1840-1940) was prepared using this information (Figure 3). There are neither gravestones nor death records indicating the existence of the Deetz, Lewis or Porter families. If the date of birth is used as an indicator, the Briscoes, Mannings and Moodys would indeed have been living in Mansfield during this early period. If the other families were among Mansfield's early African-American settlers, they are presumed to have left the township shortly after receiving their freedom during Reconstruction.

There are other persons listed as being born prior to or during the decades of 1840-1860. They include the Bush, Gamer, Jones, Simpson, Wilkins and Wyatt Families. They could also have been present in Mansfield at the time of the emancipation, but are not mentioned in the oral tradition. In addition, the cemetery and death records also indicate that there were members of a family with the surname of "Mann" that lived in the township during this period. The first individual listed is Oscar Mann, but there is no date of birth; a second individual is Caroline Mann (1885-1977). Whether members of this family were owned by Ralph Standiford Man during the Antebellum Period and at war's end or were given the slave owner's "white family name" is

unclear [14]. Although further research needs to be conducted using census data from the period, “Bennett Briscoe, Jackson, Lawson, Manning and Moody” are the only surnames that occur in the oral tradition as well as extant cemetery and death records.

Decade	Name	Year of Birth	Year of Death	Source	
1840	Bush, Mary	1847	1907	Blessing Funeral Home	
	Bush, Mollie	1847	1907	Blessing Funeral Home	
	Jones, Julius	1845	1919 (?)	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Jones, Matilda (Brown)	1840	1918	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Moody, Bettie	184(?)	1907	Blessing Funeral Home	
1850	Simpson, George	1852	1910	Mansfield Cemetery	
1860	Garner, Ben	1868	1952	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Wilkins, Eliza	1868	1898	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Wyatt, Milton	1862	1874	Mansfield Cemetery	
1870	Franklin, Lonnie	1878	1972	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Jones, Lula	1876	1960	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Lawson, Robert	1879	1934	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Manning, Robert	1870	1961	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Moody, Charlie	1872	194(?)	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Moody, Emma	1877	1972	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Nolan, F.P.	1873	(?)	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Wilkins, Magdalene	1879	1968	Mansfield Cemetery	
1880	Bennett, Easter	1881	1960	Blessing Funeral Home	
	Bennett, Joe	1888	1912	Blessing Funeral Home	
	Brinson, Jack	1883	1969	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Brown, Clara	1889	1954	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Hall, Bert	1884	1913	Blessing Funeral Home	
	Jones, Maggie	1884	1937	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Jones, Willie	1884	1948	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Lawson, Margaret	1887	1968	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Lawson, Vertie	1887	1953	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Lawson, Wilburn	1886	1972	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Mann, Caroline	1885	1977	Blessing Funeral Home	
	Manning, Pearl	1882	1976	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Moody, Fannie	1889	1930	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Moody, Martha	1887	1950	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Morris, Rosa	1883	1965	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Nolan, Ella	1882	1913	Blessing Funeral Home	
	Wyatt, Milton	1882	1955	Mansfield Cemetery	
	Wyatt, M.L.	1888	1927	Mansfield Cemetery	
	1890	Brinson, Allie	1893	1942	Mansfield Cemetery
		Briscoe, Herman	1893	1964	Mansfield Cemetery
Dears, Horace		1895	1959	Mansfield Cemetery	
Dears, Manley		1894	1980	Blessing Funeral Home	
Harris, Andy		1893	1950	Mansfield Cemetery	
Harris, Ora		1898	1952	Mansfield Cemetery	
Hicks, Bertie		1896	1974	Mansfield Cemetery	
Jackson, John		1895	19(?)	Blessing Funeral Home	
Jackson, Lula		1897	1970	Blessing Funeral Home	
Johnson, Sadie		1897	1910	Blessing Funeral Home	
Jones, Harrietta		1890	1955	Blessing Funeral Home	

Decade	Name	Year of Birth	Year of Death	Source
1890				
(con't.)	Jones, Mary	1883	1961	Blessing Funeral Home
	Martin, Pearl	1897	1951	Mansfield Cemetery
	Moody, John	1891	1962	Mansfield Cemetery
	Moore, Lena	1891	1897	Mansfield Cemetery
	Puliam, John	1897	1971	Mansfield Cemetery
	Roberson, Ed	1896	1962	Mansfield Cemetery
	Simpson, (?)	1899	1899	Mansfield Cemetery
	Stone, Vada	1897	1961	Mansfield Cemetery
	Wilkins, Eddie	1892	1960	Mansfield Cemetery
	Williams, Mary	1894	1894	Mansfield Cemetery
1900				
	Abney, Eddie	1903	1959	Mansfield Cemetery
	Bailey, James	1900	1982	Blessing Funeral Home
	Battee, P.L.	1906	1978	Blessing Funeral Home
	Briscoe, Dilsia	1909	1969	Blessing Funeral Home
	Briscoe, N.J.	1900	1975	Mansfield Cemetery
	Briscoe, Ross	1903	1959	Mansfield Cemetery
	Cleveland, Littie	1906	1972	Blessing Funeral Home
	Cleveland, Willie	1900	1975	Blessing Funeral Home
	Hodges, (?)	1906	1907	Blessing Funeral Home
	Jones, Thelma	1903	1978	Blessing Funeral Home
	Lawson, Lillian	1909	(?)	Mansfield Cemetery
	Maxie, (?)	1905	1905	Mansfield Cemetery
	Moody (?)	1906	1907	Blessing Funeral Home
	Myles, Addie	1904	1977	Mansfield Cemetery
	Myles, Hence	1904	1975	Mansfield Cemetery
	Powell, Iney	1900	1978	Mansfield Cemetery
	Richards, Agnes (Brisco)	1905	1971	Blessing Funeral Home
	Sears (?)	1907	1907	Blessing Funeral Home
1910				
	Bennett, Annie	1915	1981	Mansfield Cemetery
	Bennett (?)	1910	1910	Blessing Funeral Home
	Davis, Ordene	1911	1953	Mansfield Cemetery
	Harris, Kirk	1919	1974	Mansfield Cemetery
	Harris, Vardel	1918	1945	Mansfield Cemetery
	Lawson, Ebbie	1919	1945	Mansfield Cemetery
	Moody, Henry	1914	1953	Mansfield Cemetery
	Moody, John	1917	1938	Mansfield Cemetery
	Palmer, (?)	1913	1913	Blessing Funeral Home
1920				
	Bennett, Josephine	1922	1957	Mansfield Cemetery
	Jackson, John	1923	1958	Mansfield Cemetery
	Lawson, Richard	1922	1982	Mansfield Cemetery
	Moody, M.H.	1928	1968	Mansfield Cemetery
	Newson, J.W.	1925	1973	Blessing Funeral Home
1930				
	Lawson, Lona	1934	1961	Blessing Funeral Home
	Mitchell, Henry	1931	1931	Mansfield Cemetery
1940				
	Waters, Lloyd	1943	1972	Mansfield Cemetery

Figure 3. Alphabetized index, organized by decade, of recorded African-American residents (1840-1940), buried in the Mansfield Cemetery or listed in the Blessing Funeral Home records (Mansfield Historical Society n.d.:102-107).

Texas slaves, their bondsmen and women, were officially notified of their freedom on June 19, 1865, roughly two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been issued by President Lincoln. Presumably, within the first year of Reconstruction, the freedmen that were in Mansfield were informed of this event. Some left their former owners' immediate property for resettlement, while others stayed. The oral tradition indicates that freedmen were notified directly by their owners of their change in status. When asked how this occurred, one respondent said, "the slave owners told them" [15]. He continued, "they would give those old settlers, our foreparents who were formally under slavery, maybe an acre of ground, two acres or something like that, just big enough to put a hut on" [16]. When asked how freedmen acquired land around Mansfield, another informant said, "They purchased it. It wasn't given to them." He continued:

When they (the farmers) had to get rid of the slaves, they sold them a piece of their property. The Lewis', the Wyatts, the Lawsons. . . I think they might have been the largest Black property owners in Mansfield among the Blacks, because I think they might have gotten one hundred acres apiece . . . We're almost sitting on Lewis' property now. . . He might have had a hundred acres or more. And then the Lawsons probably had a hundred [17].

Additional tracts of land were purchased by some African-American farm families later in the twentieth century, with some holdings being as much as two-hundred-and-twenty acres [18]. One woman stated that:

The old farm that he (Ed Lewis) bought somewhere around the late 1920s. . . was about a hundred acres of land. He came to Mansfield from Longview, Texas. And when he . . . came here, he married his first wife Eliza Nolan-Lewis. She already lived here in Mansfield. . . And the reason why he came to Mansfield was because, in Longview, he couldn't find very much work. . . maybe a sharecropping job. And someone told him that life would be much better for him in Mansfield. So, he moved to Mansfield [19].

Outside of approximations of acreage however, little is known about these early farmsteads, except for the fact that they appear to have been worked by large families. One informant indicated that in her family alone, there were "eight girls and six boys." She also said, "We had a farm. . . we worked and my father had enough children that he would farm cotton, corn, peas, etc. I was the youngest daughter in the family. When the rest of them were in the fields [20]. I had to stay at home and cook for the rest of them and have food ready when they would come home" [21].

Mansfield's African-American farmsteads were scattered throughout areas that were known in the vernacular as the Timbers or the Prairie [22]. Located outside the township limits, they were developed on land that had been received with clear title from some of Mansfield's Anglo farmers. In this way, Mansfield's initial African-American settlement patterns of the period appear to have been very different from those in other North Central Texas towns. While many similar populations chose to initially settle in segregated communities or enclaves, Mansfield's freedmen and women lived on dispersed farmsteads in areas around the township. The reason why this settlement pattern developed in Mansfield was indicated by one informant as being a result of how land was acquired by former slaves.

The people that first owned this property, they were farmers. And they were liable to own four or five hundred acres. That takes up a lot of territory. And then the next farmer owned that much [23] If they could buy a slave, they'd have one or two. He (the farmer) couldn't afford four or five, only one or two. . . So, when land was sold off to one or two of these families, that's how black-owned farms got so scattered [24].

There had been a movement during Reconstruction among many African-Americans in both the rural and urban areas of Texas, as well as the South in general, to band together to establish independent settlements [25]. In the development of Clarksville, Texas during the 1870s, Charles Clark encouraged other freedmen to migrate in his new community so that he could "begin a settlement for his people, so that they all might live in one place" [26]. It was often a necessity for families to gather in an enclave for mutual safety, especially in light of the increased violence from embittered southerners which occurred during the late 1860s and 1870s [27].

Mansfield's freedmen and women did not follow Charles Clark's and others' leads until well into the twentieth century, however, when they began to settle in parts of the James Bridgeman, Thomas J. Hanks, and William Simpson Surveys. These tracts were located to the south and west of Walnut Creek and its tributary, Willow Branch [28]. This established a source of domestic labor for the professional and merchant classes of Mansfield.

Between the late 1860s and the late 1880s there was a general influx into Texas of a large percentage of some four million freedmen, women and children, as well as Confederate veterans and their families from the deep South [29]. Freedmen who migrated to Texas tended to congregate in the large cities, drawn by employment opportunities with the railroads and other industries. As a result, urban communities in such cities as Dallas and Fort Worth, tended to experience significant population growth during this period. Some southern cities experienced a slight decline during the 1870s and 1880s, but Dallas and Fort Worth did not [30].

Tarrant County's African-American population increased progressively in the late nineteenth century. By 1880 there were 2,160 persons and within ten years that number had doubled to a total of 4,316. In 1900 the population had reached some 5,756 individuals. The greatest growth occurred later in the decade between 1900 and 1910, when the county's population tripled in size to total 15,418 persons [31].

The county's entrance into a cash crop economy based upon cotton followed an agricultural trend that occurred throughout the state of Texas from the late 1870s onwards. The widespread use of the steel-bladed plow permitted large-scale cultivation of the surrounding Blackland Prairie. Mansfield became, like a host of other small rural communities, part of a region which at the turn of the century, became identified as the richest cotton belt in the world. Through the implementation of such land lease techniques as share cropping and tenant farming, as well as the use of teams of hired hands, the intense labor needs required for the production of that crop were addressed. By the turn of the century, Mansfield's African-American farmers could be divided into two groups--land-owning and tenant or sharecroppers. Unfortunately, the vast majority fell into the latter category and the land lease practices upon which the agricultural system of the period was based left them for the most part, in debt and destitute. Consequently, it was almost impossible to leave agriculture as a way of life.

When a second wave of immigration by Anglos from the Deep South occurred in Tarrant County in the late nineteenth century an additional, if not equally unwilling, group of participants were provided for land owners; thereby further sustaining that agricultural system. One African-American informant described sharecropping as being "still under slavery. . ." He explained that "We were still slaving for them. . .because they'd take everything in the fall" [32]. Another man said, "The slave owners might have given you an acre, a cow and a sow, a pig and a plow and that was it. . .maybe even twenty-four hens and a rooster. . .then you would live like you used to" [33].

The oral tradition describes the practice as it continued to be implemented in the 1910s and 1920s:

If you had your own team, you worked thirds and fourths, but if you . . . were like my parents and didn't have your own team, then you were supposed to be working on . . . halves. You would buy . . . or were supposed to be buying all of your seeds and supplies from the land owner. When you'd gather your crop in the Fall, you didn't have any money" [34].

Another informant said:

We had a farm sometimes and we didn't have a farm. My father rented from farm to farm, different places. Sometimes he would rent. Sometimes he would lease. And when leasing sometimes] he would lease like for two or three years. And crops came up that he would gather and all of that. Well, just like some of the rest of them] have already told you, we wouldn't have any money because he already owed it to the man he'd been leasing from. The money would go to them [35].

Despite such conditions, statistics for agricultural production in 1909 by African-American farmers indicate that their contribution to the county's annual yields were in excess of 335 bales of cotton and 7,981 bushels of corn [36]. During the next decade, that amount presumably increased. However, federal statisticians did not document African-American farm production again until 1929 and when they did, they did not divide it out by county. They only indicated that African-American farms produced 412,125 bales of cotton in Texas [37].

As a result of the sharecropping and tenant farming system, the survival of the majority of Mansfield's African-American families appears to have been only possible through some sort of subsistence farming, supplemented by hunting game and presumably, some fishing. One informant indicated that "We raised all kinds of potatoes, fruits, vegetables and what not . . . we didn't have to buy much, maybe a little flour and we'd hunt rabbit to eat, to have some meat. . ." [38]. A woman said, "My grandfather raised all kinds of crops-- cotton, corn, potatoes and peanuts. This man grew everything. . . the family ate from the farm. They did not have to buy very much" [39].

She continued:

We didn't ever have to buy any meat or anything like that because we saw to it that we had chickens, cows. . . just whatever kind of meat you could name. We had it, but we didn't have a good way of keeping it. . . we had smokehouses and we would hang those hams and the like. . . used a salt box, too . . . some of it would be hanging there. You could go out there and cut a piece off and just eat it right there. It would be cured out [40].

Another informant said:

More or less you grew everything that supplied your family's needs except for clothes and flour and meal--you chopped your corn and you ground it. Your meat--you raised your pig and you killed it. Your chickens--you had to have them. That's when you were splurging. When you ate your chickens. And big time splurging when you ate one of your turkeys. But your beef--you didn't put a beef in salt or smoke it. That's why back then, I don't think they killed beef. Some folks owned their beef. Like her father. He owned his own beef. But you didn't smoke it. That would have been jerky. You didn't have any T-Bone steak as jerky. So, that's why they didn't kill beef. They killed pork. Smoked it and put it in salt [41]

He continued:

And then, for your clothes, you had a big old catalogue. Like she was saying, Spiegels, Wards, Sears. And when you ordered your clothes, you knew your size. You took your size. And they had a piece of material in there that you could feel. . .and see what it was. . .and you ordered them. In two, three weeks or a month, they would come. And hopefully you met the mail man before the rain got on it . . .Because sometimes it would be hanging outside while you were in the fields. And it would be rained on and the rain would ruin it [42].

Mansfield's African-American families appear to have also maintained a practice of traditional folk medicine. "You'd have a little tobacco sack, used to be 'Bugler' and 'Bull Durham' tobacco sacks that you would put Asafetida garlic or garlic beads inside, tie it, . . .and wear it around your neck" [43]. "Most of the time we used home remedies. . .like cow chip tea . . .hog hoof tea. . .you boil the hog hoof and then you take the pizzle (grease). . .and rub it on the chest for a cold" [44].

During the first two decades of the twentieth century African-American families continued to arrive in the Mansfield area to work on local cotton farms. Some arrived from such distant Texas cities as Galveston, Corpus Christi and Longview, while others came from nearby Fort Worth and its vicinity. Most sought seasonal work as laborers while other individuals and their families eventually settled into the area south and west of Walnut Creek. "Her family moved from Corpus to Bryan. . . My mother had a brother who lived in Lillian. . .who would come into Bryan every so often and he told them that the living up here was better . . .than there. So, they decided to come to Mansfield on a cotton pick and. . .they stayed [45].

The majority of the African-American laborers that came from Fort Worth appear to have only come to Mansfield for work during the cotton picking season. ". . . A lot of them would come from Fort Worth down here and rent the houses out on the farms. They were old houses but they rented them and they stayed in them until the cotton picking was over. They they'd go back to Fort Worth. Some would come on trucks" [46].

Bringing in large teams for the picking season wasn't always easy for some of Mansfield's farmers. One woman said:

Daddy had cotton pickers who came by the truck loads from Fort Worth. I would stay at the wagon and keep count of the weights because you had to do that if you wanted to break even. They would come and say that they had fifty pounds of cotton but they might only have ten. And you had to weigh for them and then you had to check the cotton and make sure they had what they said they had. There might be bricks in the cotton sack and that kind of stuff to make it heavy. . .dirt and all that. I'd rather have been out picking cotton than standing up, arguing with them,. . .checking them out, and checking what was in the sacks [47].

However, as a result of the influx of seasonal labor from Fort Worth, strong relationships were developed between the members of both the community there and in Mansfield. Some Mansfield family members eventually moved to Fort Worth. The bonds between residents and family members became especially important in increasing educational opportunities for Mansfield's African-American children and employment opportunities for adults. "There were some children who went on. . .to the tenth grade in Fort Worth. They had friends that they lived with or they rented. Most of us didn't go any further than the seventh grade" [48].

One man indicated that "I went to Fort Worth. . .I had an older brother and sister living there. . .They were doing real good and I went there because he kept after me to come live with him. . .I got jobs in landscaping,

...cutting yards, planting flowers, working in green houses and I also worked in the feed mill" [49]. Another man said that "When I was fourteen years old, one of my cousins. . .saw that I was really having a crisis. . . and he carried me to Fort Worth where I got a job" [50].

The outmigration of some of Mansfield's farming families or their children appears to have coincided with a general movement by many African-Americans from the rural to the urban areas that occurred throughout the South between 1910 and 1940. Census records for Tarrant County's African-American farms in 1910 indicated that there were 55 owner-operated and 68 tenant-operated farms. By 1930, owner-operated farms had decreased to 37 and tenant-run farms remained constant at 69. In contrast, Fort Worth's African-American population had steadily increased during this period. In 1910 the population was listed at 13,280. In 1920 it had risen to 15,896 and by 1930 it was 22,234 [51].

There were at least three other locations between Mansfield and Fort Worth where African-American families lived during the early decades of the twentieth century. They are reputed in the oral tradition to have included Kinnedale, Watsonville and Johnson Station [52]. Whether these were established as separate enclaves during Reconstruction is rather doubtful. One informant stated that these were "...not independent black settlements, but families of connected relatives" who settled some distance from each other [53]. The closest large African-American enclave in Tarrant County was Bear Creek, which was located 20 miles to the northwest of Mansfield in the vicinity of Irving, Texas.

OUR FOREPARENTS NOTES

1. "Courage, Grace and Tenacity" was a phrase coined by actor, James Cromwell in 1995 in an interview with Tom Snyder. He was a student activist in the Student Nonviolent Coalition Committee (SNCC) during the early 1960s.
2. Tyler and Murphy 1974: viii.
3. Botkin 1945: ix.
4. Tyler and Murphy 1974: ix.
5. Gerald Saxon 1996: personal communication.
6. Alexander 1995: 39.
7. Ibid.: 281.
8. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 3; Appendix C: 3).
9. Lawson et al 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 18; Appendix C: 17-18).
10. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 3; Appendix C: 3).
11. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 19; Appendix C: 19).
12. Pickens and Mattson 1991: 4.
13. Briscoe 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 7; Appendix C: 7).
14. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 19; Appendix C: 19).
15. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 9; Appendix C: 8).
16. Ibid. (Appendix B: 9; Appendix C: 9).
17. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 24; Appendix C: 24).
18. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 5; Appendix C: 5).
19. Washington 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 26; Appendix C: 25).
20. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 29; Appendix C: 28).
21. Ibid. (Appendix B: 29; Appendix C: 28).
22. Sheppard et al 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 4-5; Appendix C: 4-5).

23. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 24; Appendix C: 23).
24. Ibid. (Appendix B: 24; Appendix C: 23).
25. Mullen 1980: 3.
26. Brewer 1940: 15.
27. McKnight 1991: 4.
28. City of Mansfield 1989: n.p.
29. Mullen 1980: 2.
30. Emrich 1993: personal communication.
31. Rogers 1918: 791.
32. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 9; Appendix C: 9).
33. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 24; Appendix C: 24).
34. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 9; Appendix C: 9).
35. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 29; Appendix C: 28).
36. Hall 1935: 756.
37. Rogers 1930: n.p.
38. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 5; Appendix C: 5).
39. Washington 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 27; Appendix C: 26).
40. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 55; Appendix C: 52).
41. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 59-60; Appendix C: 56-57)
42. Ibid. (Appendix B: 60; Appendix C: 57).
43. Ibid. (Appendix B: 34; Appendix C: 33)
44. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 34; Appendix C: 33).
45. Briscoe 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 7; Appendix C: 7).
46. Ibid. (Appendix B: 7; Appendix C: 7).

47. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 36-37; Appendix C: 35).
48. Briscoe 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 6; Appendix C: 6).
49. Lawson 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 16; Appendix C 15).
50. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 11; Appendix C: 11).
51. Rogers 1918: 757, 774; Hall 1935: 65, 672.
52. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 16; Appendix C: 16).
52. Ibid. (Appendix B: 18; Appendix C: 18).

A SOCIETY OF MEANNESS

During the early 1900s Mansfield's African-American population found themselves living under conditions that roughly resembled those experienced earlier in the nineteenth century. This understandably outraged many because there had been the promise of equality and full citizenship that had been guaranteed by the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution in 1866 and 1869. Despite the expectations that these changes presumably generated for the members of Mansfield's community and African-Americans in general, most found their rights severely eroded or totally non-existent by the turn-of-the-century.

At the end of the civil war, most Anglo-American Texans had grudgingly accepted an end to slavery however, they did not accept the change in legal status for Freedmen. For the most part, they maintained a bias against African-Americans based upon nineteenth century notions of race. Confederate veterans returned to Texas after the war and they were joined by an even larger migration of discouraged southerners during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. This effectively increased the opposition to any extension of political and social rights to Freedmen [1]. Texas became the fastest growing state in the post-war Union and the demographic changes over the last three decades of the nineteenth century were at least partially responsible for a return in practice to an out-dated Antebellum cast system.

The Federal government established the Freedman's Bureau in Texas in 1865 to provide some protection of the rights of African-Americans, however, it was ill-prepared to deal with the magnitude of problems associated with enforcement. In addition, the Bureau was hampered by the socio-political climate that existed in Texas throughout the seven years of its operations and was ineffective because it served primarily urban populations in the southern and eastern parts of the state [2]. In addition, the agency was described as being "understaffed and unable to meet the geographic demands of [Texas and at least partially responsible for] the develop[ment] of a segregated welfare system." That system later served as a model for how social services were delivered to the state's African-American population in the twentieth century [3].

The first post-war Texas legislature of 1866, although acquiescing to an end to slavery and granting property rights to African-Americans, nevertheless passed legislation which denied the equality guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The laws included: (a) allowing black testimony only in court cases involving African-Americans; (b) requiring separate cars on all railroads--both for intra or interstate traffic; (c) denying suffrage to the state's African-American male population; (d) prohibiting intermarriage between Anglos and African-Americans; and (e) preventing the holding of political office and admission to jury service by Freedmen [4].

In response to this legislation, a Republican majority in Congress passed a series of laws in 1867, aimed at forcing Texas, along with four other recalcitrant southern states, who had refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment and its mandate for "equal protection under the law for civil rights." Presumably because of this action, many African-American Texans developed a political awareness at this early date. Congress went even further during that session, when it divided Texas and the other four states into five districts which it then placed under the direct supervision of the U.S. Army [5].

Congressional action and the Federal occupation that followed, initiated the period known as Reconstruction. The new federal laws called for the "enfranchisement of [Freedmen] and the creation of new state constitutions that would accept Fourteenth Amendment protection of equal civil rights" [6]. A new Texas constitution was drafted by the State Legislature in 1869. It finally conferred suffrage rights upon Freedmen and voter

registration of that population around the state resulted in 47,581 African-American voters, compared to 56,678 Anglo voters. In addition, the constitution of that year also guaranteed Freedmen "an equal share of the monies appropriated for the public schools" [7].

Suffrage rights meant rights to representation and the holding of political office, and the first African-American Texans were elected to seats in both County, as well as State government. However, these results "threw the [Anglo] Texas [political and] electoral system into a panic" and former confederates and Democrats began to actively pursue a policy of promoting immigration by Southern Anglos as well as Aliens, in an attempt to dilute the African-American electorate [8]. The racial attitudes expressed in some of the recorded statements made by many state representatives of the period were chilling. They represented the position of a majority of Anglo landowners who were racists, were unwilling to "contract with freed slaves" and who pushed a "liberal immigration policy" primarily as an "attraction to [Anglo] landowners and [Anglo] farm laborers" [9].

The African-American political gains facilitated by the Texas Constitution of 1869 were short-lived and the period began to close in 1876, when an embittered Southern Anglo majority, working through the Democratic Party, rewrote the state constitution. This established the beginnings of a political, social and economic system that was reminiscent of the Antebellum period that had been eclipsed ten years earlier. The new constitution and a succession of subsequent legislative actions which were passed during the next two decades, dismantled the entire protective framework of the State Constitution of 1869 and the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The status of African-American Texans was relegated to, at best, that of second-class citizens.

Despite the intentions of the Democratic Party to bring into Texas, large numbers of Anglo and Alien farm laborers at the exclusion of Freedmen during this period, Anglo farm laborers--share croppers and tenant farmers in particular--proved, in some instances, to be politically uncontrollable. They precipitated (with some support from a disenfranchised African-American Republican membership in Texas) under the auspices of the Farmers Alliance and the Populist Parties, an agrarian revolt in the 1880s and 1890s against landowners and the Democratic Party throughout the south [10]. In response, the party resorted to intimidation, terror and violence as the means of retaining power and control. For African-Americans especially, the methods used included "physical abuse, psychological torment and murder." Through these means, a southern land-owning, Anglo elite continued to "preserve some semblance of [an] Antebellum status quo" [11].

Texas' Jim Crow Laws were fully adopted and in place by 1891. Referred to by their formulators as the "Black Codes," the laws were structured to effectively limit the freedom of African-Americans. These extended into every aspect of everyday life, making legal--those nineteenth century customs that were rooted in an intransigent set of Anglo racial attitudes.

No information about African-American suffrage during Reconstruction was mentioned in the Mansfield oral history interviews. The information about the community's experience with suffrage was restricted to the early twentieth century. One Mansfield informant was asked why he thought Jim Crow laws were established. He stated that, "Jim Crow law was here before, about the time that the blacks got here. And they more or less just exercised it more on the black. . . than on any other ethnicity. . . Blacks always suffered from, or were the guinea pigs for whatever laws you had. . . Make it law. . . Make it legal. . . And some of the people went extreme. They went to extremes. . ."[12].

The members of Mansfield's community, like those of many other rural African-American settlements throughout Texas and the South, lived in what might be aptly described as the geographical and political

“backwaters” of the state. This isolation guaranteed that they were subject to the enforcement of law that was at the discretion and control of those in political power. The impediments to suffrage for them, as for all African-American Texans, was codified by the Texas Constitution of 1876 and rendered the members of their community without effective legal recourse at any level. In 1902, Texas voters approved the levy of a poll tax as a prerequisite for suffrage [13]. For Mansfield’s voting residents, this included an additional tax from the county, making a total of \$1.75 due six months before the general election. Tarrant County, like most Texas counties, also instituted an “all-white” primary as a means of precluding the African-American vote before the general election, effectively rendering it Black suffrage ineffective. There was also a property requirement.

One man stated:

You couldn’t vote. Blacks couldn’t vote. And then when you could vote, you’d have to pay a dollar seventy-five cents for your poll tax to vote. . .Then if you really wanted to vote, you’d have to go and fill out an application to vote. . .Then they’d have a questionnaire. You’d have to fill out a questionnaire. If you couldn’t fill out the questionnaire, you weren’t legal enough to vote. You had to pass. You had to pass your test. . .And then you’d pay your dollar seventy-five cents. If you had it. And nine times out of ten, you didn’t have a dollar seventy-five cents to pay to get someone into office or get someone out of office. It wouldn’t be worth that much to you. And . . .they’d have two different questionnaires. They’d have one. . .for you to fill out, and then they would have another one for me. And we couldn’t fill it out and we flunked the test and we couldn’t vote [14]

In Mansfield, “local custom,” was appears to have been expressed and interpreted by Anglos of all ages through a variety of methods, and arbitrarily enforced by local authorities. The methods used ranged from harassment and humiliation on one hand, to intimidation, outright threats and violence on the other. Such actions remained unquestioned and unmitigated in Mansfield society. The individuals interviewed recounted numerous examples of these actions, reputed in the oral tradition to have occurred during the second through the fifth decades of the twentieth century. The informants described the methods used by members of the Anglo population to firmly hold in place a rigid cast system in the township and what their lives were like under that system.

Members of Mansfield’s African-American population were not allowed to travel through the town on main roads, but only on side or back streets. Broad Street, the township’s principle artery, was referred to by members of the community as “Front Street” and they indicated that if they traveled on that thoroughfare, they were subject to harassment. One man said, “you just didn’t walk down Front Street and stand around. . .and if you went down Front Street, you’d better have a sack in your hand with something in it that you had bought.” The same informant continued, “just about as often as you would come through the town, down Main (Broad) Street. . .you’d get stopped. But, if you would go on Second or Third street or a back street . . .or go around town, you wouldn’t get stopped. . .So, you didn’t have but two streets to. . .come through town. . .That would be a back street going and a side street coming back” [15].

Similarly, African-Americans were not allowed by “local custom” to be seen in the Anglo sections of town. Even while walking to work as domestics, cooks, drivers and groundsmen in some of Mansfield’s Anglo-owned houses, they were subject to harassment. The following statement was told by a woman.

I remember when Mansfield had. . .a policeman or constable. He didn’t have a car, but if he saw blacks coming along--he would see you maybe two blocks away. . .he’d have an old gun. . .and

he would holler at you "Hey! What are you doing down there?" And he'd holler at you and tell you to wait for him to get down there to you, to question you. . .He'd want to ask you "What are you doing there?" . . .and all that kind of stuff. . .And he wouldn't ever want you on the street, never a black face out front. And if there would be a new black face in Mansfield. . .he would just ride them down. Just because they were a new black face [16].

There was a reticence among Mansfield's African-American population to purchase anything from local merchants because they expressed the prevalent racial attitudes with particular venom. They are reputed in the oral tradition to have often humiliated their black customers, especially in front of Anglo patrons. One informant stated:

There weren't but three stores in Mansfield: Sid Gibson (Gibson Grocery and Market), Troy & Harold Sells (Troy Sells Merchandise), and Wynn & Cabney (?). They'd sell you beans, pig knuckles or feet or some kind of pork. But when you got ready to buy beef, they'd say, "What do you want with that kind of meat? You get this. . .This is a good cut." And then, when you got to the register to pay for it and you had a basketful. . .an Anglo woman would be there and she'd be behind you. The merchants would say, "Can I help you, Mrs. so-and-so? Uh, she's in a hurry. You stand right here." You'd have to wait until this woman paid for her things, then you'd pay for yours. And then they would. . .have an onion sack, a cabbage sack or something like that. They would put your groceries in that. They wouldn't put them in a paper sack. . .And if you would ask for a paper sack, they'd say, "Well, this is a lot more strong. You can throw this on your back and walk out of here with it" [17].

He continued, "And if they were giving you change back. . .and you had your hand out to get it, they wouldn't put it in your hand. They'd let it fall onto the floor [18]. Many local merchants even went so far as to dictate to their black customers how and what they could purchase. A man and a woman said:

You didn't go into this one drygoods store in Mansfield--Mandelstamm's, Midwell's and try on their clothes. He was Jewish and he had an accent. And he would tell you, "Naw,. . .Don't put that coat on." He didn't want you to put that coat on. He would take his coat and put it on your back--you know, press it up against your back. And if he did put it on you and it was too large and that's what he wanted you to have anyway. He would tighten it up at the back and let you look in the mirror at the front and tell you. . ."It fits you good". . .He'd say that to you while he. . .held it to your back. And you'd buy it. But don't bring it back, either. When you bought it, it was yours [19].

They continued:

And the pants, you just didn't slip out of your pants and get into those pants unless you bought them. That was a no-no. Shoes. . .the same way. You didn't put your foot in another pair of shoes. And if you asked him why, he'd say, 'Well, I might want to buy that pair of shoes and try them on. And I don't want my foot in there where you had your foot. . .' You know, just that blunt. And well, if you didn't buy them from him and went next door to buy them. It'd be the same way. . .It was just like buying a pair of socks today. You don't have to try on a pair of socks. You know your size [20].

The man went on to comment on Mansfield's merchants in terms of the town's cast system:

Say, for instance, if you went to a coke box machine, you'd better buy yourself a fruit drink. You couldn't buy yourself a Coca Cola or a Dr. Pepper. You would have to buy a Grape, Orange, or Strawberry Soda. You don't drink any Cokes or Dr. Pepper. . .because you are Black. You don't drink from the same fountain that I drink or my family drinks from. And when you meet my wife or daughter coming down the street, you pull your hat off and get on the street. You don't walk on the same sidewalk that my wife. . .and my daughter walk on. Don't look at them. . .let alone date them. You don't look at them. If you do, we'll find you in a ditch somewhere [21].

Given the conditions experienced by the members of Mansfield's community during this period, many individuals chose to rely primarily on themselves for food items such as meat and on mail order houses for manufactured items such as clothing. One woman said:

You know, we didn't ever have to buy any meat or anything like that, so we didn't have to argue about any meats. . .And we always had a catalogue. We'd get it every month. And when we'd get through with the catalogue, it would go to the outhouse. That was the toilet tissue. And she would order. . .so many blocks of 'outing.' She did her own sewing. Same thing with dresses and everything like that. She made them. That's how we would shop [22].

Other members of the community traveled to Fort Worth to purchase clothes and other necessities. The trip to Fort Worth took one full day. One informant stated, "I remember back in my daddy's lifetime. He used to say, they had wagons and they would go to Fort Worth. It would take them a day to go where they were going and they would get the. . .stuff that they needed. And it would take them a day to come back" [23].

She continued:

Well, most of the time, when my dad and them would go, it would be like a wagon pull. . .They'd go and they'd shop for themselves. . .because they knew that they were going to be gone for a day or so. Because that was a long way. . .And they did their shopping, in the night, I guess when they got there. Then, you could just stop any where and stay. It wasn't like it is now. . .You could just lay down any where. . .There were wagon trails. . .and they could stop wherever they got tired. And they carried their own water. They carried their own food and stuff like that. . .And yeah, there would be friends with them. Sometimes there would be more than one wagon going. And it was fun for them, because that's all they knew back in those days [24].

Like the residents in some other communities in Tarrant County, the oral tradition indicates that some members of Mansfield's community used their trips to Fort Worth to supplement their income during Prohibition. One man said, "There was some bootlegging going on here. . .They would go to Fort Worth. . .and buy it in bottles. . .It was sealed whiskey, brand whiskey, Kentucky whiskey, bourbon, whatever. And they'd bring it back. . .and they'd sell it. You know, resell it. They'd buy it in pints and then resell it" [25]. A woman said, ". . .they would get the whiskey and stuff that they needed. They would always get a supply and bring it back. . .But they'd better not get caught with it. . .They were trying to make a living you know, along with whatever else they had. . .[26]

In addition, the oral tradition also indicates that there was some local production during this period as well. The man who spoke earlier said: Then there were some. . .guys here that made it out of corn--called it "Corn Whiskey." And they made grape wine, made wine. . .and made beer out of sweet or "aysh" (Irish white or Idaho potatoes). They would take the hulls and. . .make beer out of them. Also you could take yellow. . .or white corn. And you could make whiskey that's just like water [27]. Presumably, some of Mansfield's

Anglo residents purchased spirits from those members of the African-American community involved in that business. This however, did not change their attitudes to any great degree and conditions remained unchanged for decades.

Perhaps the most egregious example of humiliation to members of the community that are attributed to a Mansfield merchant are those described in the oral tradition as having been made by the business of T.E. Blessing--Furniture (Salesman) and Undertaker. One man said, "The Black folks didn't have a funeral home in Mansfield. And we used Ernie Blessings. . . The Black folks would use him, but he wouldn't use his good hearse for Black folks. He would always use a van. . . and half of the casket would be hanging in the van and half of it out." The same informant continued:

If you expired today, tomorrow they'd have that funeral and they would use. . . his old van, a work van. And he'd put just enough of the casket inside. It would be so short. . . Half of it would be hanging out. And the grave would be. . . shallow. The body would just barely be covered up. He wouldn't embalm you or anything. . . I heard later, in the nineteen forties that he wouldn't do any embalming. He'd just put you in a box and got through with it before your body started deteriorating [28].

Members of Mansfield's community finally stopped using T.E. Blessing's funeral home. "Black folks eventually got wise to that. (Rev. C.C. Carson--Pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church) finally said: 'You can stop that. . . Coming up that street with your casket hanging out.' And that's when we started using the Black funeral homes in Fort Worth" [29].

For Mansfield's African-American sharecropping families, the cotton picking season--which required large numbers of hired hands to bring in large amounts of the crop in a short time period--often provided further opportunity for abuse by Anglo land owners. A woman told the following narrative:

This farmer wanted all his cotton open before. . . you started to gather it. So, we went on to another man's farm and we were gone. Stripped his cotton first. And then when the other guy's cotton was ready we were going to come back to him, the man whose farm we lived on. But, he got the devil in him and he didn't like it. And he came to us one night. I'll never forget, he came to my Daddy and was mad with him and said, "I want you to be out of my house tomorrow." (Didn't give him any reason or anything.) My Daddy came back into the house and said, "He said we have to move." And he said, "Where am I going? With all of these children?" [30].

Whatever occurred that might change or improve the lives of these families appears to have been viewed in the context of a strong Christian belief system. The same informant continued:

And as the Lord would have it, that night before my Daddy went to bed, there was another guy with a farm, I'll bet it wasn't two miles from us. He came there and blew his horn and called my Daddy out. And he said "I've got a lot of cotton I need to gather in. And I need to get it in before the weather gets bad." And my father said, "Well, I don't know when we'll get to it. This farmer told us we have to move." And my father said, "I'm going to have to go and find a place to carry my family." And this other farmer said, "I got a place for you." So, we moved the next day from one man's farm to the other's [31].

Often, Anglo landowners' children were little better than their parents in expressing the prevalent racial attitudes. One man stated that as a child in a share-cropping family:

You lived on their farm or their parent's farm. . . They would treat you bad. . . if you lived on their farm. Whatever evening, if they got together--five or six kids with them and there was one of you--they would fight you or do whatever. But now, if you could outrun them. . . They never could jump like we could. We'd jump fences and they would have to crawl through them. And we'd get away [32].

Given the daily encounters that the members of Mansfield's community experienced under the township's rigid cast system, many understandably became inwardly focused and heavily reliant upon a single institution--the local church--as a source of strength and a model of self-sufficiency. Bethlehem Baptist Church had been established in the Mansfield vicinity as early as 1870. Serviced initially by "circuit rider preachers" from Fort Worth until 1892, it achieved within four years, its position as the center of Mansfield's African-American life. Throughout this early period, the church provided several important functions including first, serving as a house of worship, then as a community meeting place and until 1909--an elementary school.

While Mansfield's African-American farm families continued to live on scattered homesteads in the Timbers or on the Prairie, some families began to settle closer to the township but still outside of the town limits, in an area located south and east of Walnut Creek. Referred to as "Rock Creek" or "the Dip" in the vernacular, the tributary ran through farm land that was located several miles west of Mansfield and periodically flooded.

Although the dates of actual occupation were not located during the research investigations, initial settlement appears to have occurred during the second and third decades of the twentieth century. The houses for these families are also reputed in the oral tradition to have been constructed by black families or by members of the congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

When asked who built the dwellings for these families, one informant indicated that they were "built by the folks" [33]. Another informant said that they were built "most of the time by the ones that lived in them. And they were black" [34]. He continued, "And when church members. . . weren't working in the fields, they'd say 'Hey, we're going over to brother so-and-so's. Bring your equipment and materials and we'll go to help him build or restore his house" [35]. Similarly, Bethlehem Baptist Church was built by members of its own congregation.

The close proximity of African-American families to the township provided a source of domestic and manual labor for Mansfield's merchant and professional classes during this period. One woman said, "And when my grandfather got to Mansfield, he started to work for Dr. McKnight. . . And his first job was so funny. He was the first black chauffeur in Mansfield. He drove a horse and buggy for the late Dr. McKnight. My grandmother . . . worked for the Wright's also. She would walk every morning and night to and from the Wright's home on East Broad Street" [36]. Another woman said, "My momma was working for different women, you know. . . in their kitchen. . . She walked to Lillian and worked for the Ball's awhile, cooking and cleaning houses. Then, . . . she worked for Dr. Pritchard, cooking here in Mansfield"[37].

A man said:

I worked from the time I was a kid. . . From about eleven years old, cooking. . . I cooked in three different doctors' homes. That's how I learned to cook. . . I cooked for Dr. Niphong, Dr. Raymond Thomas, and Dr. McKnight. And their wives taught me to cook, clean house and yards--just for my food. . . I never had to get up Monday mornings and go look for a job because I always had a job. And of course, I did other little things. I also worked for (T.E.) Blessing and McKinnley Funeral homes. I used to clean them up [38].

He continued:

Then. . .you had to call people by their last name. Mr. and Mrs. so-and-so. I used to, like I said, work for the doctors' wives. I'd drive their children in their new automobiles every evening or on Sunday. Whenever they would want to drive, I would drive them. But though I cooked for them. . . I would have to go down around and come in the back door. Go all through the house, up the stairs, and wherever. I'd cook, take care of their children. . .But I couldn't come through the front door. I thought that was a slap in the face [39].

Some members of Mansfield's community did not take the humiliation from members of the Anglo community without retaliating in some way. The same informant said:

And of course. . .there was meanness going on then. But, Blacks were just as mean to the whites as the whites were to them--just different kinds of meanness. We had our little tricks we could pull . . .I cleaned up the funeral home. . .The guy who owned the funeral home put a sheet on and was going to scare me. And I broke that up. Nobody ever scared me again. I broke a broom across his back. And I found out right then and there that there weren't any ghosts or haints like they said because he hollered louder than I did. I made him holler. He told everybody not to. . .not to bother me [40].

He continued:

I would plow this man's horse all day and I'd catch his horse. . .after dark. I'd ride him all night. And the horse wouldn't work the next day. . .I'd ride him all night. And the next morning . . .this man would say "The wolves are running my stock at night. I don't know how." But, there weren't any wolves. I was riding him. I'd catch him. . .You know he knew me. And I'd call him up to me. I'd ride him all night. Hook him up the next morning and go to the field. . .and he just wouldn't work and so we both had fun. That was mean [41].

Then the same informant told the following narrative about how he dealt with a local merchant. This merchant. . .would sew his clothes every day because I would go and when I did try them on, I would take a razor blade and go through there and cut them down. You know, it has always been everybody being mean to everybody. There never has been any body being really good. He'd wonder why his clothes were getting] so cut up--into strings [42].

A SOCIETY OF MEANNESS NOTES

1. Barr 1982: 41
2. Colby 1994: 234
3. Ibid.: 234
4. Barr 1982: 42
5. Ibid.: 44
6. Ibid.: 44
7. Rice 1971: 8
8. Kingston et al 1992: 20
9. Ibid.: 20
10. Shapiro 1988: 27
11. Colby 1994: 235
12. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 47-48; Appendix C: 45-46)
13. Kingston et al 1992: 21
14. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 46-47; Appendix C: 44-45)
15. Ibid. (Appendix B: 48; Appendix C: 46)
16. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 49; Appendix C: 47)
17. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 51; Appendix C: 49)
18. Ibid. (Appendix B: 51; Appendix C: 49)
19. Moody and Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 61; Appendix C: 57-58)
20. Ibid. (Appendix B: 61; Appendix C: 58)
21. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 48-49; Appendix C: 46-47)
22. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 55; Appendix C: 52-53)
23. Ibid. (Appendix B: 54; Appendix C: 52)

24. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 62; Appendix C: 58-59)
25. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 54; Appendix C: 51)
26. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 54-55; Appendix C: 52)
27. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 54; Appendix C: 51-52)
28. Ibid. (Appendix B: 33; Appendix C: 32)
29. Ibid. (Appendix B: 32; Appendix C: 31)
30. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 35-36; Appendix C: 34-35)
31. Ibid. (Appendix B: 36; Appendix C: 35)
32. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 22-23; Appendix C: 22)
33. Evans 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 79; Appendix C: 75)
34. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 78; Appendix C: 75)
35. Ibid.
36. Washington 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 26-27; Appendix C: 26)
37. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 31; Appendix C: 30)
38. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 11; Appendix C: 11)
39. Ibid. (Appendix B: 14; Appendix C: 14)
40. Ibid. (Appendix B: 11; Appendix C: 11)
41. Ibid. (Appendix B: 13; Appendix C: 12)
42. Ibid. (Appendix B: 13; Appendix C: 13)

COURAGE, GRACE, AND TENACITY

Although a system for formal education had existed in Mansfield, Texas since the late 1860s, the Mansfield Independent School District was not officially initiated until 1909. Both the Mansfield Male and Female College (1867-1889) and the Mansfield Academy (1901-1908) provided educational opportunities for the township's Anglo students from the latter half of the nineteenth century through the first decade of the twentieth century.

Mansfield's educational opportunities, did not, however, extend to its African-American citizenry and, as with the entire south, was not given any real priority. Prior to the first decade of the twentieth century, Mansfield's African-American children did not receive state-funded education. There are no records available to indicate what type of schooling was made available to African-American children after Emancipation and ensuing Reconstruction; however, the oral tradition indicates that Bethlehem Baptist Church provided some school functions after 1870. Aside from the church being a possible location for a part-time school, no other information about the education afforded Mansfield's African-American youth prior to 1900 is available.

Towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, though, the issue of African-American education did begin to unfold in the form of legislation that sought to maintain the separation of the races while establishing limited educational opportunities for children of color. Article 7 of the Texas Constitution of 1879 stated that "separate schools shall be provided for the white and colored children, and impartial provision shall be made for both" [1]. In addition, Section 14 of the same article indicated that "[the Legislature should] also when deemed practical, establish and provide for the maintenance of a College or Branch University for the instruction of the colored youths of the state. . ." [2]. Articles 2638-2643 of the constitution provided for the establishment of Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College for colored teachers [3]. Additional legislation regarding that institution was passed in 1899 [4] and in 1901[5]. However, no further legislation was passed which pertained to elementary education until 1905.

In that year, Article 2755 was passed by the Texas Legislature, stating that "a school house constructed in part by the subscription of colored parents or guardians, and for a school for colored children, shall not be used for white children without the consent of the trustees of the district, and a like rule shall protect the use of school houses erected in part by voluntary subscription of white parents or guardians for the benefit of white children" [6].

Mansfield's first "Negro" school was finally established by the Mansfield School District in 1909, although the oral tradition indicates that a facility may have been operational four years earlier. The school was located outside, and west of, the township's limits and was described as being a one room wooden building [7]. During the course of the next four decades, the school is reputed to have been moved at least three times [8].

In 1911, the Texas Legislature passed Article 2819 for all school districts in the state. The article required that "the county superintendent shall make, on prescribed forms, separate consolidated rolls for the white and colored children of his county, . . . showing the number of children of each race, of the different years of school age and the total number of children of each race, and the total of both races in his county" [9].

As a result of this statute, the first public records available for Mansfield Schools were prepared for the academic year 1910-1911 (Figure 4). The records indicate that Mansfield's African-American children at the time, comprised roughly fifteen percent of the total school age population. Statistics based upon actual enrollment, indicate that during the 1915-1916 academic year, that population declined to thirteen percent and

Scholastic Year	Anglo	African-American	Total
1910-1911	242	43	285
1911-1912	---	--	---
1912-1913	---	--	---
1913-1914	---	--	---
1914-1915	277	--	---
1915-1916	278	40	313
1916-1917	---	--	---
1917-1918	---	--	---
1918-1919	324	46	370
1919-1920	290	33	323
1920-1921	---	--	---
1921-1922	312	48	360
1922-1923	322	64	386
1923-1924	---	--	---
1924-1925	---	--	---
1925-1926	326	77	403
1926-1927	289	89	378
1927-1928	---	--	---
1928-1929	---	--	---
1929-1930	---	--	---
1930-1931	277	60	337
1931-1932	---	--	---
1932-1933	---	--	---
1933-1934	---	--	---
1934-1935	---	--	---
1935-1936	---	--	---
1936-1937	---	40	---
1937-1938	---	--	---
1938-1939	---	--	---
1939-1940	---	--	---
1940-1941	411	40	451
1941-1942	422	47	469
1942-1943	456	40	496
1943-1944	440	39	479
1944-1945	429	38	467
1945-1946	454	39	493
1946-1947	489	46	535
1947-1948	490	39	529
1948-1949	---	--	---
1949-1950	490	57	547
1950-1951	576	56	632
1951-1952	619	74	694
1952-1953	669	55	724
1953-1954	688	58	746
1954-1955	660	55	715
1955-1956	695	69	764
1956-1957	680	81	761

Figure 4. Student population by ethnicity and enrollment for the Mansfield Independent School District during scholastic years 1910-1956 (State of Texas, Department of Education Bulletins, 1910-1957).

in 1918-1919 had fallen to twelve percent [10]. Since many children worked alongside their parents in the fields, these numbers can only be considered as less than actual. One researcher of the period wrote that of the total of school-age children enrolled in Texas Negro Public Schools, only sixty-one percent of the children of those age groups were documented [11]. This fact was substantiated by a woman who said, "We would not

get to go to school on beautiful days--the pretty days. We had to work. Most days that we got to go to school were bad days. . .The pretty days, we were in the fields working" [12].

During the 1910s, African-American education in the South came under scrutiny from such Northern organizations as The Association of New York. The Association sent individuals to document conditions of African-American schools throughout the south during the 1910s and 1920s. One author wrote, following a trip to Texas that "rural schools of all types are poor enough, but the rural Negro schools are bad beyond comprehension" [13]. He continued, saying that in one Texas community where between one and two hundred African-American families were employed, the landlord had cleared \$40,000 in cash off his cotton crop in the previous year (1911). Yet, the "Negro school house was a bare shell, all dilapidated" and couldn't have cost more than "two or three hundred dollars" [14]. Mansfield's Negro school appears to have been little better and conditions did not measurably improve for decades.

In 1921, thirty-eight students and two teachers from the Mansfield Negro school were photographed by an unknown photographer. They included teachers, Ms. Burks and Ms. Elizabeth Moody and the following students: (top row, left to right) Lena Lewis, Annie Mae Bailey, Agnes Brisco, Troy Moody, James Brinson, T.M. Moody, Johnson (first name unknown); (second row, left to right) Shirl Davis, Viola Hollins Norwood, Betty Bush, Lillian Lawson, Tommy Porter, Majorine Briscoe, Dilsy Wyatt, Mable Williams, Edna Briscoe; (third row, left to right) Virginia Davis, Suzie Moody, Lorene Moody, Mainatte Davis, Silvanin Moody, Hattie Mae Lewis, Lula Moody, Lell Lawson; (fourth row, left to right) L.P. Porter, Roy Moody, Milford Briscoe, Leroy Brinson, Beedie Hollins, Pete Davis, Ben Lewis, Melvin Moody, Sam Moody; (seated, left to right) Henry Moody, Ralston Bennett, Robert Bennett and Eugene Moody (?)[15].

In 1923, two years after the photograph of Mansfield's African-American teachers and pupils was taken, the Texas Legislature further reinforced the state's use of segregated schools when it passed Article 2719 which stated that every "county board of education shall provide schools of two kinds: those for white children and those for colored children" [16].

From 1919 onwards, the State of Texas, along with sixteen other Southern states that maintained separate schools for Anglo and African-American children, began to utilize three private charities to fund Negro education. These charities included the John F. Slater, the Anna T. Jeanes and the Julius Rosenwald Foundations. Texas also had a General Education Board (G.E.B.) Fund which was used to support African-American education [17].

In a bulletin entitled "Negro Education in Texas," published in 1931, the Texas Department of Education described what the foundations had been funding during the previous twelve years and at what levels. From 1919-1931, the Slater fund provided \$65,671; the Jeanes Fund \$83,233; the Rosenwald fund \$2,390,691; and the G.E.B. fund \$48,538 [18]. The Rosenwald Fund, by far, contributed the most money and was, perhaps, the most visible because it paid for the construction of African-American schools, as well as, housing for teachers. The other funds were used primarily to pay the salaries of teachers and to provide teacher training.

By 1931, the Rosenwald Fund had constructed facilities for African-American children in 80 Texas counties. These facilities numbered some "518 buildings, including 455 schoolhouses, 21 teachers' homes, and 32 shops in addition to adding 29 rooms to existing Rosenwald homes" [19]. Curiously, neither Tarrant County proper nor the Mansfield Independent School District were on record as ever having made application for assistance from the Rosenwald Fund for a school in Mansfield. This was in spite of the fact that the foundation was supplying both the architectural plans and the financing for the construction of African-American school

buildings, including labor and materials. This lack of initiative eventually precipitated the African-American community's subsequent legal action, twenty-five years later, against the Mansfield Board of Education.

In 1922 and throughout the decade, a comparison between the state's investment in public school property for Anglo and African-American children was made by the authors of *The Negro Year Book* at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. This research showed that Texas spent 48 dollars on each Anglo child in the state and spent only 13 dollars on each African-American child. Although highly disproportionate from the amounts cited, these were exceeded by three other southern states in particular. The states of Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida spent *even less* than fifty percent of the Texas expenditure for each African-American child compared to 52, 57, and 59 dollars for Anglo children, respectively [20]. School buildings were the most demonstrative examples of the inequality of expenditures dedicated for Anglo and African American education.

Eight years prior to the Tuskegee study, a writer for The Association had toured Texas and reported that the state had a seventy million-dollar fund and "owned 1,457 school-houses for Negroes." Of that total, only 185 were buildings that "the State Superintendent was willing to report as being in good condition. Four hundred seventy-one others were in bad condition, and all the rest were only fair" [21]. Despite the attention that Texas and other southern states' school conditions were getting from organizations like The Association, improvements were, at best, grudgingly performed by local school districts. Most "Negro" Schools received no improvements at all.

This appears to have been the case in Mansfield in 1926, even though the number of African-American students had increased dramatically from the year before. At the beginning of the 1926-1927 academic year, its school-age African-American population had reached 25 percent of the total school age population. The students were still confined to a one room building without a toilet and all the grades were combined. There were no new books, little equipment and no improvements over the year before. Whether poor conditions or the onset of the Great Depression were responsible for an outmigration of African-American families and/or their children over the following three years can only be conjectured. For some reason, the number of students enrolled in Mansfield Negro School was never that high again and dropped to 18 percent by 1930. It continued to steadily decline with the passage of each academic year during the next two decades [22].

By the 1940s, the students of Mansfield Negro School only comprised between seven and ten percent of the total student population. The school building had been enlarged but the general conditions that had been present in the 1920s remained largely unchanged. Both written and oral descriptions about the period indicated that one school still served Mansfield's African-American children from grades one through eight. African-Americans who were later interviewed in 1957 by researchers from the University of Texas indicated that the elementary school was comprised of two long, run-down barrack-like buildings which sat side-by-side on a piece of land near West Broad Street. The school had no indoor bathrooms and no running water. There was one teacher assigned to the school, they stated, and she had to use milk cans to carry water to the school so that children would have drinking water. They also said that there were inadequate teaching materials, no school bus and no flag and no flagpole. In addition, the school was also located on a busy country road and there was no fence to prevent children from running into the road while playing [23].

One man indicated that:

"You know we'd get the books, but we didn't get enough books. There would be two kids studying from one book. . . some of the pages would be torn out. . . you'd read up to a certain page and there would be a page missing. You couldn't get your lesson because the books were written in and

pictures were drawn in them. You just couldn't read them and couldn't come up to date with your education. . ." [24].

Although legislation had been passed allowing local boards of education to appoint trustees for local Negro schools in Texas as early as 1905, the Mansfield School District did not provide for African-American trustees until the late 1940s. During the 1948-1949 academic year, the school board finally appointed several members from the local community as "Sub-trustees". However, their role was an unofficial one and was subject to the decisions of Anglo school board members. They "were invited to attend all meetings of the board and. . .the members of the board welcomed their suggestions relative to the needs of the Negro school" [25]. The first African-American trustees included T.M. Moody, John F. Lawson, and Mark Moody.

A writer for the *Mansfield News-Mirror* stated forty years later that, "unlike many other school districts in Tarrant County, Mansfield always owned its own buses. . .From World War II to the early 1960s, Mansfield ran six school buses, each making two trips. This mean[t] that buses left before sunrise and often returned after sunset" [26]. Unfortunately, this was only for Anglo students.

Few of Mansfield's African-American families had the use of automobiles. One man stated that as a result, elementary school-age children walked from home to their school. This often became an opportunity for humiliation because Mansfield's Anglo students often rode past the walking children. He said, "When the school buses came by, we'd have to get off the road, because the white kids on the school bus would throw whatever they had at us--rocks, pencils, anything. . .You know we had to walk. . .we walked there, to eight grades in one building" [27].

A woman stated, "We would have to get up and leave early. And during that time, sometimes we would leave early and we would go down to the highway--walking and taking a chance on catching a ride. A lot of times, Mr. Ralson Bennett. . .would be driving a cattle truck. And he would pick us up and drop us off" [28].

Mansfield's African-American high school students could not attend school locally. They had to travel by bus daily to downtown Fort Worth to attend two Negro secondary schools which served students from several counties. Students in the ninth grade attended James E. Guinn School, after which they transferred to I.M. Terrell High School. One woman stated, "I came out of (finished) I.M. Terrell High School. . .I had to get up every morning before daybreak and walk down to the red light. . .The buses. . .ran from Ennis to Fort Worth. And then we. . .caught the Trailways bus. . .Later, there were enough kids to run a bus from Mansfield to Fort Worth [29]. According to other informants, African-American students paid their own bus fare to and from Fort Worth. The woman continued, "We had to pay. We would buy cards. . .and when you would get on the bus they would punch it. . .We wouldn't get to go to school if we didn't have it" [30].

African-American parents having to pay for the transportation of their children to the schools in Fort Worth was one of the many issues which finally precipitated community action. One man stated, "T.M. Moody, John F. Lawson, Buck Wilson, Wilbur Lawson--several of the deacons of [Bethlehem Baptist] Church decided that if we had to pay taxes in Mansfield--school taxes, property taxes, county taxes--and we still had to pay for transportation. . .to go to Fort Worth, why should we have to pay double for an education when we could go right across the street?" [31]

The situation was temporarily remedied with the provision of paid bus passes in 1954 to cover the fare for students commuting to Fort Worth's segregated high schools. Four years earlier, following the continued efforts of the sub-trustees, Mansfield Negro School was finally provided with its own 24-passenger school bus, and replaced with a larger model in 1951 [32].

In that same year, Mansfield Negro School was razed and a new school building was erected on the same site. It was a four-room wood structure, furnished with a water cooler, chalk boards, lockers, typing tables, door locks and a library. The school also received an additional teacher. These improvements, though late-incoming, were well-received by the community, but were far from equal to the education facilities provided for Mansfield's Anglo students [33]. In addition, the changes were not made by the Mansfield Board of Education without some altercation. According to accounts rendered by interviewees in the late 1950s, T.M. Moody was threatened during one school board meeting in particular, when he demanded better textbooks for students. One man stated that some Anglo school board members said, "Well, we'll stop him from stirring up trouble. We'll hang him! . . . or scare him. . . But they didn't do either [34].

T.M. Moody's frustration with the school board, the conditions at Mansfield Negro School and the general treatment of members of the community had prompted him to form a chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Mansfield as early as 1950. A lifelong resident who did not have children of his own and who was employed in a federally-owned warehouse outside of Mansfield, Moody had experienced a more integrated existence [35]. It can be assumed, that he knew that Mansfield's African-American residents, like other residents of small Southern towns, had two choices to better the education for their children: they could move North where housing was still substandard and employment was limited or they could stay in their own community and fight for equal rights. It can only be conjectured that Moody knew that the biggest step forward that the community could take would be to join the NAACP.

Dating back to 1910, the NAACP was an organization that was dedicated to the promotion of equal rights, the eradication of caste and racial prejudice in the United States, the advancement of the interests of people of color, the securing of impartial voting rights and the increase of opportunities for gaining justice in the courts, in education and employment as well as "complete equality before the law" [36]. Realizing the breadth of the task and acknowledging the need for donations, the NAACP initiated the Legal Defense and Educational Fund in 1939. Referred to in the vernacular, simply as "The Fund," this entity was created as a separate organization and was operated under the direction of attorney, Thurgood Marshall. Marshall later argued many of the cases that dismantled the "Separate but Equal" clauses set up by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 and paved the way for the 1954 case, *Brown v. U.S. Board of Education*.

Moody's decision to organize the NAACP chapter in 1950 proved pivotal in bringing about the eventual integration of the Mansfield schools. Along with his appointment two years earlier as one of the African-American sub-trustees, his formation and subsequent presidency of the chapter accompanied increasing demands for change in the conditions of Mansfield's African-American children that never abated [37]. One man said that T.M. Moody "started pushing for our kids to go to the Mansfield schools because we didn't want to pay taxes here, if the kids couldn't go and get. . . schooling here. They [the school board] got so aggravated with T.M. Moody because he was pushing so hard for the kids to go to school [here] or to integrate the schools [altogether]" [38].

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court outlawed segregation in public schools in a court case styled *Brown v. the U.S. Board of Education*, a consolidation of four separate school desegregation cases. In his ruling, Chief Justice Warren stated that,

To separate [African-Americans] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. . . In the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal [39].

Realizing the complexity of undoing a system of segregation that had been codified into law more than century before, the Court restored the case to its docket to determine a solution. On May 31, 1955, in what came to be called, *Brown II*, the Court mandated that district courts, in each area where segregated public schools existed, had jurisdiction over cases, and could decide whether or not "good faith" was exercised in carrying out desegregation orders. Ultimately, the court gave school districts the right to decide how desegregation would occur, but mandated that it occur "with all deliberate speed." The ruling for desegregation was a victory for African-Americans, and T.M. Moody as well as other community leaders in Mansfield viewed it as an opportunity to gain equal education for their children. But the ruling was only the beginning. The decision by the Supreme Court in *Brown II* to give district courts jurisdiction over enforcement allowed local school boards to use various methods to delay the process of integration that had been mandated [40].

On April 7, 1955, almost one year after the initial *Brown* decision against segregation in public schools, African-Americans in Mansfield, dissatisfied with the lack of action on the part of the school board, retained Clifford L. Davis, an African-American attorney from Fort Worth, to counsel them on a course of action geared towards integration. Their list of grievances included (a) no school lunch program for African-American students enrolled in grades one through eight; (b) a lack of adequate teaching materials; (c) no flags or flagpole on the school grounds; (d) the location of the school along a busy road without fencing to prevent injury to children who might run into the street; and (e) children of high school age being forced to attend schools in Fort Worth which required that they take a public service bus from Mansfield which left them twenty blocks from the school; and which forced them to catch a 5:30 p.m. bus back to Mansfield although school ended at 3:30 p.m. [41].

Clifford Davis, originally from Arkansas, had moved to Fort Worth, Texas in January 1955. He became one of only three African-American attorneys practicing law in that city and was the only lawyer who would take on civil rights litigation cases. Born in Little River County, Arkansas, Davis was the product of segregated school systems in Wilton and Ashdown, Arkansas. He went on to study and receive an undergraduate degree from Philander College in 1945. In 1947, after two years of studying economics at the graduate level, Davis went on to study business law at Howard University in Washington, D.C. His tenure at Howard afforded him the opportunity to study under the tutelage of some of America's most esteemed civil rights professors, including James Nabrit, William H. Hastie and George Edward Hayes. This educational experience allowed Davis to be instilled with a commitment to equalizing the status of African-Americans. By the time he arrived in Fort Worth in 1955, he had filed several civil rights cases, including the successful case styled *Alvin J. Matthews et al. v. R.W. Launius, President, etc and the Beardon School District No. 53 of Ouahita County Arkansas*, which helped to dismantle Section 80-509 of the Arkansas statute allowing for desegregation in Arkansas schools. His successes in the courtroom garnered him the praise of NAACP directors and the Legal Defense and Educational Fund representatives, and he was considered to be an excellent and committed civil rights attorney [42].

From April to July 1955, attorney J.A. (Tiny) Gooch, was retained by the Mansfield Independent School District (ISD), and Superintendent R.L. Huffman corresponded with Davis about the issues presented by the African-American community. But no changes were made. In July, 1955, members of Mansfield's African-American community filed a petition with the school board demanding that their children be admitted to Mansfield High School in compliance with the Supreme Court's decision. Davis drafted a letter to the school board asking it to comply with the request by September, 1955. However, the admission of African-American students to the high school was denied [43].

In October 1955, a suit, on behalf of three of Mansfield's African-American high school students---Floyd Moody, Charles Moody and Nathaniel Jackson---was filed against the Mansfield Independent School District

[44]. The case was tried in the Federal District Court of Fort Worth by Judge Joseph Estes (who ironically was the same judge who admitted Davis into practice in Northern Texas). The request, mandated by the *Brown II* decision, was ruled "premature" and "precipitate" and lay in full agreement with the Mansfield school district's opinion that the town was not ready for integration [45]. The plaintiffs appealed the case to the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals which overruled Judge Estes, and reversed his decision. This action mandated that the school board admit African-American students to Mansfield High School without regard to race, and made Mansfield, the first Texas school district to be forced to integrate under a court order [46].

Following that decision, an editorial appeared in the September 20, 1956 issue of the *Mansfield News*. It stated:

We, the American people are right back where our forefathers were when they left England to escape oppression. They wanted religious freedom and were willing to endure untold hardships to gain that freedom.

Today we are facing oppression of a different kind. Our personal freedom is at stake, our racial freedom is being violated. It is time for all true Americans to open their eyes and their ears. None is so blind as he who WILL not see, says an old quotation. Hatreds are being promoted between races which have gotten along together for lo, these many years. Why can't the whites of this land, as well as the Negroes, see that they are both being used as pawns in a Communistic game to disrupt our nation? Some advocates of integration have been brain-washed by pin-headed, religious fanatical preachers who get up in pulpits all over the land and shout, "The Negro is your brother, the Bible says so, you must have him in your home, in your church and in your school." And, he might add, in your family. The Bible does not say anything about accepting the Negro as an equal.

The two races are as different in customs, ways of thinking and in ideals as they are in color. "East is East, West is West and never the twain shall meet," is just as true as the day it was written. In fact a seer of no mean ability must have written it [47].

These sentiments had been seriously questioned in sermons delivered in services and meetings by the Reverend L.E. Billingslea at Mansfield's Bethlehem Baptist Church since the late 1940s. The consensus of the members of the African-American community was that they wanted a change in the status quo, especially for their children. How to effect this change remained under debate however, because of a community memory which recounted incidents of violence that had been perpetrated by Anglos against African-Americans in Tarrant County [48].

Very few of Mansfield's Anglo residents, like most other Southerners, accepted the desegregation ruling. A poll conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion in 1956 indicated that 80% of Anglo Southerners were opposed to *Brown*. As the September, 1956 editorial in the *Mansfield News* indicated, there was strong sentiment to preserve the traditional caste system in the South. In Mansfield, as in other sites of desegregation throughout the South, members of the Anglo population resorted to threats and acts of intimidation and violence against African-Americans seeking integration.

Although not mentioned during the interview sessions conducted later in 1995, the first act of intimidation perpetrated on Mansfield's African-American community was on August 22, 1956, when a cross was burned at night in the heart of the community. The following evening a second cross was burned in the same area and the sheriff dispatched police to patrol the neighborhood. Four days later, T.M. Moody, President of the Mansfield Chapter of the NAACP, reportedly received death threats and was ordered to leave town [49]. On

August 28, 1956, he was hung in effigy over the main street in Mansfield. Signs attached to the effigy read "THIS NEGRO TRIED TO GO TO A WHITE SCHOOL" and "WOULDN'T THIS BE A HORRIBLE WAY TO DIE" [50].

One man stated:

They hung an effigy on Main Street of T.M. Moody. And they called him that evening and said they were coming out to kill him. And there were. . . about twenty-five or thirty. . . that got together to come out and raid him. . . at night after dark. But there were several of T.M.'s friends that got together and were with him here. They never did show up. It was good that they didn't show up. . . All the Blacks that got with T.M. Moody said, "Well, it's just going to be a showdown." And he recognized the man's voice that was on the telephone. . . And he told him, "Mr. Perry, you come on. . . anytime you get ready. In case you don't get a chance to come out tonight, you can come tomorrow night or whenever. I will be here at home. You are welcome anytime you want to come to my house" [51].

On August 29, the attorney for the Mansfield ISD filed a court petition asking for a stay of the enforcement of integration. By this date as well, the Mansfield White Citizens' Council had also begun to organize and hold meetings. Accounts of one meeting held in the evening of August 29, indicated that Council members had decided to meet on the school grounds at 7:00 a.m the following morning and the first day of school registration. They would "non-violently" ask any African-American child who came to register that he/she was "entering the school against the will of the [Anglo] community and over their protests" [52].

On August 30, 1956, a Federal District Court Judge denied Mansfield's petition for a one-year postponement of desegregation stating that "[i]t would be a direct disobedience of the Circuit Court order to grant the school district's petition for postponement of desegregation" [53]. The school opened for registration that same day and it is estimated that between 250 and 400 Anglos gathered on the school grounds to protest desegregation [54].

Anglo informants, interviewed a year later, indicated that "a 'brutal' element began to take over--an element that favored 'anything' to keep the Negroes in their place," force "the NAACP out of town and "protect the white children from mongrelization" [55]. The phrase, "brutal element," was in actuality, a reference to five conservative leaders of the White Citizens' Council who maintained staunch objections to integration. Reports indicated that although this small group did not openly advocate violence, they did encourage acts that were suggestive of violence, including the use of signs and placards with derogatory and threatening comments toward African-Americans [56].

Mansfield's White Citizens' Council, like others that appeared throughout the Southern states, had deep roots in a movement that began in May 1954 when, a Mississippi Circuit Judge, Tom P. Brady delivered a speech in Greenwood, Mississippi calling for organized white resistance against integration. Brady followed his speech with the publication of a pamphlet entitled *Black Monday* which outlined strategies for carrying out this defiance [57]. His actions led to the formation of the first White Citizens' Council which was organized in Indianola, Mississippi. The Council portrayed itself as an organization committed to lawfully upholding segregation. The group's then-executive secretary, Robert Patterson, maintained that African-Americans were not anxious to integrate and that any efforts to do so was the result of manipulation by the NAACP; thus, paving the way for the resentment that followed any NAACP involvement in the integration movement [58].

In their initial stages, White Citizens' Councils concentrated on garnering political support and economic control, manipulating public opinion, and recruiting new members. In taking this strategy, White Citizens' Councils gained influence in Southern politics and were able to use economic scare tactics, such as the threat of eviction and unemployment, to prevent African-Americans from using court mandates for integration [59]. When these methods proved insufficient many members merely resorted to more tried-and-proven methods of intimidation.

In Mansfield, the White Citizens' Council demanded "that all Negroes with 'good' jobs be fired, with the inference that failure to [do so] would be met by economic [repercussions]. . . In one instance, not only was the employer told to fire the Negro employee, but also which white man to hire in his place" [60]. In addition, members of the White Citizens' Council also demanded that "all credit was to be denied to Negroes" [61].

The first day of school registration, attorney, Clifford Davis, telegraphed Governor Allen Shivers to request that additional law enforcement officers be dispatched to Mansfield to prevent mob violence. He also tried to reach the Governor by phone, but was unsuccessful. He then wired the Director of Public Safety who informed him that he could only intervene if contacted directly by Mansfield law enforcement [62].

At Mansfield High School, two cloth effigies, intended to resemble lynched African-Americans, appeared mysteriously the night before the first day of school on August 30, 1956. One was suspended from the flagpole in the school yard and the other was hung from a light above the front entry of the school. R.C. Hickman, photographer for the NAACP, was instructed to drive to Mansfield and record the effigy that hung from the flag pole. He spoke later of the incident, saying that after he had taken his photograph, "a truck load of white men pulled up and began shouting insults and threats." He got into his car and began driving west as the truck followed. Both vehicles increased their speeds. He later said that, "They chased me all the way to Fort Worth" [63].

The two effigies remained in plain view. Reverend D.W. Clark, pastor of St. Vincent's Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, arrived in Mansfield. He told the crowd that their assemblage was against "God's law and the law of the land. . . [and that] they [were] acting like barbarians." He also told them, presumably pointing at the suspended figures, "I would particularly like to cut down these effigies" [64]. The crowd shouted and jeered at him, saying that he had no business being there. He was escorted by a Texas Ranger to his car and returned to Fort Worth [65].

One man who witnessed the events of that day stated, "I remember when Mansfield High School was going to be integrated. . . It took about five or six hundred white guys to keep three thirteen or fourteen year old kids from entering into the school. . . seemed like awful odds to me [66].

The effigy that hung from the flagpole was removed later, "so that the American flag could be flown on the second day of registration," but the other effigy remained in place over the school entrance for several more days [67]. Other incidents of Anglo intimidation are reputed to have occurred in Mansfield. One African-American resident said that he had difficulty even driving his daughter to Mansfield Negro School. "At the time my oldest daughter was entering school. . . these white guys laid a chain across the highway to stop me . . . I asked my daughter to lay down on the floor and I made, maybe not five hundred of them but. . . a bunch of them run after my car [68].

On the second day of school registration, another crowd of about 500 people gathered around the school grounds voicing open threats. Interviews at the time also indicated that "vigilante squads" were stopping people coming into town for questioning. Anyone considered to be a "Negro sympathizer" was escorted out

of town. On that day, as during days prior, large quantities of printed hate materials were distributed among Mansfield's Anglo population. The materials indicated that Jews were behind the NAACP and that "school desegregation was a communist plot to mongrelize the white race" [69].

Mansfield schools were closed September 1-3, 1956 for the Labor Day Holiday. Governor Shivers dispatched two Texas rangers to the scene, and granted the Mansfield school board the authority to transfer out of the district any student whose presence might incite a riot [70].

Final registration for Mansfield High School for the 1956-1957 school year was scheduled for September 4, 1956, the same day that the school board's petition to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals was denied, with then Judge Black upholding the lower court's order to integrate [71]. In response, Mansfield's school board made the decision to appeal directly to the Supreme Court [72]. A mob of over 200 people remained on the school grounds that day to continue their protest against integration. Mansfield's African-American community was justifiably concerned for the safety of its children. Consequently, those students who were supposed to enroll at Mansfield High School, instead boarded buses bound for the Fort Worth Schools--James E Guinn and I.M. Terrell.

Texas Governor Shivers had prevented the implementation of the Federal District Court by upholding segregation. "This was a perfect example of state's rights impeding federal authority. [Both] the president and the federal court system allowed it to happen and the segregationists celebrated" [73]. Governor Shivers defied the federal order for integration under the guise of meeting his constitutional responsibility for maintaining law and order in Texas; and, for a short time, succeeded in re-segregating Mansfield schools [74].

Governor Shivers blamed the problems in Mansfield on the NAACP, referring to them as "paid agitators" [75]. "Without paid agitators, we would not have trouble. . . [They] ought to be put in jail, but unfortunately, they are sitting back in plush offices" [76]. He failed to recognize that several thousand native African-American Texans belonged to the NAACP and that these citizens were not outside agitators [77]. He also failed to recognize that the integration of Mansfield High School had originated not from outside the state of Texas, but in the homes and the church in Mansfield's own African-American Community [78].

President Eisenhower advanced a similar view when he referred to "extremists on both sides" and remained non-committal when asked in his weekly news conference on September 5, 1956 to comment on the crisis. Initially, Eisenhower maintained that controlling the violence associated with desegregation was the State's responsibility; and he supported neither extensive legislation nor the use of Federal police methods despite the fact that Southern authorities repeatedly failed to protect African-Americans from violent interference with the exercise of rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution [79].

Thurgood Marshall wrote a letter to the president, hoping that Eisenhower would "take an unequivocal stand against. . . mob action wherever it occurs. . . regardless of the participants. Marshall explained that many citizens were upset by the president's stated views concerning integration and civil rights. He went on to indicate that many of the president's statements could be construed as giving support to those opposing integration and abandoning "Americans who [sought] only their lawful rights in a lawful manner, often after unbelievably long periods of waiting" [80].

He continued:

Surely you do not mean to equate lawless mobs with federal courts as "extremists." Certainly the dozen [or so] Negro children involved in each instance trying to get an adequate education in a lawful

manner could not be classified as "extremists". . . There is nothing [to]. . . justify the use of such phrases in commenting upon. . . [the events in] Mansfield, Texas. To do so. . . tends to alleviate the full responsibility of the lawless mob by giving the impression that there is someone else or some group of people who are equally guilty of bringing about the lawless situation [81].

Another letter was written to the president by Norman Thomas, a syndicated columnist and six-time socialist candidate for president. Thomas wrote of his concerns for the "Negro students" in Mansfield saying, "It would appear that [Governor] Shivers' idea of order is to use his police power to do what the mob wants; namely, bar Negro students from any school. . . Your reference to 'extremists on both sides'. . . is too often understood as apportioning guilt about equally between the aggressive segregationists and the advocates of obedience to the order of the Court" [82]. In the same letter, Thomas also described the movement of Mansfield's African-American community, as demonstrating a "restraint of a race whose dignity and patience in the face of persecution is worthy of all praise [83].

Eisenhower held another press conference on September 11, 1956. Although tending to maintain what members of the press corps described as a "middle-of-the-road" position, he did state that: "[The] court must decide whether it believes. . . someone is in contempt of that Court. . . [Then] it is customary for the Court to call in the Justice Department to assist in bringing the evidence and thrashing the case out. He continued, stating that "The states. . . would exercise first of all their responsibility and authority in carrying out police functions to preserve law and order. . . [and that they also have] a concurrent responsibility. . . to see. . . [that] the orders of a District Court are carried out" [84].

On September 25, 1956, lawyers for the Mansfield School Board, appealed directly to the United States Supreme Court, to overturn the lower court order to integrate Mansfield High School. Their appeal was made on the basis that the lower court "did not consider the local problems. . . of implementing school integration" [85]. On December 3, the Supreme Court denied hearing the appeal and the court order requiring the immediate integration of Mansfield High School was upheld.

This action should have been regarded as a victory and a means by which contempt charges could have been filed by the plaintiffs against Mansfield High School and the School Board. Instead, "the African-American parents in Mansfield did not wish to subject their teenagers to the hatred and animosity of [people like the] crowd of segregationists who [had] surrounded Mansfield High School" [86].

The Winter of 1956 saw the successful legal victory of Mansfield's African-American community against the Mansfield School Board. However, the victory proved hollow given what was involved in the implementation of integration. Threats continued to be made against members of the community and many of them believed that they had failed miserably in their efforts to integrate Mansfield schools.

It was 1957 which proved to be a pivotal year in the fight for desegregation at the national level. The integration movement at Little Rock, Arkansas' Central High School finally forced the hand of the executive branch. Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas made it very clear, in both written correspondence and personal interviews with Eisenhower, that he would attempt to follow the same path as that chosen by Texas Governor Shivers. Realizing that his campaign lacked any indication that he was a president who would back his words with action, Eisenhower used integration at Central High School in Little Rock to wield executive branch power in the civil rights arena and bolster his political stature.

On September 24, 1957, Eisenhower ended Governor Faubus' efforts to maintain segregation in Arkansas schools by ordering 9,936 National guardsmen and 1,000 paratroopers from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne

Division to enforce integration at Central High School. Ironically, one of Eisenhower's primary advisors in this decision was Governor Shivers who stated that the president "wasn't going to let a governor of a state run over" him and [he] [didn't] blame him" [87].

Also ironic was the fact that Eisenhower and then Attorney General Brownell utilized Chapter 15, Title 10, Sections 332-333 of the U.S. Code as the basis for their actions in Little Rock. These sections gave the president the power to use Armed Forces to "suppress in a State any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combination or conspiracy which so hinders the execution of the laws" [88]. They were treated as if they were non-existent during the Mansfield crisis.

The integration crisis in Little Rock also forced Eisenhower to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1957. The act created a Civil Rights Commission within the Justice Department and also instigated measures to ensure the voting rights of African-Americans. Section III of the Act initially did not allow the Justice Department to initiate injunctions against civil rights offenders, and did not allow for jury trials except in cases of voting rights violations. Southern Democrats, however, lobbied for and got a softer version of the Bill, and passed it through the Senate. It was the first civil rights legislation enacted since Reconstruction [89]. Although the bill still included the right of the Justice Department to level injunctions, it allowed states like Texas to use a variety of legal tactics to delay or stall integration. Consequently, the schools of the State of Texas would not be integrated for almost a decade.

In the year following the initial attempts to integrate Mansfield schools, Texas legislators launched a full campaign to prevent integration. It included plans to implement a program, developed by the Texas Advisory Committee on Segregation in Public Schools, which called for dual school systems wherein the state would fund the tuition of any student wishing to transfer from an integrated school into a state-funded nonsectarian school. The committee also developed a strategy wherein this system of dual education could only be abolished through popular vote of the residents of a school district.

Texas legislators, like other politicians throughout the South, also moved to destroy the credibility of the NAACP. Beginning in September 1956, Texas had begun an investigation into NAACP involvement in Mansfield. From September 14 through 16, 1956, an investigator from the Attorney General's office interviewed Mansfield residents about Clifford Davis' involvement in the community. The only African-American resident interviewed was a Mr. Brown, the owner of a barbecue establishment. The others were Anglo, including, Constable Tom Beard, Willie Pigg, R.L. Huffman, and O.C. Rawdon [90]. Huffman and Rowden indicated that the Anglo citizens in Mansfield were not ready for desegregation and that neither the Anglo community nor the school board wanted to integrate Mansfield High School. Brown indicated that in an attempt to diffuse the situation, he had circulated a petition throughout the African-American community in Mansfield, asking parents to support a proposal to reclassify the Mansfield Negro School as a "colored" High School. The petition had been signed by all except two families and Brown noted that parents had decided that they would continue to send their children to James E. Guinn and I.M. Terrell in Fort Worth if their school could not be upgraded [91].

On September 18, 1956, Texas Attorney General Shepperd announced a statewide investigation of the NAACP. The organization's officers were informed that state investigators would be sent to their offices and that all paperwork was to be made accessible. The violations that were pending investigation included: (a) acting as a business with a permit; (b) failure to file a franchise tax report; (c) tax evasion; and (d) participating in political activity while operating as a corporation. On September 21, 1956, District Judge Otis T. Dunagan of Tyler issued a temporary restraining order against the NAACP in Texas on the basis that it was a New York

corporation operating illegally in the state of Texas and that, as such, the organization has consistently violated barratry laws. A hearing for a temporary injunction was scheduled for September 28 [92].

Prior to the trial in the East Texas town of Tyler, a Court of Inquiry was held in Kennedale, a hamlet west of Mansfield, and several key participants in the integration efforts in Mansfield were subpoenaed. Included on that list were T.M. Moody and John F. Lawson. Floyd and Charles Moody, two of the students on whose behalf the Mansfield integration case had been filed, were interviewed as well. They were forced to answer questions relative to the amount of time spent with Clifford Davis and their recollections of all efforts to integrate Mansfield High School.

The trial against the NAACP officials began on September 28 and lasted seventeen days. During that time, the state presented 472 exhibits which purportedly pointed to the NAACP's unlawful practices in the state. The bulk of the exhibits pointed to incidents that occurred in Mansfield [93].

In his closing remarks, attorney, Thurgood Marshall, representing the NAACP, stated:

The intent [of this trial] is to keep status quo. This is not a status quo situation, it's the opposite of the status quo. . . The people in these organizations in Texas are not people who willingly violate the laws. . . we have done nothing worse than getting Texas people to obey the law of the land. . . Once the Supreme Court decides the law in a particular case, regardless of what it is, the Supreme Court can't go from county to county to enforce it. The Negro's faith in American life is supported by the belief they can get justice in the courts [94].

Judge Otis Dunagan took only four hours to grant the State of Texas a temporary injunction against the NAACP. Eight days later, on May 18, 1957, Dunagan issued a permanent injunction against the organization. The NAACP was allowed to continue its educational and charitable programs in Texas, however, it became illegal for the organization to perform any legal activity in the state [95].

In that same month, two bills passed the Texas senate, during its 120-day special session, allowing Texas a legal avenue to circumvent integration in the state. The laws allowed for the legal transferral of students from one school to another based on seventeen standards, including psychological qualifications and the effect on students' academic progress when "other" students were present in the school [96]. During that same session, three resolutions were also passed. Jointly they called for more stringent guidelines against interference in a state's rights to prevent integration. With the successful maneuvering of the Texas legislature against integration, efforts to desegregate Texas schools came to a standstill in 1957. Only ten Texas school districts integrated during the following five years. Without the help of the NAACP, Mansfield High School remained segregated, the community's high school students continued to travel by bus to the Fort Worth schools, and Mansfield Negro School continued to have substandard facilities for grades one through eight.

In that same year, John Howard Griffin, the Mansfield author who later wrote *Black Like Me*, was contacted by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in Houston and asked to prepare a report on the crisis situation that resulted from the community's efforts to desegregate the city's school system the year before. He wrote the following commentary in present tense while conducting interviews with Mansfield's Anglo and African-American residents:

I am contacted [by B'nai B'rith] about the study of the crisis situation. I agree to do the research locally, since we do not think the local people would cooperate with any outsiders. I begin to

make extensive interviews. I let it be know[n] that the findings whether good or bad will be published nationally.

The steam has died down in all except the small group of fanatics. I find great resentment, and after the interviews, I attempt to explain the situation to each interviewee. The findings become obvious and there are many embarrassed and red-faced people here, some that think that what we lost is far greater than what we gained. Those who were the scapegoats--the ones who refused to fire their Negro help, are looked upon now with a certain respect. The tide is beginning to turn.

At the onset, it was very difficult to get interviews. But when the story got around, many people took courage and volunteered, among them some of the conservative leaders. If this were going to be published, it was a sobering thing to them--they wanted the record straight, wanted themselves cleared and written down as opposers of violence, and as regretting the whole thing.

I sent a letter to the local newspaper, a very impersonal letter, listing a background of the distributors and publishers of hate pamphlets. Nothing more. The editor came to see me, very contrite. She said she wanted to be on the right side and that if I thought she should, she would fire the people running the paper who had written such inflammatory editorials. I refused to express myself on this. She asked permission to publish this information, and I gave it to her. The information appeared, as coming from me, and I expected severe reprisals. To my surprise, I was highly praised. People said they hadn't realized how they were being used by hate groups. They said it would have been better to go ahead and integrate than to be lead astray.

The fanatic opposition [to desegregation] is temporarily quiet, and they have lost all prestige in the [Anglo] community. . .[However,] it might be more exact to say that there are [still] a number of individual fanatics left in town--men and women who still think they acted gloriously and who think it would have been even more glorious if a Negro or two had been killed--just to show them. But these people have no respect for the radical leaders, and not much respect for each other.

The subsidiary effects arising from the crisis situation were horrifying to most of the people who now view them in retrospect. These effects would appear to be: (a) the pattern of a fanatical group taking over [and] forming a dictatorship. . .; (b) the pattern of working on the young and teaching them bigotry and prejudice; (c) the pattern of the destruction of reverence for values which most people consider of prime importance: namely, destruction of reverence for law, for religion, for human persons, for privacy [sic] of conscience.

Most people think it will take a long time to overcome the great damage done in these crisis-weeks [sic] in this community [97].

In contrast to some of the impressions that Griffin described from his interviews with Anglos in the report, Mansfield ISD remained segregated for eight more years. Finally, following the passage of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Mansfield High School was quietly integrated in the Fall of 1965. The legislation stipulated that federal funding would be cut off from any public school practicing segregation. Also in that year, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed. It offered increased federal funding to all public educational institutions following the mandates of Title VI. These monetary incentives appear to have been the only means that finally pushed the Mansfield Independent School District to open its doors to children of color [98].

Whether the events of 1956 inspired Griffin to write and publish his now famous book in 1961 can only be conjectured. Members of Mansfield's African-American community are of the opinion that the events that he witnessed and his writing the book were related. One man said, "Griffin couldn't believe it was right under his nose. . .Whites. . .his friends. . .were acting that way. And he injected some dye into his veins and it turned him Black for a couple of months, I think. And he went to Louisiana and he. . .almost got hung" [99]. A woman said, "He wanted to write the book to really know how Black people in Mansfield and Black people in the South were treated. Because he went to more places than Mansfield" [100].

The man continued, "When he wrote that book, there was a hell of a gain. . .It was good to know about Blacks in the South. Back then, just like today, if you can write a book and can sell it, you can make yourself proud. So, I heard later on that the dye that he injected into his body to make his skin black, did have some effect on his eyes. He wore real thick black glasses. And eventually, he swelled up and. . .got real sick and died [101]. The woman added, "And his skin did turn dark. His skin really turned darker than mine. It really did. It worked. And he got along, I mean he was treated just like I guess I would be treated if I went. . .to some of those places. Because he went to places and was thrown out, you know, on account of his color" [102].

When asked how the Anglo community in Mansfield reacted to Griffin's book, one man said, "He was not too popular until he was deceased. He really didn't care then, because. . .he was a rich man then. He didn't need them" [103].

Despite the long and difficult struggle that the African-American community in Mansfield endured to get their children educational opportunities that were equal to those of Anglo children, members of the community remained fairly gracious when discussing the period. One woman provided the following commentary:

I'd like to give Mansfield. . .a good name. Mansfield finally integrated the schools on their own without any problems. . .because they were getting government subsidies. And I read in the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* before they did it, that if they did not integrate, open up the schools, and let the children go in. . .their subsidies would have been cut off. . .So, give 'em what's due 'em . . .Without any problems they opened up the schools, but that *Star Telegram* had to stir them up . . .They weren't going to get any government subsidies unless they. . .integrated the schools. So, quite a few of our children went to Mansfield. . .They're still going to Mansfield High School and Middle School. . .They did open up. . .And it's been some good things going on in Mansfield [104].

COURAGE, GRACE, AND TENACITY NOTES

1. Texas Constitution Art. 7, Sec. 7
2. Ibid. Art. 7, Sec 7
3. Ibid. Acts 1879: 181
4. Ibid. Acts 1899: 325
5. Ibid. Acts 1901: 35
6. Ibid. Acts 1905: 263
7. Briscoe 1996: personal communication (Appendix B: 6-7; Appendix C: 6)
8. Ibid.
9. Texas Constitution. Acts 1911: 201
10. State of Texas, Department of Education Bulletins, 1910-1956
11. *Present Forces in Negro Progress*, 1912: 128
12. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 30; Appendix C: 29)
13. Ibid.: 120
14. Ibid.: 121
15. *Mansfield News-Mirror*, July 30, 1990
16. Texas Constitution, Acts 1923: 237
17. Texas Board of Education Bulletin No. 294, 1931: 7
18. Ibid.: 7-10
19. Ibid.
20. *The Negro Year Book* 1922: 239
21. Ibid: 121
22. State of Texas, Department of Education Bulletins, 1910-1956
23. Ladino 1993: 8-10

24. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 39; Appendix C: 37-38)
25. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 4
26. Mansfield News-Mirror, July 30, 1990
27. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 22; Appendix C: 22)
28. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 30; Appendix C: 29)
29. Ibid. (Appendix B: 30-31; Appendix C: 29-30)
30. Ibid. (Appendix B: 31; Appendix C: 30)
31. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 46; Appendix C: 44)
32. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 4
33. Ibid.
34. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 39; Appendix C: 38)
35. Ladino 1993: 9-10
36. Ladino 1996: 12
37. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 4
38. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 46; Appendix C: 44)
39. Bell 1980: 379
40. Ibid.: 379-380
41. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 4-5
42. Ladino 1996: 22-24
43. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 5
44. *Texas Observer*, June 9, 1978
45. Ibid.
46. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 5
47. *Mansfield News*, September 20, 1956

48. Ladino 1993: 9
49. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 5
50. Ibid.
51. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 38-39; Appendix C: 37)
52. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 5-6
53. Ibid.: 5
54. Ibid.: 6
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.: 5-6
57. Ladino 1996: 28
58. Ibid.: 29
59. Ladino 1996: 29-31
60. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 8
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.: 7
63. Hickman 1994: personal communication
64. Ladino 1993: 219
65. Ibid.: Ladino 1993: 220
66. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 13; Appendix C: 13)
67. Ladino 1993: 222
68. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 13; Appendix C: 13)
69. Griffin and Freedman 1957: 7
70. Ibid.: 8
71. Ibid.: 7

72. Ladino 1993: 223
73. Ibid.: 228
74. Belknap 1991: 33
75. Ladino 1993: 228
76. *Dallas Morning News*, September 7, 1956
77. Ladino 1993: 231
78. Ibid.
79. Belknap 1991: 33-35
80. Thurgood Marshall to Dwight D. Eisenhower, letter, August 6, 1956
81. Ibid.
82. Norman Thomas to Dwight D. Eisenhower, letter, August 5, 1956
83. Ibid.
84. Official Transcript of Dwight D. Eisenhower Press Conference, September 11, 1956
85. *Austin American*, September 26, 1956
86. Ladino 1993: 236
87. Ladino 1996: 127-128
88. Ibid.: 128-129
89. Ibid.: 130
90. Ibid.: 133
91. *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, Morning-Three Star edition, September 18, 1956
92. Ladino 1996: 134
93. Ibid.: 136
94. Ibid.: 136-137
95. Ibid.: 137

96. Ibid.
97. Griffin and Freeman 1957: 9-10
98. Ladino 1996: 142
99. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 39; Appendix C: 38)
100. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 32; Appendix C: 31)
101. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 32; Appendix C: 31)
102. Sheppard 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 32; Appendix C: 31)
103. Moody 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 40; Appendix C: 38)
104. Briscoe 1995: personal communication (Appendix B: 25-26; Appendix C: 24-25)

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Mansfield, Texas
Oral History Questionnaire
Page 1

Please give your name, place and date of your birth, and tell us how long you have lived in Mansfield, Texas. What was your occupation? If you have moved to somewhere else like Fort Worth, please tell us when you moved there and for what reason, if any.

When did your parents come to Mansfield? What state did they come from? What were their occupations?

Were there other relatives such as grandparents and cousins also living in Mansfield?

If you had grandparents who lived in Mansfield, when did they arrive in Mansfield and what state did they come from? What were their occupations?

How did your community get established?

Was Walnut Creek known by any other name? Can you tell us how it got its name? Is it important for any other reason?

Who provided the first dwellings in your community? Were there black carpenters or builders who constructed houses there?

As children, did you hear any stories about life during and after the Civil War?

We often hear that a Federal officer made an announcement upon his arrival in Galveston Harbor in 185 that the Texas slaves were freed. How did the African-American population in small communities like Mansfield receive word of their freedom? How long did it take for word to reach them? Was there Federal enforcement from say, the field office in Fort Worth to force unwilling slave owners to comply with the Federal mandate?

Can you tell us anything else that you might have heard about this time period?

There are relatively few graves in the cemetery in Mansfield of Freedmen and women who were born in the 1840s. Was this due to a relatively small population in Mansfield or is there [any other] reason for this?

We have been told that some initial land holdings were received by Freedmen during Reconstruction. Was the title to land given outright by landowners to Freedmen? (Or) Was it sold to them? (Or) Was it like share-cropping--an exchange of land for crops produced?

There are many stories about small rural communities in Texas and incidences where land was taken illegally from African-Americans. Was there ever land taken by Anglos from members of your community? If so, how did it happen?

As children, you knew important early members of your community. Can you tell us something about who they were and what you remember about them?

Mansfield, Texas
Oral History Questionnaire
Page 2

Many rural African-American churches date from Reconstruction. Can you tell us something about the history of this church and how it was established? Who built the church and what did it look like? What were some of the most important periods in the church's history?

We assume that most of your children were educated in the church before a primary school was established for them in Mansfield. When was the first segregated school established and where was it located? When was the first school for Anglo children established in Mansfield?

How did the church provide books for its children when no school [was available] for them?

Agricultural practices was an important subject of several oral history interviews that we conducted recently in Grapevine, Texas. What did the farming members of your community cultivate or raise?

What did your diet consist of when you were children? How did this change as you got older? Can you tell us something of what you remember that might be important about how your family stored, cured or prepared food?

There are indications that it was difficult to purchase basic necessities in Mansfield. Can you tell us about this? Where did the members of this community get necessities and manufactured items?

(Deleted). During the 1920s, the Dallas Chapter of the Ku Klux Klan rose to a position of incredible power and it was the largest Klan [organization] in the United States. There are incidences which are described as Klan-sponsored that are reputed to have occurred in Mansfield. What happened to this community during the 1920s or in the following decades. Is there evidence to suggest that there was influence from the Dallas Chapter?

(Deleted) How did you protect yourselves during this period?

How did small communities like yours interact with other communities?

An earlier interview indicated that the local undertaker would not take members from your community to prepare [them] for burial. How were people from your community prepared for internment in the local cemetery?

What happened to this community during the Great Depression and during the 1930s?

What changes occurred in your community during the 1940s?

How did these prepare your community for the events that would later occur in the 1950s [and 1960s]?

Did anyone know the author of "Black Like Me" and did he have any interaction with members of your community before or after the book was written? Was the book read by any of you and what was your reaction to it?

Mansfield, Texas
Oral History Questionnaire
Page 3

When did your children first start commuting to the high school in Fort Worth?

Prior to this, was there any opportunity for educational advancement outside of primary school?

Describe the events that lead up to the desegregation of the Mansfield [Public] School System.

There are individuals that are mentioned in some of the documentation as being extremely racist in their attitudes towards your community. Can you give us their names and relate specific incidents of racism?

What happened after the schools were integrated?

When did your community receive electricity? When did your community receive other utilities such as gas, water and sewage.

Sometimes, people use humor to deal with intolerable conditions that they are forced to endure. Did this occur in this community? What are some examples of this?

**MANSFIELD, TEXAS ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS
RECORDED
DECEMBER 1995**

**STAN SOLAMILLO, INTERVIEWER
TRANSCRIBED BY HOWARD BURLEY
EDITED BY PAM ARMSTRONG**

STAN SOLAMILLO, [S.S.]. "WHENEVER YOU WANTA' START. . ."

BETTY BENJAMIN, [B.B.]. "I'VE LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE, AND I WAS BORN IN 1909. AND MY BIRTHDAY IS APRIL THE TWENTY FOURTH. AND I'VE LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE. THIS IS MY HOME. . . I LIVE HERE. I DON'T KNOW NO OTHER PLACE. . . AND THAT'S THAT."

S.S.: "WERE YOUR PARENTS HERE?"

B.B.: "MY PARENTS IS ALL DEAD. NOW, AIN'T NOBODY LIVING BUT ME."

S.S.: "MA'AM?"

M.B.: "I'M MAGGIE JACKSON BRISCOE, [M.B.]. I WAS BORN ON JULY THE TENTH IN NINETEEN-SEVENTEEN IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS. MY PARENTS WAS JOHN AND LOULA JACKSON. . . WE'VE COME TO MANSFIELD IN 1927. . . OCTOBER. WE'VE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE. MY PARENTS ARE DECEASED."

S.S.: "HOW ABOUT YOU, SIR?"

F.L.: "I'M FRED LAWSON, [F.L.]. BORN. . . AND RAISED UP HERE. BORN MARCH THE SIXTH, NINETEEN AND EIGHTEEN. I'VE LIVED HERE UNTIL I LOST MY FATHER, WHICH WAS IN 1934. I LEFT AND WENT OFF TO SCHOOL. . . WAS GONE A COUPLE OF YEARS, CAME BACK, AND STAYED TWO OR THREE MONTHS, (OR MAYBE ABOUT SIX MONTHS). THEN I LEFT AGAIN AND WENT TO FORT WORTH. FROM THERE, TO OKLAHOMA, BACK TO FORT WORTH.

"THEN, WENT IN THE ARMED SERVICES. SPENT ABOUT TWO YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS. . . CAME OUT. . . AND JUST UH, ON OCCASION, (FUNERAL OCCASIONS AND WHAT NOT). . . SPECIAL DAYS WOULD COME BACK. SO, VERY LITTLE I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT WHICH WENT ON IN BETWEEN THAT TIME."

S.S.: "ALL YOUR CHILDHOOD MEMORIES, TOO, ARE REAL IMPORTANT BECAUSE YOU'VE HEARD THINGS THAT THE REST OF US DIDN'T. UH, I GUESS WHAT I NEED TO ASK FIRST OF ALL, IS WHAT DID YOUR PARENTS DO FOR A LIVING?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo
B.B.: Betty Benjamin
F. L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe
M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)
S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard
M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr
M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: "FARM. . . FARM."

S.S.: "HOW 'BOUT YOU, MA'AM?"

M.B.: "THEY WERE FARMERS. THEY WORKED ON A FARM. DID YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT WHEN WE WENT TO. . . WHEN WE UNITED WITH THE CHURCH OR WHERE WE WENT TO SCHOOL?"

S.S.: "YES, IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO INTO THAT, THAT'S. . ."

M.B.: "WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW, I JUST. . ."

S.S.: "WE'RE GONNA' BE. . . WE'LL BE REAL LOOSE HERE. . . SO UH, SOME OF THE QUESTIONS ARE GONNA' BE. . . JUMP AROUND AND THAT'S OKAY."

M.B.: "WELL. . . I UNITED WITH THE BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH IN UH, 1931. AND ON JUNE. . . ON AUGUST THE TWENTY-EIGHTH, I WAS FIFTEEN. AND I'VE BEEN WITH THE CHURCH EVER SINCE. THEN ON UH. . . I MARRIED MILTON BRISCOE WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN, ON DECEMBER THE TWENTY-SECOND, 1922, UH, '32 AND I LIVED WITH HIM UNTIL HE. . . HE LOST. . . HE WAS DECEASED."

"TO THAT UNION, WE HAD FOUR CHILDREN--TWO GIRLS AND TWO BOYS. MY OLDEST DAUGHTER WAS EDNA BRISCOE; MY OLDEST SON, WILLIAM BRISCOE; THEN OUR. . . MY THIRD. . . SECOND. . . THIRD CHILD WAS MILDRED BRISCOE--MILDRED LOUISE BRISCOE. AND [POINTING] THAT'S HER OVER THERE. AND THEN, MY YOUNGEST WAS LEONARD EDWARD BRISCOE. WE HAVE FOUR CHILDREN AND THEY'RE ALL HERE--STILL ALIVE."

S.S.: "HOW ABOUT YOU MA'AM? ARE YOU MARRIED AND DID YOU HAVE CHILDREN?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "AUNT BETTY, HE'S TALKIN' TO YOU. . ."

B.B.: "NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN."

S.S.: "YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN? OKAY. . ."

B.B.: "MY HUSBAND. . . I LIVED WITH MY HUSBAND RIGHT DOWN THERE. AND HE PASSED AWAY IN '83. . . C. B. BENJAMIN, AND THAT'S WHAT MY NAME IS. . . AND I WENT TO SCHOOL HERE IN MANSFIELD. . . AND I WENT AND JOINED THIS CHURCH A LONG TIME AGO. AND IT WASN'T NOTHING BUT JUST A LITTLE BITTY FRAME. . ."

S.S.: "WHAT YEAR WAS THAT WHEN YOU JOINED THE CHURCH?"

B.B.: "I CAN'T THINK OF IT NOW."

S.S.: "WHAT DID YOUR HUSBAND DO FOR A LIVING?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

M.E.: Michael Evans

B.B.: "YOU KNOW, WE . . . WE WORKED ON A FARM. WE PLOWED. . . AND CUT, PICKED COTTON. . . AND I PICKED COTTON AND CHOPPED COTTON. BUT HE GOT TO A PLACE WHERE HE COULDN'T CHOP ANYMORE. SO THAT WAS THAT!"

S.S.: "WHAT DID HE DO WHEN HE COULDN'T CHOP COTTON ANYMORE?"

B.B.: "WELL, HE STAYED AT HOME. . . WE WERE WISHING HE WAS GETTING BETTER, . . . BUT HE HAD A THING THAT HE COULDN'T GET RID OF."

S.S.: "UH, YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR PARENTS ALSO FARMED. . ."

B.B.: "YES, MY PARENTS WORKED ON THE FARM. AND MY MOTHER, SHE ALWAYS WORKED AND PICKED COTTON TOO. AND ALL THE REST OF THEM PICKED COTTON. AND I LIKED TO PICK COTTON. . . I COULD DO A LITTLE BIT NOW, I THINK. . ."

S.S.: "HOW ABOUT YOU SIR? YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR PARENTS HAD FARMED AS WELL?"

F.L.: "OH, YEAH."

S.S.: "OKAY. AND WAS IT PRETTY MUCH COTTON FARMING?"

F.L.: "COTTON, CORN, OATS--PRACTICALLY ANYTHING THAT YOU COULD RAISE AROUND IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY."

S.S.: ". . . YOU RAISE. . . ANYONE RAISE ANY LIVE STOCK?"

F.L.: "OH, YES. COWS, HORSES AND CHICKENS, TURKEYS. . . AND SOME KINDS OF ANIMALS."

S.S.: "THE VAST PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION HERE IN MANSFIELD. . . WERE THEY PICKING COTTON PRETTY MUCH?"

F.L.: "RIGHT."

S.S.: "UH, I WANT TO GO BACK TO. . . AS YOU WERE CHILDREN. WHAT DID YOU HEAR FROM YOUR PARENTS OR FROM YOUR RELATIVES UM, ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY AND HOW IT GOT STARTED? DOES ANYONE KNOW?"

F.L.: "WELL, MY PARENTS SAID THEY ORIGINATED FROM UH, CAME FROM KENTUCKY--AS WELL AS I CAN REMEMBER. . . AND UH, MY GRANDFATHER. . . HE USED TO SIT DOWN, (WHICH WAS NAMED BOB LAWSON), . . . USED TO SIT DOWN AND TALK TO US ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD AND UH, HOW HE CAME UP. HE WAS UH, . . . HIS MOTHER WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE. AND HE WAS AROUND ABOUT EIGHT OR TEN YEARS OLD. . . UH, BEFORE THEY CAME OUT FROM UNDER SLAVERY."

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

F.L.: Fred Lawson

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: [CONTINUED] "AND HOW SHE USED TO COOK. AND HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT BISCUITS WAS, HARDLY, UNTIL HE HAD GOT ALMOST UH, IN HIS TEENS. AND BY HIS MOTHER COOKING EVERY NOW AND THEN, HE'D GET A BISCUIT AROUND BREAKFAST TIME. AND MANY TIMES SHE HAD TO SLIP THAT TO HIM, (I GUESS WHAT YOU WOULD CALL STEALING), AND PASS IT ON TO HIM. AND HE THOUGHT THAT WAS CAKE. YOU KNOW, JUS' LIKE CAKE. IT WAS JUS' LIKE CAKE TO HIM. AND MANY, MANY OTHER THINGS THAT IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO GO THROUGH."

S.S.: "THAT'S OKAY. I WANT YOU TO TAKE THE TIME. NO, FEEL FREE TO SAY MORE."

F.L.: "BUT UH, NEVERTHELESS, HE PURCHASED THE FARM--I GUESS ALONG THE TIME I WAS BORN. EIGHTY-TWO ACRES IN WHAT WE CALL 'THE TIMBERS.' AND UH, I LIVED THERE A LONG TIME AFTER THAT. HE LOST HIS WIFE IN 1918, WHEN I WAS BORN. AND UH, HE LIVED THERE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS UNTIL, UH, HE GOT UNABLE TO TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF. AND MY DADDY'S YOUNGEST BROTHER TAKEN CARE OF HIM MOST OF HIS LIFE, UNTIL UH, GRANDFATHER PASSED."

"SO. . .MANY THINGS THAT I JUST BARELY CAN REMEMBER. I DIDN'T THINK BACK THIS WAY TOO MUCH AFTER I LEFT FROM HERE. I COULD TELL YOU SOME THINGS THAT WOULD SOUND FUNNY NOW. AFTER MY FATHER PASSED, WE HAD. . . (ME AND MY BROTHER--ONE NEXT TO ME), . . . WE HAD A CROP ON THE PRAIRIE--ABOUT TEN ACRES. WE HAD COTTON CROP AND WE PICKED TWO OR THREE BALES OF COTTON OFF OF IT. THINGS WERE SO HARD THEN. A DOLLAR JUST REALLY MEANT SOMETHING--TO HAVE A DOLLAR."

"SO, I REMEMBER IN THE FALL I CALL MYSELF GETTING READY TO BUY CLOTHES, YOU KNOW, FOR TO GO TO SCHOOL THAT WINTER. I WENT OUT AND BOUGHT SOME SHOES IN FORT WORTH. I FORGET THE NAME OF THAT STORE, BUT IT WAS A JEW STORE UH, ON 19TH STREET. IT WAS A FAVORITE PLACE THAT WE WOULD GO AND BUY SCHOOL CLOTHES. AND I BOUGHT SOME SHOES."

"AND IT WAS NEAR. . .IT WAS IN THE FALL. CAME A RAIN. AND MANY TIMES, WE LIKED TO HUNT SQUIRRELS AND RABBITS, AND DUCKS, OR WHAT EVER. GOING OUT HUNTING ONE DAY AND IT RAINED. AND THOSE SHOES. . .I PAID A DOLLAR, NINETY-EIGHT CENTS, (SOMETHING LIKE THAT) FOR, . . .THEY GOT WET AND UH, THE BOTTOM COME OUT. AND THAT TICKLED MY BROTHER. NOW THIS WAS HARD LIVIN', BUT IT'S BETTER TIMES THAN WHAT WE'RE LIVIN' IN NOW."

S.S.: "BETTER TIMES?"

F.L.: "BETTER TIMES."

S.S.: "WHY?"

F.L.: "BECAUSE. . .YOU DID NOT HAVE TO BE AFRAID TO GO OUT DOORS. YOU COULD LEAVE YOUR HOUSE OPEN. NEIGHBORS WOULD. . .WOULDN'T. . .BOTHER YOU. WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING. IF THEY WAS HUNGRY, YOU WOULD GET THEM SOME FOOD"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

F. L.: Fred Lawson

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: [CONTINUED] AND LEAVE IT AT THAT. SO. . .UH, I, I, I. . . I THINK THAT'S BETTER TIMES THAN WHAT WE'RE LIVING IN NOW.

BUT NEVERTHELESS, UH, I THOUGHT I HAD BOUGHT ME SOME REAL GOOD SHOES. AND I HAD SOME MONEY ON ME. AND I WENT OUT AND TRIED TO CATCH ME A RABBIT TO EAT--TO HAVE SOME MEAT, (WHICH WE REALLY DIDN'T HAVE TO DO). BUT, IT WAS JUST UH, THAT I LIKED RABBIT MEAT--COTTON TAILS ESPECIALLY. . .

"BUT. . . I LIKE TO LOOK BACK OVER THOSE TIMES AND SEE WHERE THE LORD HAS BROUGHT ME UH."

S.S.: "AND WHERE WAS THE FAMILY LOCATED?"

F.L.: "BACK UP HERE--ABOUT THREE MILES."

S.S.: "OKAY. YOU SAID YOUR GRANDFATHER ACQUIRED LAND THERE?"

F.L.: "YES, HE DID. AND ALSO MY FATHER."

S.S.: "DID THEY HAVE TO PURCHASE THIS?"

F.L.: "THEY DID PURCHASE IT. . ."

S.S.: "WHAT YEAR WAS THIS?"

F.L.: "OH. . . THAT WAS UH. . . WELL I WAS GROWN. AND HE PURCHASED THAT. AND MY FATHER UH, PURCHASED TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY ACRES ADJACENT TO IT. AND WE RAISED ALL KINDS OF POTATOES, FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND WHAT NOT. AND WE DIDN'T HAVE TO BUY TOO MUCH--MAYBE A LITTLE FLOUR, RAISED OUR OWN, WHAT NOT. SO NEVERTHELESS, I NEVER DID KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT DEPRESSION TOO MUCH."

S.S.: "HOW ABOUT YOU MA'AM? WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?"

M.B.: "WHAT DO I REMEMBER. . .?"

S.S.: "ABOUT HOW MANSFIELD GOT ESTABLISHED?"

M.B.: "I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHEN WE GOT HERE. MANSFIELD WAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED WHEN WE MOVED IN 1927. BUT, UH, I DO KNOW WE HAD A LITTLE SCHOOL BACK OVER HERE. AND WE LIVED. . . WHAT THEY CALL UH, 'THE PRAIRIE.' AND WE HAD TO WALK FROM OUT ON THE PRAIRIE BACK OVER HERE TO THE TWO-ROOM SCHOOL.

"AND UH, MISS THELMA LOUISE JONES WAS THE PRINCIPAL AND MISS BEATRICE BROCK WAS HER ASSISTANT--THERE'S JUST TWO TEACHERS AT THIS SCHOOL. LATER, THEY BUILT ANOTHER ONE. AND THAT WENT TO ABOUT THE FIFTH OR SIXTH GRADE.

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

M.E.: Michael Evans

M.B. [CONTINUED] LATER, THEY BUILT ANOTHER ONE AND IT WENT TO THE SEVENTH GRADE. EVEN AFTER WE GOT HERE AT UH, THIS SCHOOL, IT WAS. . . (I WAS WRONG) BUT THERE'S. . . THE CHILDREN WAS GOIN'. AND WE HAD A LITTLE OLD SCHOOL FIRST, BACK OUT HERE. . . ABOUT TWO. . . IT HAD TWO ROOMS OVER OFF THICKET, BETWEEN HERE AND THE HOUSE DOWN YONDER. ”

S.S.: “ABOUT WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?”

M.B.: “OH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YEAR BACK IN THE THIRTIES, I IMAGINE. ‘CAUSE, SEE, WE MOVED HERE IN ‘27.”

S.S.: “RIGHT.”

M.B.: “AND UH. . . BUT UH, I REMEMBER ME WALKING FROM WAY OUT THERE TO THE SCHOOL. FIRST, IT WAS DOWN THERE ACROSS FROM WHERE BROTHER MAC LIVED, AND WE WENT THERE. WELL THEN, THEY FINALLY DECIDED, THEY BOUGHT A LITTLE TWO-ROOM UH, BUILDIN’ AND PUT IT OVER NEAR THE VERY END OF THIS ROOM--’TWEEN HERE AND THE HOUSE DOWN THERE. AND WE WERE ON SCHOOL THEN, ‘TIL THEY BUILT THIS SCHOOL FOR THE CHILDREN.

“I WAS ALREADY GROWN AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME. WHEN THEY BUILT THE SCHOOL HERE FOR THE CHILDREN. MY CHILDREN WENT TO SCHOOL HERE. AND UH, THEN THEY DIDN’T HAVE GO NO FURTHER THAN THE SEVENTH GRADE HERE. THEN THEY HAVE TO BE BUSSED TO FORT WORTH TO I. M. TERRELL. UH, WHEN MY CHILDREN WENT ON, THAT WAS TWO BUS DRIVERS. ONE WAS. . . UH, I BELIEVE HIS NAME WAS. . . THEY CALLED HIM ‘LAWYER.’ THAT WASN'T HIS NAME, THOUGH. WHAT WAS HIS NAME MILDRED? DO YOU REMEMBER?”

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA]. . . “STRAUS.”

M.B.: “STRAUS. STRAUS WAS HIS LAST NAME. . .”

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] “GO BACK TO YOUR CHILDHOOD. YOU SKIPPED. . . YOU SKIPPED YOUR CHILDHOOD.”

M.B.: “WELL, THAT. . . THAT'S WHAT I'M. . . I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT MANSFIELD, WHEN IT'S ESTABLISHED AS A CHILD ‘CAUSE I WAS ABOUT SIX, SEVEN YEARS OLD WHEN WE MOVED HERE.”

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] “TALK ABOUT YOUR GROWIN’ UP AND YOUR GOIN’ TO SCHOOL.”

M.B.: “WELL, I'VE TALKED ABOUT GOIN’ TO SCHOOL OVER THERE. . . AND THEN THEY MOVED THE BUILDING OVER THERE. AND WE WENT TO SCHOOL, BUT UH, WE DIDN'T GO UH, NO FURTHER THAN THE SEVENTH GRADE. SO, IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE RELATIVES IN FORT WORTH, OR A FRIEND. . . WE COULDN'T. . . WE DIDN'T HAVE TRANSPORTATION TO GO LIKE PEOPLE DO NOW. WE DIDN'T HAVE CARS.

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

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M.B.: [CONTINUED] "BUT THERE WAS SOME OTHERS WENT ON. . . TO THE TENTH GRADE IN FORT WORTH. THEY HAD FRIENDS THEY LIVED WITH. AND. . . THEY RENTED AND WENT. AND MAYBE SOMETIMES. . . THEY. . . WELL, THEY'D GO AND STAY AND COME HOME. BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY SO, WE DIDN'T. . . I DIDN'T GO UH, NO FURTHER THAN HERE. AND THAT'S AS FAR AS WE WENT. 'CAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE RELATIVES IN FORT WORTH, NOR ANY ESTABLISHED FRIENDS DOWN THROUGH THE LINE."

S.S.: "WHY DID YOUR FAMILY DECIDE TO MOVE FROM CORPUS TO MANSFIELD?"

M.B.: "WELL, THEY HAD MOVED FROM CORPUS TO BRYAN. . . AND THEN MY MOTHER HAD A BROTHER. . . LIVED OVER HERE AT LILLIAN--JUST OUT OF LILLIAN. AND, OF COURSE, HE WOULD COME IN TO BRYAN EVERY SO OFTEN. AND HE TOLD THEM THAT THE LIVING UP HERE WAS BETTER. . . THAN DOWN IN BRYAN. SO, THEY DECIDED TO COME UP HERE ON A COTTON PICK. . . AND THEN THEY STAYED."

S.S.: "WAS THERE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT WOULD COME IN?"

M.B.: "OH YES. THERE WAS A LOTTA' PEOPLE. . . ."

S.S.: "TO PICK COTTON. . . AND THEN STAY?"

M.B.: "YEAH, 'CAUSE A LOT OF 'EM WOULD COME FROM FORT WORTH DOWN HERE AND TAKE WHAT WE. . . WHAT WE. . . THEY CALL 'THE HOUSES' OUT ON THE FARMS. THEY WERE OLD HOUSES, BUT THEY RENTED THEM AND THEY STAYED IN THERE TILL THE COTTON PICKIN' WAS OVER. THAN THEY'D GO BACK INTO FORT WORTH. SOME WOULD COME ON TRUCKS.

SO WE GOT IN ONE OF THOSE OLD HOUSES. AND O' COURSE MY FATHER WORKED ON THE FARM. THAT'S ALL HE KNEW. . . AND WE JUST STAYED. AND THEN AFTER. . . WE GOT UP, OH, ABOUT GROWN, WE COME FROM BETWEEN LILLIAN AND THEN, BACK OUT, WAY OUT THERE. . . CLOSER TO MANSFIELD. AND THEN. . . WE BEEN AROUND IN THIS AREA EVER SINCE."

S.S.: "M-M-M. . . OKAY. . . NOW MA'AM, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD AS A CHILD ABOUT HOW. . . THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY GOT STARTED HERE?"

B.B.: "NO, I CAN'T."

S.S.: "YOU CAN'T? DID YOU HEAR ANY. . . YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANY STORIES ABOUT. . . HOW LAND WAS ACQUIRED OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT? OKAY. . . UM. . ."

M.B.: "NOW I USED TO HEAR THE OLD PEOPLE TALK ABOUT BEFORE WE HAD CHURCHES. THEY HAD CHURCHES ON THE FRONT BRUSH ARBOR."

S.S.: "ON THE BRUSH ARBOR?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

M.E.: Michael Evans

M.B.: "UH-HUH. . .THEY TALKED ABOUT THAT FOR QUITE A BIT."

S.S.: "THAT WOULD BE IMPORTANT. . ."

M.B.: "AND UH. . .WE WOULD THEN. . .WE WOULD GO THERE. THEN THE FIRST [BRUSH] CHURCH I REMEMBER OF THEM HAVIN' WAS DOWN HERE. JUST BEFORE YOU. . .RIGHT AFTER YOU PASS. . .YOU KNOW. . .DOWN, BEFORE YOU START DOWN THE HILL TO MANSFIELD. YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW WHERE THAT IS, BUT IT'S A CHURCH. A HOUSE OVER THERE NOW WHERE THE CHURCH USED TO BE. AND THEN WE'D WALK FROM WAY OUT ON THE PRAIRIE TO THIS HOUSE--THAT CHURCH HOUSE. AND THEN, I GUESS IT MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT. . ."

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "TOWARDS MC CLENDON PARK."

M.B.: "HUH?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "WE USED TO GO TO MC CLENDON PARK."

M.B.: "YEAH, TO THE MC CLENDON PARKS, WHERE THE. . .TO. . .THAT'S WHERE THAT HOUSE IS. THAT'S WHERE OUR CHURCH WAS FOR YEARS. . .AND UH, WHEN. . .WHEN. . .THAT'S THE FIRST CHURCH I REMEMBER US GOING TO. THEN, LATER THEY TORE THAT DOWN AND RE-BUILD.

"AND THEN, LATER THEY ACQUIRED THIS BUILDING. BUT COURSE, I WAS GROWN AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME--FOR THE CHURCH. BUT THIS CHURCH HAS BEEN HERE SINCE. BUT WE WORSHIPPED DOWN THE HILL THERE IN MANSFIELD, AND THEY HAD UH. . .THE OUTSIDE TORCH LIGHTS ALL AROUND. AND WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY ELECTRICITY OR. . .NOTHING. WE HAD WOOD HEATERS. AND. . .THAT'S ABOUT. . .UH, WE WALKED FROM WAY OUT ON THE PRAIRIE TO THE CHURCH."

S.S.: "WAS EVERYBODY SCATTERED, AS FAR AS WHERE THEY LIVED, OR WAS THERE A DEFINED COMMUNITY? SAY IN THE NINETEEN TENS AND TWENTIES? SO, YOU'RE OUT SCATTERED, LITERALLY, ON ISOLATED FARMS?"

M.B.: "YES."

S.S.: "UH, OKAY. DID ANYBODY HEAR ANY STORIES ABOUT. . .WHAT HAPPENS?. . .I GUESS THERE'S A QUESTION. . .AND IT SEEMS. . .SOME OF MY QUESTIONS MAY SEEM NAIVE BUT. . .I THINK THEY'RE. . .THEY'RE IMPORTANT. WE OFTEN HEAR THAT A FEDERAL OFFICER, (AT THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR), . . .UH, ARRIVES AT THE PORT OF GALVESTON AND ANNOUNCES THAT THE SLAVES OF TEXAS ARE FREE. BUT, WE NEVER FIND OUT HOW PEOPLE IN SMALL COMMUNITIES SCATTERED THROUGHOUT TEXAS FOUND OUT THAT THEY WERE FREE."

F.L.: "THE SLAVE OWNERS TOLD THEM."

S.S.: Stan Solamillo
B.B.: Betty Benjamin
F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe
M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)
S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard
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S.S.: "THEY TOLD THEM?"

F.L.: "BUT, THEY WERE STILL UNDER SLAVERY. THEY WOULD GIVE THOSE OLD SETTLERS, (OUR 'FORE PARENTS' THAT WAS UNDER SLAVERY), MAYBE AN ACRE OF GROUND--TWO ACRES OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT--JUST BIG ENOUGH TO PUT A HUT ON. BUT YOU WAS STILL SLAVING FOR THEM."

S.S.: "SO, THEY WOULDN'T PAY YOU FOR ANY WORK YOU DID?"

F.L.: "OH, IF THEY LET YOU HAVE SOME MONEY WHEN. . . WHEN UH, . . . IF YOU WAS UH, SHARECROPPIN'."

S.S.: "M-M-M. . ."

F.L.: "WELL, UH, . . . THEY'D TAKE EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAD. . . AT UH. . . IN THE FALL."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "UH, DIDN'T THEY CALL IT HALF'S OR SOMETHING? WHAT DID THEY CALL IT?"

F.L.: "THIRD AND FOURTHS."

S.S.: "THEY CALLED THIRD AND FOURTHS."

M.B.: "AND SOME WAS ON HALF'S. IF YOU HAD YOUR OWN TEAM, YOU WORKED THIRDS AND FOURTHS. BUT IF YOU. . . WAS LIKE MY PARENTS--DIDN'T HAVE YA' TEAM--THEN THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BEEN WORKING ON THE HALF'S. AND OF COURSE, AS HE SAY. . . THEY WOULD BUY. . . SUPPOSED TO BE BUYING ALL YOUR SEEDS AND THIS, THAT, AND THE OTHER. AND WHEN. . . YOU'D GATHER THE CROP, WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY."

S.S.: "M-M-M."

M.B.: "I REMEMBER THAT."

F.L.: "YOU OWED IT ALL."

S.S.: "SO, YOU WERE ALWAYS IN DEBT AS WELL?"

F.L.: "SO, THEREFORE WHEN I LOST THOSE SHOES IN THE MUD I SEEN IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE THIS PLACE. AND I LEFT HERE. . . SIXTY-ONE YEARS AGO."

S.S.: "UM, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THAT. UH. . . IT SEEMS TO BE SOMETHING THAT. . . THAT'S ENDEMIC TO THE SOUTH. UM. . . CAN YOU TELL US ANY MORE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE UNDER THAT. . . THAT SYSTEM, WHETHER IT'S CALLED SHARECROPPING OR SLAVERY. AND I GUESS THE OTHER THING I NEED TO FIND OUT, WAS THERE EVER TITLE GIVEN. . . TO YOU?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

F. L.: Fred Lawson

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: "OH YES. THEY'D GIVE YOU TITLE."

S.S.: "THEY'D GIVE YOU TITLE?"

F.L.: "I KNOW MOST PEOPLE IN A . . . YOU KNOW. . . WHEN I WAS COMING UP TO SIXTEEN, THAT'S WHEN I LEFT HERE. THAT'S THE YEAR MY FATHER PASSED. . . 1934. SO, UH, . . . THAT'S SHARECROPPIN'. I . . . I GUESS NOT MUCH I CAN RELATE TO AFTER I LEFT FROM HERE BECAUSE. . . I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TOO MANY MEMORIES OF WHAT. . . WENT ON BACK HERE."

M.B.: "MY PARENTS DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROPERTY UNTIL AFTER WE HAD GOTTEN GROWN. AND WE JUST BOUGHT A LITTLE HOUSE, YOU KNOW, AND ENOUGH LAND TO PUT THE HOUSE ON. BUT WHILE WE WERE GROWING UP, WE WERE STAYING IN THE HOUSE ON THE FARMS WHERE WE WORKED."

"AND WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY LAND UNTIL AFTER THEY GOT. . . WE GOT GROWN. AND THEY BOUGHT A LITTLE HOUSE AND MAYBE STAYED THERE A WHILE. AND MAYBE THEY MOVED A LITTLE FURTHER, OR DECIDE WAS ABLE TO ADD SOME MORE TO IT. THEY DONE THAT. BUT, WE WERE GROWN AND MARRIED WHEN WE BEGAN TO GET OUR LITTLE HOUSES."

S.S.: "HOW 'BOUT YOU, MA'AM? CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT. . . WHAT. . . YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER. . . WHETHER THEY HAD PROPERTY. . . OR WHETHER THEY SHARECROPPED?"

F.L.: "MOSTLY, THEY WERE SHARECROPPERS."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "TELL HIM SOMETHING ABOUT UNCLE OSCAR WORKING DOWN ON THE WHITE OAKS FARM. REMEMBER THAT, AUNT BETTY? TELL HIM SOMETHING ABOUT THAT. THAT'S WERE YOU WORKED SO LONG, DOWN ON THAT WHITE OAKS FARM."

B.B.: "I CAN'T TALK."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?"

B.B.: "M-M-M."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "YOU SICK?"

B.B.: "M-M-M."

S.S.: "... YOU LIKE TO SIT SOME WHERE ELSE, MA'AM?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "YOU WANT TO GO OUTSIDE?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

M.E.: Michael Evans

S.S.: "YOU WANT TO? . . . WE'LL TAKE A LITTLE BREAK?"

M.M.: "I AM MC CLENDON MOODY, [M.M.]. I WAS BORN MARCH 12, 1932. AND I WAS RAISED UP IN MANSFIELD--LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE. AND I WAS BORN AT HOME WITH A MIDWIFE. AND I GOT MY EDUCATION IN MANSFIELD TO THE EIGHTH GRADE. AND I HAD TO PURSUE THE REST OF IT IN FORT WORTH. . . I. M. TERRELL.

"FINISHED THERE. . . RAISED A FAMILY. . . AND. . . I WORKED FROM A KID. I. . . DON'T REMEMBER MY FATHER. NEVER SEEN HIM. AND MY MOTHER, I REMEMBER SOME THINGS VAGUELY ABOUT HER. I DON'T REMEMBER HER. AND FROM WHEN I WERE ELEVEN YEAR OLD, I LIVED IN A SIX-ROOM HOUSE BY MYSELF. I HAD ONE BROTHER AND TWO SISTERS. MY BROTHER, UH, WENT TO THE ARMY. MY COUSINS CAME FOR MY TWO SISTERS AND THEY WENT TO SCHOOL IN FORT WORTH. ONE OF MY AUNTIES GOT MY GRANDMOTHER. SOMEWHERE IN THE SHUFFLE. . . NO ONE. . . ADOPTED ME. SO I LIVED IN MY PARENTS' HOME FOR ABOUT LIKE SIX YEARS BY MYSELF.

"FROM 'BOUT ELEVEN YEAR OLD, COOKING FOR MYSELF AND. . . WHATEVER TO BE DID, I DID IT BY MYSELF. I WOULD GO TO BED ABOUT SUNDOWN 'CAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF THE DARK. AND I. . . I COOKED IN THREE DIFFERENT DOCTORS' HOMES. THAT'S HOW I LEARNED TO COOK. I'M A CHEF COOK BY TRADE. I LIKE THE TRADE. . . NOW. I COOKED FOR DR. NIFONG, RAYMOND THOMAS, AND MC NIGHT--DR. MC KNIGHT. AND THEIR WIVES TAUGHT ME TO COOK, CLEAN HOUSE AND YARDS--JUST FOR MY FOOD.

"AND THEN I. . . WHEN I TURNED ABOUT FOURTEEN YEAR OLD, ONE OF MY COUSINS. . . SAW, THAT I WAS REALLY HAVING CRISIS. . . CARRIED ME TO FORT WORTH. I GOT A JOB. . . FOR THE COMPANY I WORKED WITH [WINN DIXIE]. . . WORKED FOR NOW. . . BEEN WORKING FOR THEM FORTY-EIGHT YEARS. . . ONE JOB. I NEVER HAD TO GET UP MONDAY MORNING AND GO LOOK FOR A JOB 'CAUSE I'VE ALWAYS HAD A JOB. AND OF COURSE, I DID OTHER LITTLE THINGS. I WORKED. . . FOR BLESSING-MC KINLEY FUNERAL HOME. I USED TO CLEAN IT UP.

"AND COURSE, UH, IT WAS MEANNESS GOING ON THEN. BUT, BLACKS WAS JUST AS MEAN TO THE WHITES AS WHITES WERE THEM--JUST DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEAN. WE ALL HAD OUR LITTLE TRICKS WE COULD PULL. AND AS I CLEANED UP UH, THE FUNERAL HOME. . . ONCE I CAN REMEMBER VERY CLEARLY THAT THEY WOULD SCARE ME AT NIGHT WITH SHEETS AND WHAT EVER.

"AND AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T KNOW THERE. . . I THOUGHT THEY MIGHT BE SOME OF THE BODIES THAT WAS LAYING THERE ON THE TABLES. SO, THE GUY OWNED THE FUNERAL HOME PUT A SHEET ON AND WAS GOING TO SCARE ME. AND I BROKE THAT UP. NOBODY EVER SCARED ME AGAIN. I BROKE THE BROOM ACROSS HIS BACK. AND I FOUND OUT RIGHT THEN THERE WEREN'T ANY GHOSTS OR 'HAINTS,' LIKE THEY SAID, 'CAUSE HE HOLLERED LOUDER THAN I DID. MADE HIM HOLLER. HE TOLD EVERYBODY NOT TO. . . NOT TO BOTHER ME.

"I CAN REMEMBER. . . OH, WHEN I WAS JUST A KID. . . WE DIDN'T HAVE A FUNERAL HOME FOR BLACKS HERE. WE HAD TWO DIFFERENT, SEPARATE. . . UH. . . CEMETERIES. THERE

S.S.: Stan Solamillo
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M.M.: [CONTINUED] WAS RIGHT, JUST A FENCE ROW RIGHT DOWN THE SIDE OF 'EM. I REMEMBER, I . . . THEY HAD A FUNERAL ONCE. AND UH, WHITE GUY, BLESSING'S HAD TO TAKE CARE OF THE BODY. AND HE GOT A . . . A VAN. AND OVER HALF. . . WELL, ABOUT HALF OF THE CASKET WAS STICKING OUT IN THE RAIN, YOU KNOW. I FORGET WHERE ABOUT IT WAS, BUT I CAN REMEMBER FOR REAL BACK THEN. . . WAS MUDDY ROADS, WASN'T ANY STREETS--MUDDY ROADS. AND THEY PUT THE . . . PUT THE BODY IN THE GRAVE AND JUST BARELY COVERED IT UP. THEN, THOSE THINGS WERE JUST AS BAD THERE NOW, AS IT WAS THEN.

I CAN REMEMBER. . . I REMEMBER SOME OF THE . . . QUESTIONS YOU WAS ASKING ABOUT THE FOOD YOU EAT. I CAN. . . THE FOOD IS DIFFERENT NOW BECAUSE WE EAT BEEF NOW, CHICKEN--WHATEVER WE WANT TO. THEN, MOST OF THE MEAT YOU ATE WAS PORK, CHICKEN IF YOU RAISE IT, TURKEY ON THE SPECIAL HOLIDAYS--THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS. WE DIDN'T EAT TURKEY EVERY DAY, UH, LIKE YOU CAN NOW."

S.S.: "UH-HUH."

M.M.: "GOING TO SCHOOL, I WALKED ABOUT THREE AND A HALF MILES ONE WAY, COLD OR HOT GETTING OUT. YOU WALKED THERE TO SEVEN GRADES IN ONE BUILDING. ONE TEACHER TAUGHT SEVEN GRADES. THEN, EVENTUALLY WE GOT TWO TEACHERS WHO HAD TWO GRADES. RIGHT HERE WHERE WE ARE NOW. THIS WAS THE SCHOOL.

"I DON'T KNOW IF, (IN MANSFIELD), I CAN REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS GOING TO BE INTEGRATED. AND IT TOOK ABOUT FIVE OR SIX HUNDRED WHITE GUYS TO KEEP THREE, THIRTEEN OR FOURTEEN YEAR OLD KIDS FROM ENTERING INTO THE SCHOOL. . . FIVE OR SIX HUNDRED, YOU KNOW. . . IT SEEMED LIKE ODDS WOULD BE AWFUL, YOU KNOW. EVEN THOUGH THEN THE WHITES UH, WERE MEAN, BUT THERE WAS SOME MEAN BLACKS TO THE WHITE ALSO. I WAS ONE OF THEM."

S.S.: "GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES OF YOU BEING MEAN TO WHITE FOLKS."

M.M.: "I WOULD PLOW HIS, MULE ALL DAY AND I'D CATCH HIS MULE AFTER. . . HORSE. . . AFTER DARK. I'D RIDE HIM ALL NIGHT. AND THE HORSE WOULDN'T WORK THAT DAY. AND WE'D BOTH HAVE. . . JUST HAVE. . . FUN, FUN WORKING. YOU KNOW? I'D RUN HIM ALL NIGHT.

"AND THE NEXT MORNING I WOULD GET UP, BRIDLE HIM. HE'D SAY, HE, '*THE WOLVES IS RUNNING MY STOCK TONIGHT, I DON'T KNOW HOW.*' BUT THERE WASN'T NO WOLVES--I WAS RIDIN' HIM. I'D CATCH HIM OUT, YOU KNOW? HE, KNEW ME AND I'D CALL HIM UP TO ME. I'D RIDE HIM ALL NIGHT, HOOK HIM UP THE NEXT MORNING, AND GO TO THE FIELD.

"AND ALL OF THE OTHERS WOULD TRADE DIFFERENT OFF. . . GET SOMETHING. . . GET ANOTHER ONE. AND I'D RIDE HIM. AND HE JUST WOULDN'T WORK. AND SO, WE BOTH HAD FUN. THAT WAS MEAN, AND THEN, DIFFERENT OF US.

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "WE HAD A SPECIAL PLACE SET IN TOWN ON THE CORNER. ALL THE BLACKS WERE RIGHT THERE. . . GO UP TO FRONT STREET. YOU'D BETTER HAVE SACK IN YOUR HANDS WHEN YOU COME OUT, COME BACK DOWN. IF, YOU DON'T GO AND WALK THROUGH A STORE UNLESS YOU BUY SOMETHING. AND IF YOU BUY A PAIR OF SHOES OR PANTS, SHIRT, WHATEVER. YOU BETTER KNOW YOUR SIZE. BECAUSE YOU DON'T PUT THEM, ON OR PULL THEM OFF AND HANG THEM UP AND GET YOURSELF ANOTHER PAIR TO TRY ON. YOU BETTER KNOW YOUR SIZE, YOU KNOW. . .

"SO, THAT WAS MEAN TO ME, AND ME BEING MEAN TO THEM. WELL, HE WOULD SEW HIS CLOTHES EVERY DAY. BECAUSE I WOULD GO AND WHEN I DID TRY THEM ON, I WOULD TAKE A RAZOR BLADE AND GO THROUGH THERE AND CUT 'EM DOWN, YOU KNOW. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN EVERYBODY MEAN TO EVERYBODY. AIN'T NEVER BEEN NO BODY REALLY GOOD. HE'D WONDER WHY HIS CLOTHES WAS BEING SO CUT UP IN STRINGS. WELL, I'D HAVE MINE.

"I BOUGHT A COTTON SACK ONE DAY FROM A GUY, AND WHILE. . . I BOUGHT IT ON CREDIT. . . AND WHILE I WAS BUYING IT, THE WAGON CAME AND LEFT. AND I HAD THE SACK AND I WAS SITTIN' ON IT. THIS IS FUNNY. BUT HE CAME OUT AND ASK ME, IF. . . IF. . . HE ASKED ME WAS THAT CONCRETE HARD ON ME, WHY I BUY HIS SACK? JUST MEAN. AND IF YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING ELSE, YOU ASK ME AND I'LL TELL YOU."

M.B.: "MAC, I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE THAT KIND OF MAN BEFORE."

M.M.: "AND WHEN. . . LIKE I SAID ABOUT THOSE KIDS GOING TO SCHOOL. . . THAT WAS. . . IT DIDN'T TAKE FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE TO KEEP THREE KIDS OUT OF A SCHOOL, BUT IT DID! AND AT THE TIME, MY OLDEST DAUGHTER WAS. . . SHE WAS. . . ENTERING SCHOOL--BUT NOT THAT PARTICULAR SCHOOL.

"AND THEY WOULD JUST. . . LAID A CHAIN ACROSS THE HIGHWAY TO STOP ME. AND I ASKED MY DAUGHTER TO LAY DOWN ON THE FLOOR. AND I MADE--MAYBE NOT FIVE HUNDRED OF THEM--RUN WITH MY CAR. BUT I RAN A BUNCH OF THEM. IT JUST FAR AS THE PAVEMENT, WOULD LET ME MAKE THEM LET ME THROUGH. THEY SCATTERED OUT. AND THEY REMEMBERED ME TO THAT DAY TILL TODAY. AND I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'D CALL HIM A RACIST, OR WHATEVER HE COULD BE. HE TOLD ME EVERY TIME HE'D SEE ME, (I WOULD BE TALKING TO SOME OF HIS WOMEN), WHY DIDN'T I RUN FOR CITY COUNCIL?"

S.S.: "WHO WAS THIS?"

M.M.: "FLOYD CHERRY. AND THE MAYOR. THEN, I THINK HIS NAME WAS SEETON. . . I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT THAT WAS A PRETTY GOOD IDEA, AND I BELIEVE I TRY THAT. SO I DID. AND REALLY, I WON. I WON AND THAT WAS THE NIGHT THAT I WENT TO BE SWORN IN. SOMETHING HAPPENED AND THEY POSTPONED THE MEETING FOR THAT PARTICULAR NIGHT. BUT I WAS THERE EVERY TIME IT OPENED UP. AND I WENT AND THEY PUT OFF.

S.S.: Stan Solamillo
B.B.: Betty Benjamin
F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe
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M.E.: Michael Evans

M.M.: [CONTINUED] "I WAS IN UH, SEVENTH PLACE FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS THERE. IT WAS. . . MANSFIELD WAS SPLIT. WALNUT CREEK AND MANSFIELD. THREE PEOPLE FROM MANSFIELD--THE OLD PART OF MANSFIELD--THREE FROM WALNUT CREEK. AND I'M SEVENTH, IN SEVENTH PLACE. WHATEVER ANSWER I WOULD GIVE. . . YOU KNOW, FOR QUESTIONS. . . WHATEVER WAS PROPOSED, THAT WAS THE WAY IT WOULD FALL.

"AND I BROUGHT MANSFIELD AND THE OLD WALNUT CREEK BACK TOGETHER BECAUSE THEY WOULD. . . I WOULD. . . HAVE MORE CALLS. THREE WOULD WANT ME TO VOTE THEIR DIRECTION, THREE'D WANT ME, AND I'D VOTE MY OWN. WHICH EVER ONE I'D THINK WOULD HURT THE OTHER ONE, I'D VOTE.

"AND FROM THAT, I WAS ON THE CITY COUNCIL FOR FIFTEEN YEARS. MAYOR PRO-TEM FOR SIX. I RAN TWICE, (TWENTY). . . TWO TIMES I WAS WROTE IN. AND THE REASON I'M NOT SERVING NOW IS 'CAUSE I QUIT. I AM ON THE SCHOOL BOARD NOW. [THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE FOR BOND ELECTIONS] AND IT'S NOT A PERSON IN MANSFIELD THAT DOESN'T KNOW ME.

". . . THEN, YOU HAD TO CALL PEOPLE BY THEIR LAST NAME, MISTER OR MISSES. I USED TO, (LIKE I SAY), WORK FOR THE DOCTORS' WIVES. I'D RIDE THEIR CHILDREN IN THEIR NEW AUTOMOBILES. UH, EVERY EVENING, SUNDAY, (WHENEVER THEY WOULD WANT TO RIDE), I WOULD RIDE THEM.

"BUT YET, I'D COOK FOR THEM. BUT YET, I WOULD HAVE TO GO DOWN AROUND AND COME IN THE BACK DOOR, GO ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE, UP STAIRS, WHEREVER, COOK, TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN. BUT YET, I COULDN'T COME THROUGH THE FRONT. . . I THOUGHT THAT WAS A SLAP IN THE FACE. I NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT. WHAT WAS THE DEAL ON. . . SO. . . ?"

S.S.: "DO YOU UNDERSTAND IT BETTER NOW?"

M.M.: "NO, NOT REALLY. NEVER DID UNDERSTAND IT. SO YOU MIGHT. . . MAYBE CAN GET SOME LITERATURE ON IT AND EXPLAIN IT TO ME, 'CAUSE I NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT."

S.S.: "DO YOU THINK THERE IS AN EXPLANATION?"

M.M.: "I THOUGHT THAT WAS. I THOUGHT I HAD THE SENSE AND THOSE GUYS WAS THE ONES THAT WAS, YOU KNOW, OFF BALANCE. DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH SENSE, TO ME."

S.S.: "SIR, WHEN YOU LEFT TO JOIN THE ARMY, (I AM BAD WITH NAMES). WHEN YOU LEFT MANSFIELD, WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED HERE THAT MADE YOU WANT TO LEAVE? ANY SPECIFIC EVENT, AS IT'S LIKE THE LAST STRAW THAT BREAKS.

F.L.: "ARE YOU SPEAKING TO ME?"

S.S.: ". . . THE PROVERBIAL CAMEL'S BACK. AND YOU SAY, I'M DONE WITH THIS?"

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M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

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M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

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F.L.: "WHEN I WENT TO THE ARMY?"

S.S.: "WHEN YOU LEFT MANSFIELD."

F.L.: "WHEN I LEFT MANSFIELD, IT WAS JUST BECAUSE. . .WELL, THE WAY THINGS WERE SITUATED AROUND HERE. YOU KNOW JUST WHAT HE WAS SPEAKING ABOUT. I WASN'T BUT SIXTEEN WHEN I LEFT HERE, REALLY GOING OFF TO SCHOOL. SO, I SPENT ONE YEAR, COMPLETED IT AND PART OF ANOTHER SESSION.

"AND I DECIDED THAT I WASN'T GONNA' GO TO SCHOOL ANY FURTHER BECAUSE ME AND THE MATHEMATICS TEACHER, WE HAD SOME DIFFERENCES. AND I JUST FELT LIKE IT WAS BEST TO GET AWAY FROM THIS AFTER I FOUND OUT WHAT OTHER PLACES WERE LIKE, YOU KNOW, GOT ACQUAINTED. AND I NEVER DID WANT TO COME BACK HERE TO LIVE ANYWAY AFTER I LOST MY FATHER."

S.S.: "SO, WHY DID YOU COME BACK TO MANSFIELD?"

F.L.: "I DON'T LIVE HERE."

S.S.: "OH, YOU DON'T? WHERE ARE YOU NOW?"

F.L.: "I'M IN FORT WORTH."

S.S.: "YOU'RE IN FORT WORTH? OKAY."

S.S.: "I AM CURIOUS ABOUT THIS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANSFIELD AND FORT WORTH. AND AGAIN, (PARDON THE QUESTIONS, BUT THEY ARE REAL NAIVE), BUT TELL ME HOW. . .THIS RELATIONSHIP GETS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN YOUR COMMUNITY HERE IN MANSFIELD AND FORT WORTH?"

F.L.: "WELL, I WENT TO FORT WORTH. I HAD AN OLDER BROTHER LIVING THERE AND I HAD ONE SISTER, SHE WAS LIVIN' THERE. AND THEY WAS DOING REAL GOOD AND I WENT THERE. AND HE KEPT AFTER ME TO COME LIVE WITH HIM. I SAID 'I'LL STAY UNTIL I GET ME A JOB.' I MOVED TO MYSELF. SO, I DID. HE WAS LIVING IN AN APARTMENT.

"AND I GOT A JOB. WELL, WHAT I FIRST STARTED DOING WAS LANDSCAPING--CUTTING YARDS. I WAS PLANTING FLOWERS, WORKING IN GREENHOUSES. I LIKED FLOWERS. AND I DID THAT UH, EVEN UP UNTIL NOW. I GO OUT AND STILL DO IT. BUT UH, I WORKED AT THE FEED MILL. IT WAS 'UNIVERSAL' WHEN I FIRST STARTED THERE. AND I WORKED FOR FORTY YEARS. AND THEN RETIRED. . .FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. SO. . .LIFE WASN'T TOO BAD WITH ME."

S.S.: "WHAT PART OF FORT WORTH DID YOU LIVE IN?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: "SOUTHSIDE, LAKE COMO. FROM ONE TO THE OTHER. STARTED ON THE SOUTHSIDE, LIVED IN LAKE COMO ABOUT TEN YEARS, AND BACK TO THE SOUTH SIDE. . AT THE SAME PLACE."

S.S.: "WAS LIFE BETTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS IN FORT WORTH, THAN IT WAS HERE?"

F.L.: "I WOULDN'T SAY. . .MAYBE IN SOME AREAS."

S.S.: "WAS THERE A LARGER COMMUNITY THERE, OR. . .?"

F.L.: "FOR SURE."

S.S.: "THERE ARE SEVERAL COMMUNITIES BETWEEN HERE AND FORT WORTH. DO YOU ALL REMEMBER THE NAMES OF THOSE?"

M.M.: "KENNE DALE AND MANSFIELD. . ."

M.B.: "BISBEE. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH, BISBEE. . .GOING TOWARDS FORT WORTH. GOING TO ARLINGTON, IT WAS WATSONVILLE. . .AND UH. . .JOHNSON STATION, THEN ARLINGTON. "

S.S.: "THESE WERE ALL THE. . .THESE WERE THE BLACK COMMUNITIES THAT WERE SET UP. THESE ARE THE ONES I'M INTERESTED IN. YOU HAVE THESE LITTLE. . .THERE WAS ONE THAT WAS WRITTEN ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO. THAT WAS, I GUESS. . .ANOTHER COMMUNITY. THAT WAS LOCATED BETWEEN HERE AND FORT WORTH."

F.L.: "KENNE DALE?"

S.S.: "I THINK THAT WAS IT. YEAH. WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO IS FOUND OUT HOW MANY COMMUNITIES WERE LOCATED FROM, SAY, HERE TO FORT WORTH."

F.L.: "NOW FOREST HILL, THEY'VE GOT THE LARGEST COMMUNITY."

S.S.: "M-M-M"

M.M.: "KENNE DALE. I NEVER KNEW THEM TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE BLACK FAMILY THAT EVER LIVED THERE. UP UNTIL LAST YEAR, OR YEAR BEFORE LAST. I NEVER KNEW A BLACK KID GOING TO SCHOOL THERE. IT'S STILL JUST LIKE IT WAS IN THE 1800'S.

"YOU KNOW, THEN FOREST HILL WAS JUST LIKE KENNE DALE AND MANSFIELD UNTIL TWO OR THREE BLACK PEOPLES BOUGHT HOMES THERE. AND THEN THE WHITES MOVED OUT. AND THEN THE GAS WENT UP. AND THEN THEY WANTED TO BUY 'EM BACK, BUT THEY DIDN'T GET 'EM BACK. SO THAT'S HOW FOREST HILL BECAME PREDOMINATE BLACK, ALMOST."

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M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: "AND THE TAXES WENT UP."

M.M.: "YEAH, KENNEDALE WELL THEM FOLKS SETTLEMENT THERE. THEY ARE. . . THOSE POOR GUYS THEY WOULDN'T SELL, YOU KNOW. SO, IT'S STILL ALMOST PREDOMINATELY WHITE. BUT I DON'T THINK THERE'S. . . I DON'T THINK THERE'S OVER TWO OR THREE FAMILIES LIVE THERE NOW. . . IN THE OLD PART OF KENNEDALE. BURLESON THERE NEVER HAVE BEEN ONE. RENDON, THAT WAS A LITTLE ROUND IN HERE. . . 'CAUSE BLACKS UH, MORE OR LESS LIVED IN MANSFIELD."

"THEY LIVED ON FARMS--SHARECROPPERS AND JUST FARMERS BY. . . WORKED BY DAY AND. . . SAY FOR INSTANCE, LIKE MYSELF, . . . I NEVER DID A WHOLE LOT OF FARMING, 'CAUSE I WAS. . . LIKE I SAY, I WAS A KID. FROM ELEVEN YEAR OLD TILL I WAS ABOUT SIXTEEN, I LIVED BY MYSELF."

"I NEVER REALLY REMEMBER GETTING DIPPED AND WHIPPINGS BY MY PARENTS. I GOTTEN MANY WHIPPINGS WAS BY OTHER KIDS AND MEN--WHITE GUY. I NEVER GOT A WHIPPING BY MY PARENTS DISCIPLINED. I NEVER HAD ONE. I NEVER KNEW MY PARENTS. AND, OF COURSE, MANSFIELD'S BEEN GOOD. I'M NOT PUTTING MANSFIELD DOWN."

"I RAISED TEN CHILDREN OF MY OWN AND ADOPTED THREE, PUT TWO THROUGH COLLEGE. BEEN ON MY JOB FOR FORTY-EIGHT YEARS [AT WINN DIXIE] AND OWNED PROPERTY IN MANSFIELD. I OWN PROPERTY RIGHT IN THE PART OF MANSFIELD THAT I COULDN'T WALK ON. I OWN PROPERTY THERE. SO, MANSFIELD'S BEEN VERY GOOD TO ME."

F.L.: "THERE WAS THREE OR FOUR BLACK FAMILIES HERE THAT AH. . . REALLY MANSFIELD GREW FROM. AND THAT WAS THE MOODYS, THE BENNETTS, THE BRISCOES."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "LAWSON. . ."

F.L.: "LAWS. . . DIDN'T I SAY. . . I'M GOIN' FORGET MYSELF. SORRY. . ."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "YOU'VE DONE GREAT. . ."

S.S.: "WHAT ABOUT THE LEWIS' AND THE PORTERS, AND THE MANNINGS?"

F.L.: "NOW THOSE WERE. . ."

S.S.: "SEVEN FAMILIES. . ."

F.L.: "U-HUH. . . THAT I KNEW OF GREW UP AROUND."

S.S.: "THEY ALL WERE OVER IN FORT WORTH. . .?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: "AND TO OBEY THEM LIKE I DID MY PARENTS. AND I'M GLAD ABOUT IT."

S.S.: "SO, THERE'S FAMILIES STILL REPRESENTED BY RELATIVES HERE?"

F.L.: "YES, I'M SURE. AREN'T THEY?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "LEWIS?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "MOODY, LAWSON AND BRISCOE."

F.L.: "MOODY?"

M.M.: "AND, UH, I WAS READING SOME OF THE LITERATURE ABOUT THE . . . RELATIVES. THEY ARE. . . THEY ARE THE FAMILIES UH, MORE OR LESS. . . IN SOME WAY THEY ARE CONNECTED RELATIVES--SOME WAY IN THERE. THERE USED TO NOT BE A LARGE SETTLEMENT OF BLACKS. IT WAS JUST THAT THEY LIVED ON DIFFERENT. . .

"IN THE FARM I WAS RAISED ON UH . . . THE FARM I USED TO LIVE ON WHEN I GREW UP. WELL THE GUY. . . HE WAS. . . HE WAS MORE LESS. . . TREATED ME LIKE I WAS A SHARECROPPER. . . A SHARECROPPER. BUT I WASN'T! I. . . YOU KNOW, PAID HIM. I HAD PAID HIM RENT UH, MORE LESS WORK FOR HIM, WATERING HIS COWS, FARM AREA.

"BUT EVERY SUNDAY MORNING, HE WOULD FIND SOMETHING FOR ME TO DO. AND THAT WAS ONE OF THE BEST THINGS, I GUESS, HAPPENED TO ME, (WHEN HE TOLD ME NEEDED HIS HOUSE), BECAUSE I WOULD STILL LIVE THERE FOR FREE. YOU DON'T LIVE IN A HOUSE NOWHERE, UH, FOR FREE. YOU KNOW--WALK OFF FROM IT. YOU STAY THERE. BUT HE TOLD ME HE NEEDED HIS HOUSE.

"THAT'S WHEN I BOUGHT ONE. BUT AT THE TIME THAT I WAS LIVING THERE FREE, I WAS STASHING UP MONEY. . . MY MONEY. SO THAT WAS PRETTY DARK DAY FOR ME. BUT ANYWAY, I MADE IT. HE DIDN'T GIVE ME A LOT OF TIME TO MOVE, YOU KNOW. JUST LIKE, *'YOU GO NOW AND ALL YOU CAN'T TAKE, DON'T COME BACK FOR IT.'* THAT WAS ABOUT THE MEANEST THING I GUESS THAT EVER REALLY HAPPENED TO ME."

S.S.: "U-M-M. . . I WANT TO GO BACK TO. . . SAY. . . WITH. . . OKAY, WE'VE GOT SEVEN FAMILIES WHO WERE HERE. . . SAY. . . AT THE BEGINNING. SO THAT'S ESSENTIALLY HOW THE COMMUNITY GETS STARTED--BY THOSE SEVEN FAMILIES. AND ARE THEY HERE PRIOR TO RECONSTRUCTION? DID THEY COME AFTER, OR WAS IT A MIXTURE?"

F.L.: "IT WAS A MIXTURE."

M.M.: "YEAH, I, IT WAS. . . IT WAS. . . IT WAS A MIXTURE."

S.S.: "DOES ANYBODY KNOW WHO THE FIRST BLACK FAMILIES, (WHO THEN BECAME FREED SLAVES), WERE HERE IN MANSFIELD?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

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M.E.: Michael Evans

F.L.: "IT WAS THE MOODYS AND THE BRISCOES, I THINK. FROM WHAT MY GRANDFATHER USED TO SAY, I THINK IT WAS THE MOODYS. AND. . .WELL. . ."

M.M.: "THE MOODYS CAME FROM GALVESTON. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH GALVESTON? THERE'S A LOT OF. . .THERE WAS LOT OF MOODYS. . .IN GALVESTON. THAT'S WHERE THE MOODYS CAME FROM. THE NAME OF MOODY CAME FROM GALVESTON. I DON'T WHAT YEAR. BUT. . .EVEN THOUGH, THEY STILL HAVE MOODYS THERE NOW. AND THEY HAVE SOME. . .THEY HAVE THE NAME OF MOODY. . .THEY HAVE SOME BIG. . .THEY EVEN HAVE A MUSEUM OF MOODY'S DOWN THERE. BUT THAT'S WHERE THEY CAME FROM. THAT'S WHERE THE FAMILY OF MOODYS CAME FROM.

"I THINK HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN FRENCH OR SOMETHING. . .THAT CAME IN ON A SHIP WAS NAMED MOODY. AND THERE WERE SLAVES. THE BLACKS GOT HIS NAME. I THINK THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS. BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW IF IT JUST WAS A MOODY JUST POPPED UP. I THINK IT WAS A FRENCH NAME, LIKE I SAY. AND THEN, THE SLAVES GIVE 'EM THEIR NAMES WHICH WAS A MOODY AND SOLD IT TO A MAN NAMED LAWSON. ND THEY SOLD IT A. . .I THINK ALL THOSE NAMES WERE MORE OR LESS WHITE GUYS' NAMES."

S.S.: "ALRIGHT. . ."

M.B.: "I COULDN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT THE BRISCOES. WE WENT TO SCHOOL TOGETHER AND I MARRIED MILFORD. AND MILFORD'S FAMILY WAS HERE, BUT I DON'T KNOW, (YOU KNOW), HOW LONG THEY'D BEEN HERE OR NOTHING. AND, OF COURSE, MILFORD JUST PASSED ON. . .IN UH, '90, IN MARCH.

"SO, I'VE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE. I WENT TO SCHOOL HERE AND GOT MARRIED. MY CHILDREN, SOME OF THEM MOVED ON OFF TO FORT WORTH, CALIFORNIA, AND AROUND. BUT, I'VE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE."

S.S.: "YOU MENTION A LOT OF LOCATIONS FOR SCHOOL. I'M ASSUMING FROM THE LITERATURE THAT I'VE LOOKED AT, THAT THE FIRST SCHOOL FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN WAS ESTABLISHED SOMETIME IN THE TWENTIES? AM I RIGHT, OR IS IT THE THIRTIES?"

M.M.: "I CAME IN THE THIRTIES, I THINK, MAYBE IN THE TWENTIES. . ."

M.B.: "I'M SURE IT WAS THE TWENTIES, 'CAUSE WE COME HERE IN '27, AND WE WENT TO SCHOOL WHERE THEY GOT OVER HERE. BESIDE, ACROSS FROM WHERE BROTHER MAC LIVED THEN. AND I WAS A CHILD, AND THAT WAS IN THE TWENTIES. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THEY HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED, BUT IT WAS A LITTLE TWO-ROOM BLACK SCHOOL, BACK THERE.

S.S.: "AND IT MOVED LIKE. . .IN YOUR MEMORY IT'S MOVED THREE TIMES?"

M.B.: "AS I SAID, MRS. THELMA JONES WAS THE PRINCIPAL, MISS BEATRICE BRIDER WAS FROM FORT WORTH, AND MRS. JONES LIVED HERE. AND SHE WAS HER

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M.B.: [CONTINUED] ASSISTANT. AND THOSE TWO WOMEN RAN THE SCHOOL HERE. THEN LATER, THEY BOUGHT A TWO-ROOM BUILDING AND PUT BETWEEN HERE AND MOODY'S HOUSE--KINDA' ON THE HILL UP THERE."

S.S.: "DID THEY MOVE IT?"

M.B.: "UH-HUH. THEY MOVED IT. BY THAT TIME, I WAS ABOUT OUT OF SCHOOL. AND MY CHILDREN WENT THERE. AND THEN, WHEN THEY GOT TO WHERE THEY COULDN'T GO THERE, THEY WENT TO FORT WORTH. SO, WHEN THIS SCHOOL COME IN EXISTENCE, MY GRANDCHILDREN WERE GOING TO SCHOOL, NOT MY CHILDREN."

S.S.: "YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING?"

F.L.: "OH, AH, WERE YOU SPEAKING ABOUT THE FIRST BLACK PUBLIC SCHOOL? IS THAT WHAT YOU WERE ASKING ABOUT?"

S.S.: "RIGHT. I WANTED TO FIND OUT WHEN THAT GETS ESTABLISHED HERE IN MANSFIELD."

F.L.: "WELL, THAT HAD TO BE SOMEWHERE ABOUT NINETEEN AND FOUR, OR NINETEEN AND FIVE, SOMEWHERE IN THAT AREA. BECAUSE MY OLDEST SISTER. . . ALL MY WHOLE ENTIRE FAMILY, (WHICH WAS TWELVE OF US), WE, WENT TO, YOU KNOW. . . MY BROTHER, THAT'S NEXT TO ME, HE WAS THE LAST ONE THAT WENT OUT THERE. WHICH USED TO BE BACK BEFORE WE MOVED UP HERE."

M.B.: "YEAH, THEY USED TO RIDE HORSEBACK BACK DOWN THERE. . ."

F.L.: "BUT UH, THE FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL WAS 'ROUND 'BOUT NINETEEN AND FOUR OR FIVE--SOMETHING LIKE THAT."

S.S.: "WHEN DID THEY START SENDING STUDENTS TO FORT WORTH?"

F.L.: "THAT WAS DURING THE INTEGRATION AND I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT."

M.B.: "NO. THEY WENT BEFORE INTEGRATION, BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T GO NO FURTHER THAN SEVENTH GRADE HERE. 'CAUSE MY MILDRED, EDNA, WILLIAM--ALL OF THEM--UH, WERE BUSSED. AND THE BOBOLINK FAMILY AND THEY DIDN'T, WE DIDN'T HAVE NO WAY OF GOING.

"AND THEN MANSFIELD SCHOOL, FOR A WHILE, PAID FOR THEM TO RIDE THE BOWEN BUS TO I. M. TERRELL. THEY WENT TO THE BUS STATION AND WALKED TO I. M. TERRELL. AND LATER, THEY DECIDED TO GIVE THEM BUS DRIVERS FROM MANSFIELD. THAT'S WHEN LAWYER STRAUS AND J. DENMON COME IN. J. DENMON DROVE THE BUS FOR THE CHILDREN HERE TO AND FRO. LAWYER STRAUS CARRIED THE FORT WORTH CHILDREN TO I. M. TERRELL AND STAYED ALL DAY AND BROUGHT 'EM BACK IN THE EVENING. THEN I'D MEET 'EM."

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F.L.: Fred Lawson

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M.E.: Michael Evans

S.S.: "SO, UP TO 1950, YOU COULDN'T GET A SECONDARY EDUCATION?"

M.B.: "SO, I GUESS. . . MY CHILDREN. . ."

S.S.: "EXCUSE ME, COULD YOU GET A SECONDARY EDUCATION UP TO 1950?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "NO."

S.S.: "SO, IT ALL STOPPED AT SEVEN?"

M.B.: "THAT'S ALL FURTHER IT WENT HERE."

S.S.: "AND, THERE WAS NO PROVISION FOR ANY TRANSPORTATION BY. . . PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR YOU TO GET TO SCHOOL?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "NO, EVERYBODY WALKED."

S.S.: "OKAY. BUT, IN FORT WORTH. . . IN FORT WORTH. . .?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "IN FORT WORTH, WE CAUGHT THE TRAILWAY. *CONTINENTAL TRAILWAYS BUS.*"

S.S.: "RIGHT. HOW LONG WAS THAT SCHOOL IN EXISTENCE? THE HIGH SCHOOL I. M. TERRELL?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "OH. . . GOSH. . . TH' LATE SIXTIES. THAT'S WHEN THEY TOOK THEN, AND MADE A SCHOOL FOR UNWED MOTHERS."

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "1968, THAT'S THE LAST GROUP I KNOW THAT CAME OUT OF THERE."

S.S.: "SO, WHEN WAS IT STARTED. . .?"

M.B.: "'CAUSE LEONARD GRADUATED IN '68."

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "THAT WAS THE LAST CLASS WASN'T IT?"

M.M.: "I THINK THE BLACKS ONLY TAKEN IT IN THE THIRTIES, I BELIEVE. . ."

S.S.: "SO, IT WAS IN THE THIRTIES?"

M.M.: ". . . THEY GOT A HISTORICAL PLAQUE DOWN THERE. I THINK IT WAS 1930. BUT, MANSFIELD NEVER HAD. . . AS FAR AS BLACKS. . . UP UNTIL 1960. . . NEVER HAD NO TRANSPORTATION FOR KIDS. I DON'T CARE HOW FAR YOU LIVED. YOU HAD TO WALK TO SCHOOL. AND NORMALLY WHEN KIDS WERE WALKING, YOU'D WALK FROM THIS PARTICULAR PLACE TO TOWN, (WHICH WAS ABOUT TWO MILES DOWN), AND THEN THEY'D SCATTER TO VARIOUS PLACES.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "BUT WHEN THE SCHOOL BUSES CAME BY, WE'D HAVE TO GET OFF THE ROAD, BECAUSE THE WHITE KIDS ON THE SCHOOL BUS WOULD THROW WHATEVER THEY HAD--ROCKS, PENCILS--OUT AT THE KIDS, YOU KNOW. IT WAS DARK; AND, OF COURSE YOU KNOW, WE HAD TO WALK. AND THEN, MOST OF THEM. . . YOU LIVED ON THEIR FARMS, THEIR PARENTS' FARM. AND THEY ACTED THAT-A-WAY WHEN YOU WERE WALKING. THEY'D THROW PENCILS AND THINGS AT US AND THEN WHEN THEY'D GET HOME, IT WAS OKAY.

"BUT, SOMEHOW OR ANOTHER, IT CHANGED. THAT'S WHY THEY SEGREGATED US, BECAUSE THEY WERE SO MEAN WHEN IT WAS FIVE OR SIX OF THEM, ONE OF YOU. THEY WOULD NEVER MEET YOU ONE ON ONE. AND I THINK IT'S MORE OR LESS THAT-A-WAY TODAY. IF IT AIN'T FIVE OR SIX OF THEM. . . WELL. . ."

S.S.: "HOW DID THEY TREAT YOU IF YOU LIVED ON THEIR FARM?"

M.M.: "THE SAME WAY IF THEY GOT WITH THEIR GROUP."

S.S.: "IF THEY GOT WITH A GROUP?"

M.M.: "THEY TREAT YOU. . . IF YOU LIVED ON THEIR FARM. . . WHATEVER EVENING UH, THEY GOT UH, FIVE OR SIX KIDS WITH THEM, (AND THERE WAS ONE OF YOU), THEY WOULD FIGHT YOU, OR DO WHATEVER. BUT UH, IF YOU OUTFRAN 'EM, THEY NEVER COULD JUMP. WE'D JUMP FENCES AND THEY HAVE TO CRAWL THROUGH 'EM. AND WE'D GET AWAY. . . YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?"

M.B.: "RIGHT AFTER OUR CHILDREN WERE OLD ENOUGH TO START SCHOOL, WE LIVED ON A FARM BACK OUT TOWARD ARLINGTON. SO, WE BROUGHT 'EM IN OUR CAR AND PICKED THEM UP. AND THEN SHORTLY AFTER THAT, WE BOUGHT A LITTLE OL' HOME DOWN THERE, AND THEN THEY COULD WALK TO SCHOOL UP HERE. AND THEN THEY COULD WALK TO MANSFIELD AND CATCH THE BUS. BUT THEY DIDN'T HAVE. . . WE DIDN'T LIVE WAY OUT ON THE FARM AT TH' TIME THEY WERE SCHOOL AGE, BUT JUST A LITTLE WHILE."

S.S.: "DID ANYBODY, DURING THAT PERIOD, EVER GO ON TO SECONDARY SCHOOL, OR LEAVE MANSFIELD, GO ON TO ATTEND A BLACK COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY?"

M.M.: "OH, YES. . ."

S.S.: "BUT, YOU HAD TO SHIP YOUR CHILDREN. . . YOUR FAMILY ELSEWHERE IN ORDER TO DO THAT?"

M.M.: "NOT REALLY. . . UH, THE WILSON'S, THEY'RE WELL KNOWN IN THIS COMMUNITY. AND I THINK IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TEN, TWELVE, OR MORE CHILDREN. AND I THINK EVERY ONE OF THEM WENT TO COLLEGE. YOU KNOW, COLLEGES WITH REAL NAMES, NOT JUST SMALL COLLEGES, BIG COLLEGES.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "SO, NO. . . THAT WAS. . . LIKE IN MY RESPECT IF I HAD GONE TO COLLEGE, I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANYWHERE, I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD A SCHOLARSHIP OR ANYTHING. I WOULD HAVE HAD TO WORK MY WAY THROUGH AND LIVE SOMEWHERE. BUT I HAD A SON TO GO TO PURDUE, YOU KNOW, IN LAFAYETTE. HE WENT THERE FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS. AND THE WILSON'S WENT TO VARIOUS COLLEGES."

M.B.: "I HAD A SON GO TO PEPPERDINE, BUT HE HAD TO FINISH AT I. M. TERRELL BEFORE HE GOT THERE. OUR OLDEST SON LIVED IN CALIFORNIA. AND HE STAYED WITH HIM WHILE HE WENT THERE. WE DIDN'T HAVE NO PROVISIONS MADE OTHER THAN WHAT WE HAD MADE OUT THERE. BUT HE HAD TO FINISH AT I. M. TERRELL FIRST, BEFORE HE COULD GO TO PEPPERDINE IN CALIFORNIA."

S.S.: "U-M. . . I'M GONNA' GO BACK NOW AND. . . WE'RE STILL KINDA' INVESTIGATING. . . WE'RE STILL TRYING TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ROUGH ENVIRONMENT, (WHICH WE CAN TRACE TO RECONSTRUCTION), OF SMALL INDEPENDENT BLACK COMMUNITIES BEING ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT TEXAS. AND WHAT. . . AND THIS IS KIND OF AN INTERESTING CASE BECAUSE WE'VE GOT SCATTERED AFRICAN AMERICAN HOMESTEADS.

"AND IT'S KINDA DIFFERENT THAN, SAY THAN, IF YOU GO TOWARD DALLAS. YOU FIND THESE REAL CONCENTRATED COMMUNITIES AND EVEN IN IRVING, BEAR CREEK. AND THEN YOU GO AND YOU STILL FIND COMMUNITIES LIKE LITTLE EGYPT, JOppy AND THOSE COMMUNITIES IN DALLAS. AND THEY'RE PRETTY COMPACT. AND IT'S KIND OF A DIFFERENT VIEW THAT WE GET THAN THE SCATTERED POPULATION."

M.M.: "I THINK I KNOW WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM. . . LIKE WHY THE BLACK COMMUNITIES WERE BEING SO SCATTERED, THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN?"

S.S.: "YEAH, IT'S NOT A CONCENTRATED. . . BECAUSE DURING THE 1870'S WE HAVE A LOT OF VIOLENCE BY EX SLAVE OWNERS BEING PERPETRATED AGAINST THE POPULATION. SO, IN DALLAS SPECIFICALLY, THE ENCLAVES, (I CALL THEM), GET REAL CONDENSED."

M.M.: "WELL. . . MANSFIELD, AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER BACK, HAS BEEN A. . . LOW-CLASS ENVIRONMENT. . . OTHER THAN DALLAS. . . OTHERWISE, MANSFIELD WOULD HAVE GREW. MANSFIELD IS AS OLD AS FORT WORTH, OLDER THAN FORT WORTH, OLDER THAN DALLAS.

"BUT THEN, YOU KNOW, THE PEOPLE THAT OWNED THIS PROPERTY, THEY WAS FARMERS. AND THEY LIABLE TO OWN FOUR OR FIVE HUNDRED ACRES. THAT TAKES A LOT OF TERRITORY. AND THEN, THE NEXT FARMER THAT MUCH. THEN IF THEY COULD BUY A SLAVE, THEY'D HAVE ONE OR TWO. HE COULDN'T AFFORD FOUR OR FIVE, ONE OR TWO. AND THEN, THAT'S WHY IT'S SO SCATTERED.

"AND THEN, WHEN IT WAS UH. . . WHAT DO YOU CALL IT. . . I DON'T KNOW, SLAVES. WHEN THEY HAD TO GET RID OF THE SLAVES, THEY SOLD THEM A PIECE OF PROPERTY.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] AND THEN, SAY FOR INSTANCE, THE LEWIS,' THE WYATTS, THE LAWSONS. . . I THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE LARGEST PROPERTY OWNERS IN MANSFIELD IN BLACKS; BECAUSE, I THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE GOT HUNDRED ACRES APIECE. YOU KNOW, EACH FAMILY HAD MORE. . . MAYBE OVER A HUNDRED ACRES. WE'RE ALMOST SITTING ON THE LEWIS' PROPERTY NOW. IF NOT, BECAUSE I THINK. . . LEWIS. . . I THINK HIS NAME WAS ED LEWIS. . . HE MIGHT HAVE HAD A HUNDRED ACRES OR MORE. AND THEN THE LAWSONS PROBABLY HAD A HUNDRED."

S.S.: "NOW, WAS THAT A PURCHASE?"

M.M.: "YEAH. THEY PURCHASED IT. IT WASN'T GIVE TO 'EM. THE SLAVE OWNERS WOULD GIVE YOU AN ACRE, A COW AND A SOW, A PIG AND A PLOW. AND THAT'S IT. . . TWENTY-FOUR HENS AND A ROOSTER. . . THEN YOU'D LIVE LIKE YOU USE TO."

M.B.: "EXCUSE ME FOR INTERRUPTING, BUT IF I MAY, I'D LIKE TO GIVE MANSFIELD A NAME--A GOOD NAME. DON'T MAKE IT ALL BE BAD. MANSFIELD FINALLY INTEGRATED THE SCHOOLS ON THEIR OWN WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS. AND THIS MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT NINETEEN, SEVENTY-TWO. . . THREE. . . I CAN'T REMEMBER THE YEARS.

"BUT WHY THEY DONE IT, BECAUSE THEY WERE GETTING GOVERNMENT COMMODITIES. AND I READ IN THE *FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM*, BEFORE THEY DONE IT, THAT IF THEY DID NOT INTEGRATE, (OPEN UP THE SCHOOLS AND LET THE CHILDREN GO IN), THEIR COMMODITIES WOULD BE CUT OFF. AND WITHOUT ANY PROBLEM ONE YEAR LEMME SEE, I CAN'T THINK OF WHAT YEAR, BUT IT WAS IN THE FALL.

"I HAD WORKED DOWN AT THE NURSING HOME WHILE SCHOOL WAS OUT THAT YEAR. AND A LADY WAS THERE FROM WICHITA FALLS. AND SHE SAID TO ME ONE DAY WHEN SHE PASSED FOR LUNCH, (THEN THEY WERE GOING IN THE DINING ROOM), SHE SAID, '*WHEN YOU LEAVE MAGGIE TO GO HOME, COME BY MY ROOM.*'

"I SAID '*I WILL.*' SO, WHEN I STARTED BY, I LIKE TO FORGOT. AND SHE WHISTLED AND I WENT INTO HER ROOM.

"SHE SAID '*I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.*' SHE SAID '*I READ ALL IN WICHITA FALLS ABOUT THE RACKET THAT WAS CREATED IN MANSFIELD OVER THREE CHILDREN WANTING TO GO INTO THE SCHOOL.*' SHE SAY '*YOU TELL YOUR PEOPLE TO BE QUIET. SAY THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH AMMUNITION AND THEY WON'T SELL 'EM ENOUGH, BECAUSE THE WHITE FOLKS HAVE GOT IT ALL.*' SHE SAY '*BUT EVERY TIME THEY GET A CHANCE, TELL 'EM TO HAMMER ON THAT WITH PRAYER.*' SHE SAY '*CAN YOU DO THAT?*'

"I SAY '*I SURE CAN.*'

"SHE SAY '*WELL, I BELIEVE YOU COULD DO THAT TOO.*'

"I SAID '*I CAN HAMMER ON IT WITH PRAYER.*'

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M.B.: [CONTINUED] "SHE SAY. . . 'AND WHEN YOU KNOW ANYTHING, THE SCHOOLS WILL FLY WIDE OPEN THE DOORS, AND THE CHILDREN WILL WALK IN, AND NOBODY WILL BE HURT.' AND IT HAPPENED JUST LIKE SHE SAID.

"THAT FALL, THEY INTEGRATED THIS SCHOOL. SO FIRST, THEY STARTED INTEGRATING FIRST AND SECOND. THEN, THEY WERE GONNA' DO THIRD AND FOURTH. AND THAT YEAR THEY WERE GONNA' DO THIRD AND FOURTH, THEY DONE THE WHOLE SCHOOL.

I WAS COOKING HERE. I LEFT FROM HERE AND WENT TO ALICE PONDER AND COOKED THERE. AND MANSFIELD SCHOOLS WERE WIDE OPEN. BLACKS WENT IN ALL OF THEM--HIGH SCHOOLS AND ELEMENTARY, THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS. AND THEN AFTER THAT, THEY HAD A CHANCE TO GRADUATE THERE.

"I HAD A GRANDDAUGHTER GRADUATED AT I. M. . . UH, AT MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL AND WENT TO WACO TO COLLEGE. SO, IT'S. . . MANSFIELD HAD A GOOD POINT ON THE LAST. GIVE 'EM, GIVE 'EM WHAT DUE 'EM. WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS, THEY OPENED THE SCHOOLS. BUT THAT *STAR TELEGRAM* HAD TO STIR THEM UP. THEY WASN'T GONNA' GET THE GOVERNMENT COMMODITIES UNLESS THEY, YOU KNOW, INTEGRATED THE SCHOOLS. SO, QUITE A FEW CHILDREN WENT TO MANSFIELD. THEY'RE STILL GOING TO MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL, WHATEVER."

S.S.: "OKAY. . . SO, WE WILL GIVE MANSFIELD IT'S DUE."

M.B.: "YEAH. . . GIVE 'EM IT'S DUE. THE. . . I HAD A GRANDSON THAT FINISHED THERE, AND HE'S IN COLLEGE NOW FROM MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL. SO, THERE ARE SOME GOOD POINTS ON THE LAST. BY THE. . . BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I'LL PUT IT LIKE THAT, BUT THEY DID OPEN UP. AND IT'S BEEN SOME GOOD THINGS GOING TO MANSFIELD."

S.S.: "DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A BREAK?"

S.W.: "I DON'T HAVE MUCH HISTORY. . ."

S.S.: "WELL, WILL YOU TELL US YOUR NAME?"

S.W.: "MY NAME IS SHIRLEY LARUE BARTON-WASHINGTON, [S.W.]. I AM THE GRANDDAUGHTER TO THE LATE ED LEWIS.

"I REMEMBER MY EARLY CHILDHOOD DAYS LIVING AND VISITING WITH MY GRANDFATHER. TO US, HE WAS KNOWN AS 'PAPA' ON THE FARM. AND WE CAN ALMOST STEP ON HIS FARM. THE OLD FARM THAT HE BOUGHT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE LATE 1920'S. AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME, HE BOUGHT ABOUT A HUNDRED ACRES OF LAND. HE CAME TO MANSFIELD FROM LONGVIEW, TEXAS. AND WHEN HE CAME HERE, HE MARRIED HIS FIRST WIFE, ELIZA NOLAN LEWIS. SHE ALREADY LIVED HERE IN MANSFIELD.

"BUT HE MIGRATED HERE FROM LONGVIEW TO MANSFIELD. AND THE REASON WHY HE CAME TO MANSFIELD WAS BECAUSE, IN LONGVIEW HE COULDN'T FIND VERY MUCH

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S.W.: [CONTINUED] WORK--MAYBE A SHARECROPPING JOB. AND SOMEONE TOLD HIM THAT LIFE WOULD BE MUCH BETTER FOR HIM IN MANSFIELD. SO, HE MOVED TO MANSFIELD. AND WHEN GOT TO MANSFIELD, HE STARTED TO WORK FOR DR. MC KNIGHT--THE LATE DR. MC KNIGHT. AND HIS FIRST JOB WAS SO FUNNY. HE WAS THE FIRST BLACK CHAUFFEUR IN MANSFIELD. HE DROVE HORSE AND BUGGY FOR THE LATE DR. MC KNIGHT.

"MY GRANDMOTHER, ELIZA LEWIS, WORKED FOR THE WRIGHTS. WHEN YOU PROBABLY CAME INTO MANSFIELD THIS MORNING, YOU PROBABLY PASSED A BIG RED AND WHITE. . . KINDA' TWO STORY HOUSE ON EAST BROAD. WELL, WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, IT WAS A MUCH LARGER HOME. THE FAMILY THAT LIVES IN THAT HOUSE NOW, I THINK, TOOK OFF A STORY. BUT MY GRANDMOTHER USED TO WALK FROM RETTA ROAD. AT THAT TIME, THE STREETS WERE NOT NAMED. IT WAS LIKE ROUTE TWO, BOX 126. SHE WOULD WALK MORNING AND NIGHT TO THE WRIGHT'S HOME HERE ON EAST BROAD.

"MY GRANDFATHER ALSO RAISED ALL KINDS OF CROPS--COTTON, CORN, POTATOES, PEANUTS. THIS MAN GREW EVERYTHING. I THINK IF HE STUCK A STICK IN THE GROUND, IT WOULD GROW. THE FAMILY ATE FROM THE FARM. THEY DID NOT HAVE TO BUY VERY MUCH, PROBABLY SOME FLOUR.

"AND VIVIDLY, I CAN REMEMBER THERE WAS A WELL IN THE FRONT YARD. AND PEOPLE WOULD COME TO THE HOUSE. AND THEY WOULD ALWAYS STOP FOR A DIPPER OF COOL WATER. AND, UH, MY GRANDFATHER WAS A VERY RELIGIOUS MAN. HE WOULD SIT ON THE FRONT PORCH AND READ THE BIBLE. AND HE WOULD SING SONGS. AND ONE OF HIS FAVORITE SONGS THAT HE ALWAYS ENJOYED SINGING WAS '*WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER.*'

"AND HE WAS JUST A VERY HARD-WORKING, DEDICATED FAMILY MAN. HE RAISED FOUR CHILDREN. ONE SON, BENJAMIN LEWIS, WHO WAS A ORGANIST IN WORLD WAR TWO, (THAT WAS DURING PATTON'S REIGN). AND HE PLAYED THE ORGAN AND HE PLAYED THE PIANO. AND WHILE HE WAS IN THE SERVICE, HE PLAYED THE ORGAN IN THE CHAPEL.

"HE HAD THREE DAUGHTERS. HATTIE M. LEWIS WAS MY MOTHER. SHE IS THE ONLY SURVIVING MEMBER OF THAT FAMILY BESIDES ME. HE HAD ANOTHER DAUGHTER BY THE NAME OF RUBY LEWIS. SHE MARRIED KIRK HARRIS. THERE WAS ANOTHER DAUGHTER, BERNICE LEWIS DARKUS. BERNICE MARRIED A FELLOW FROM BRENHAM, TEXAS. SHE IS DECEASED. HER HUSBAND IS DECEASED. RUBY IS DECEASED. HER HUSBAND, KIRK HARRIS, IS DECEASED. AND AS I FORESTATED, MY MOTHER IS THE ONLY SURVIVING PERSON FROM THAT IMMEDIATE FAMILY.

"MY MOTHER AND HER SISTERS AND BROTHERS ATTENDED PUBLIC SCHOOLS HERE IN MANSFIELD. I CAN REMEMBER THEM TALKING ABOUT HOW THEY ATTENDED SCHOOL DOWN BY THE BOTTOMS--THAT'S THE CREEK DOWN BY MR. MAC'S HOME. AND THEY WOULD WALK. AND THEY WOULD TELL ME HOW THEY WOULD FIX THEIR LUNCHES OF, MAYBE, FATBACK, BISCUITS AND SYRUP. AND THEY WOULD CARRY IT IN A BUCKET,

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S.W.: [CONTINUED] AND THAT WOULD BE LUNCH FOR THEM WHEN THEY WENT TO SCHOOL.

“AND I FOUND IT QUITE INTERESTING. TODAY IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY. NOW CHILDREN HAVE TO HAVE MONEY TO BUY LUNCHES, AND IF THEY CARRY LUNCHES, IT CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BE BISCUITS AND FATBACK.

“AND MY MOTHER ATTENDED SCHOOL HERE UP UNTIL ABOUT THE SIXTH OR SEVENTH GRADE. AND I'VE HEARD HER TELL STORIES ABOUT HOW SHE AND SUSIE MOODY WENT OFF TO HIGH SCHOOL IN WACO, H. J. MOORE HIGH SCHOOL. AND THAT WAS LIKE KINDA' GOING TO COLLEGE, BUT IT WAS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU KNOW. YOU HAVE TO PACK UP, GET READY TO GO OFF TO HIGH SCHOOL. BUT THEY FELT LIKE THEY WERE GOING OFF TO COLLEGE. AND THEN SHE STAYED THERE AWHILE, A COUPLE OF YEARS. AND SHE WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL, AND THEN SHE MOVED TO HOUSTON. AND SHE LIVED THERE ABOUT TWO OR THREE YEARS. AND THEN SHE CAME BACK TO MANSFIELD AND STAYED ABOUT A YEAR. AND THEN, SHE MOVED TO FORT WORTH.

“ALL OF THE CHILDREN IN THE LEWIS FAMILY EVENTUALLY MOVED TO FORT WORTH. MY MOTHER MOVED BACK TO THE HOMESTEAD AROUND 1976. SHE IS STILL ON THE OLD ESTATE NOW. SHE'S STILL LIVING THERE. SHE IS SUFFERING FROM ALZHEIMER'S NOW. SHE'S EIGHTY-ONE YEARS OLD. AND SHE DOES RECOGNIZE THAT SHE'S BACK ON THE FARM, BECAUSE EVERY NOW AND THEN SHE'LL LOOK OUT THE REAR MIRROR AND SHE'LL SAY 'OH WE'RE ON THE FARM, BECAUSE I SEE THE PECAN TREE.' THAT JUST LIGHTS ME UP THEN WHEN SHE SAYS, 'OH I KNOW I'M BACK ON THE FARM.'

“NOW, I AM HER DAUGHTER. I AM THE FIRST IN THIS PARTICULAR FAMILY TO GO OFF TO COLLEGE AND SECURE A DEGREE. I WENT TO A PRIVATE INSTITUTION BY THE NAME OF BISHOP COLLEGE, WHICH WAS LOCATED IN MARSHALL, TEXAS. AT THE TIME THAT I WENT, I WENT OFF TO SCHOOL IN 1955 AND I COMPLETED MY STUDIES IN 1959. AFTER COMPLETING MY STUDIES ON A BACHELORS OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, I WENT TO PRAIRIE VIEW A & M. AND THERE, I SECURED A SECOND DEGREE--MY MASTERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. I HAVE THIRTY-TWO YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN THE PORT ARTHUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT. ME

“AND MY HUSBAND JOHN, (WHO WAS AN ADMINISTRATOR FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS IN THE PORT ARTHUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT), HAVE MOVED BACK TO THE HOMESTEAD. AND WE'RE HAPPY TO BE HERE. WE HAVE TWO DAUGHTERS. MY GRAND PARENTS NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO SEE THEIR GRAND DAUGHTERS. MY AUNTS AND UNCLES DID. I HAVE TWO GIRLS--THE OLDEST GIRL IS LEOLA. SHE'S THIRTY-SEVEN. THE YOUNGEST GIRL IS THIRTY-FOUR, HER NAME IS LIBBY. LIBBY IS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN THE BEAUMONT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT. MY OLDEST DAUGHTER WORKS IN INDUSTRY. SHE WORKS FOR HUNTSMAN IN BEAUMONT, TEXAS. SO, WE'RE GLAD. ME AND JOHN ARE GLAD TO BACK ON THE FARM.”

S.S.: “ONE QUESTION. . . WHY DURING THE 1950'S, WHEN THERE WAS ONLY, SAY. . . WHEN THE REQUIRED EDUCATION WAS ONLY A BACHELOR'S DEGREE, I FIND THIS INTERESTING. PEOPLE WHO GO TO COLLEGE FROM THE COMMUNITIES TEND TO GO

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S.S.: [CONTINUED] AND SEEK HIGHER AND HIGHER DEGREES. WHAT COMPELS. . .WHAT COMPELLED PEOPLE, AT THAT TIME, TO SAY GO FOR A MASTERS OR GO FOR A DOCTORATE AS OPPOSED TO JUST FINISHING UP?"

S.W.: "WELL. . .MAYBE, I WOULD THINK IT WOULD BE ECONOMICS. . . THAT WOULD BE THE BIGGEST REASON WHY THEY WOULD GO TO COLLEGE TO SECURE A HIGHER DEGREE."

S.S.: "AMEN. . .WE'LL BE BACK TO YOU."

S.S.: "NOW YOU CAN TELL US WHO YOU ARE, AND WHO YOU COME FROM?"

L.S.: "OKAY. . .I AM LILLIE LAWSON SHEPPARD [L.S.]. I'M A LAWSON. I WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE IN MANSFIELD. I WAS BORN JUNE THE TWELFTH, 1931. MY DAD WAS WILBUR, AND MY MOTHER WAS LIL LAWSON. THEY HAD FIVE CHILDREN. MY DAD WAS THE FATHER OF FOURTEEN CHILDREN. AND I ENJOYED LIFE. I WOULDN'T GIVE FOR IT HA, HA, HA. . .WE HAD A BEAUTIFUL LIFE. WE HAD EIGHT GIRLS AND SIX BOYS. WE HAD A FARM.

"AND HE DIDN'T HAVE A FARM. HE RENTED FROM FARM TO FARM, DIFFERENT PLACES. SOMETIME HE WOULD RENT. SOMETIME HE WOULD LEASE. AND LEASING, AS YOU WOULD CALL IT, SOMETIME HE WOULD LEASE LIKE FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS. AND CROPS COME UP THAT HE WOULD GATHER. AND ALL OF THAT. WELL, JUST LIKE SOME OF THE REST OF 'EM HAVE ALREADY TOLD YOU, WE WOULDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY, 'CAUSE HE ALREADY OWED IT TO THE MAN HE'D BEEN LEASING FROM. THE MONEY WOULD GO TO THEM.

"WELL, ANYWAY, WE WORKED. AND HE HAD ENOUGH CHILDREN THAT HE'D FARM COTTON, CORN, PEAS. AND I WAS DOING ALL OF THAT. I WAS THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF THE FAMILY. WHEN THE REST OF THEM WAS IN THE FIELD, I WAS TOO SMALL TO GO THE FIELD. WELL, I HAD TO STAY HOME AND COOK FOR THE REST OF THEM AND HAVE FOOD READY WHEN THEY WOULD COME. AND I ENJOYED IT BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW ANYMORE, WHAT ELSE TO DO. BUT ANYWAY, I STOOD. . .I STAYED RIGHT BESIDE DADDY AND MOTHER.

"AND I WAS TWENTY-TWO YEARS OLD WHEN I MARRIED. I HAVE SIX BOYS. THEY DON'T KNOW NOTHING 'BOUT NO FARM. NOW MY OLDEST SON. . .HE KNOWS ABOUT. . .HE KNOWS A LITTLE ABOUT FARMING, 'CAUSE MY DADDY WAS STILL AROUND WHEN HE WAS BORN. AND HE, . . .VERY OFTEN, . . .HE ALWAYS WANT TO TALK ABOUT GOING DOWN AND GETTING ON THE TRACTOR WITH. . .EVERYBODY CALLED HIM 'PAPA.' IN THOSE DAYS, EVERYBODY WAS 'PAPA.' WASN'T NO DAD, NOTHING LIKE THAT. THEY WAS CALLED 'PAPA.'

"BUT, WE HAD A GOOD LIFE, YOU KNOW, AS FAR AS I CONSIDER IT AS BEING. BUT I'VE BEEN IN MANSFIELD ALL OF MY LIFE. AND I WENT TO SCHOOL HERE IN MANSFIELD. SOMETIME WE WOULD MOVE AWAY TO FIND A BETTER FARM AND STUFF LIKE THAT. AND HE'D MOVE DOWN BETWEEN MIDLOTHIAN AND MANSFIELD. BUT WE WAS CLOSER

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] TO MIDLOTHIAN SCHOOLS THAN WE WAS TO MANSFIELD. SO, WE'D HAD TO GET UP MORNINGS AND WALK TO MIDLOTHIAN TO SCHOOL."

S.S. "HOW FAR WAS THAT?"

L.S.: "IT WAS ABOUT NINE MILES. WE'D GET UP EVERY MORNING AND WALK. . ."

S.S.: "SO, WHAT TIME DID YOU HAVE TO BE AT SCHOOL? BY, EIGHT O'CLOCK?"

L.S.: "EIGHT O'CLOCK. WE'D HAVE TO GET UP AND LEAVE EARLY. AND DURING THAT TIME, SOMETIMES WE WOULD LEAVE EARLY AND WE WOULD GO DOWN THE HIGHWAY, WALKING AND TAKE A CHANCE ON CATCHING A RIDE. A LOT OF TIMES, MR. RALSTON BENNETT, (DURING THOSE TIMES), WAS DRIVING A CATTLE TRUCK. AND HE WOULD PICK US UP AND DROP US OFF--RIGHT IN THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN. HE LIABLE TO HAVE BEEN GOING TO HOUSTON OR SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT. HE DROVE A TRUCK THAT WAS HAULING CATTLE.

"SOME MORNINGS. . . WE DIDN'T GET TO GO TO SCHOOL NO BEAUTIFUL DAYS--THE PRETTY DAYS. WE HAD TO WORK. MOST THE DAYS WE GOT TO GO TO SCHOOL WAS BAD DAYS. YOU SEE WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT? WE WAS. . . THE PRETTY DAYS, WE WAS IN THE FIELD WORKING. WE HAD TO WORK."

S.S.: "SO, HOW MUCH SCHOOLING DID YOU GET PER YEAR?"

L.S.: "I FINALLY STUMBLED THROUGH. . . THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL. . . TWELFTH GRADE. BUT WE WAS HERE AND THERE AND HERE AND THERE. AND I WAS OLD WHEN I COME OUT OF SCHOOL, BUT I. . . I MADE IT. THANK GOD, I MADE IT. I WAS JUST DETERMINED THAT I WAS GONNA' MAKE IT. BECAUSE EVERY TIME WE WOULD EXCHANGE SCHOOL WELL, THAT WAS A DROP BACK. SOMETIME THEY WOULD PUT YOU BACK BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, YOU WASN'T ACQUAINTED WITH THE SCHOOL. THEY MIGHT PUT YOU BACK. I'VE HEARD A LOT OF KIDS SAY, '*I CAN'T BELIEVE I WENT TO SCHOOL WITH YOU.*' I SAID '*YOU DID. I WAS A LOT OLDER THAN YOU.*' BUT I JUST STAYED IN SCHOOL. I WAS AN OLD PERSON IN SCHOOL. BUT I STAYED IN SCHOOL UNTIL I COME OUT TWELFTH GRADE.

"AND WE LEFT MIDLOTHIAN AND MOVED BACK CLOSER TO MANSFIELD. . . AT ALVIN CASTEEN'S FARM, (I THINK MAC MIGHT REMEMBER HIS PLACE), MY DADDY FARMED FOR HIM. DURING THAT TIME, I ENROLLED IN I. M. TERRELL. THAT'S WHERE I FINISHED, AT I. M. TERRELL. WELL, THEN THE BUS WAS THE RO. . . WELL, FOR A WHILE WE WAS CATCHING RIDES UP THERE. AND WE STAYED AT ALVIN CASTEEN'S A FEW YEARS.

"AND THEN BY THAT TIME, MOSTLY ALL THE KIDS WAS GONE. I WAS THE LAST ONE THAT LEFT HOME. AND MY DADDY CAME AND BOUGHT THE FARM RIGHT STRAIGHT ACROSS FROM HERE. THAT'S WHEN I WENT TO BUSSING TO I. M. TERRELL HIGH SCHOOL. I COME OUT OF I. M. TERRELL HIGH SCHOOL.

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] "STILL I'M IN MANSFIELD. WHEN WE FIRST MOVED OVER CROSS THE STREET HERE IN MANSFIELD, I HAD TO GET UP EVERY MORNING BEFORE DAY AND WALK DOWN TO THE RED LIGHT. UH. . . THE BUSES WAS RUNNING FROM ENNIS TO FORT WORTH. AND THEN WE WAS CATCHING THE TRAILWAY. BUT AFTER THEN, THEY START TO. . . THERE WAS ENOUGH KIDS BY THEN. . . WELL, THERE WAS ENOUGH KIDS FOR THEM TO RUN A BUS FROM MANSFIELD TO FORT WORTH.

S.S.: "WHO PAID FOR THE BUS DRIVER?"

L.S.: "A-H-H. . . WE HAD TO PAY. WE WOULD BUY CARDS. THEY HAD LITTLE CARDS LIKE YOU BUY. AND WHEN YOU'D GET ON THE BUS, THEY'D PUNCH IT. LIKE WE WAS GOING TO SCHOOL. . . SAME THING WHEN WE WOULD GET TO FORT WORTH. IF WE WOULD CATCH THE. . . FROM THE BUS STATION TO THE SCHOOL, THE CITY BUS TO THE SCHOOL. WE HAD A LITTLE OL' SCHOOL CARD. THEY'D PUNCH IT FOR US TO RIDE THE BUS."

S.S.: "WAS THERE EVER ANYTIME SOMEBODY COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY A SCHOOL CARD?"

L.S.: "WE HAD TO BUY IT OURSELVES. . . MY MOTHER AND DADDY. . ."

S.S.: "RIGHT, BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF. . . I MEAN YOU WOULDN'T GET TO GO TO SCHOOL."

L.S.: "WE WOULDN'T GET TO GO TO SCHOOL IF WE DIDN'T HAVE IT. MY MAMMA WAS WORKING FOR DIFFERENT WOMEN, YOU KNOW. . . IN THEIR KITCHENS. 'CAUSE SHE WALKED TO LILLIAN AND WORKED FOR THE BALLS AWHILE COOKIN' AND CLEANIN' HOUSES. THEN ON THE LAST, WELL, SHE RETIRED TWENTY YEARS AGO. NO SHE HAVEN'T BEEN RETIRED NO TWENTY YEARS.

"SHE WORKED FOR DR. PRITCHARD COOKIN' AT HERE IN MANSFIELD. AND DURING THAT TIME, SHE'S WORKING. HELPING PUSH ME, TO GET THIS OLD GAL OUT OF SCHOOL. BUT I WAS GLAD I MADE IT. SO, I WAS TWENTY-TWO YEARS OLD FINALLY WHEN I GOT MARRIED. STILL I WAS IN MANSFIELD.

" 'AS I MENTIONED ABOUT THE GRIFFINS HERE IN MANSFIELD, WELL, THEY LIVED ON UP THE STREET FURTHER ON THE SAME. . . ROAD. AND I WAS STILL AT HOME WITH MY MOTHER AND THEM. AND I REMEMBER HE MARRIED UH, CLYDE HOLLING'S DAUGHTER. AND WHEN HE. . . MARRIED HER, CLYDE HOLLING ONLY HAD ONE DAUGHTER. DO YOU REMEMBER HER NAME UNCLE MAC?

M.M.: "PAT, . . . PAT HOLLINGS."

L.S.: "AND HE MARRIED HER. AND THEN, (I DON'T KNOW IF HE WAS REALLY BLIND OR NOT), I THINK HE WAS PLAYING BLIND. BUT ANYWAY, SHE WOULD DO ALL THE DRIVING. SHE DID ALL THE DRIVING. WHAT REALLY MAKES ME THINK THAT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN PRETENDING THAT HE WAS BLIND, IS WHEN HE UH, TAKEN THAT

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] MEDICINE AND TURNED HIM BLACK. AND HE WAS GOIN' FROM PLACES TO PLACES, PRETENDING THAT HE WAS BLACK AND SEEING HOW WAS THE BLACK FOLKS TREATED."

S.S.: "WHY DID HE WANT TO WRITE THE BOOK?"

L.S.: "WELL, HE WANTED TO WRITE THE BOOK TO REALLY KNOW HOW THE PEOPLE IN MANSFIELD, (WELL, I DON'T SAY MANSFIELD), HOW THE PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH WAS TREATED. 'CAUSE HE WENT MORE PLACES THAN MANSFIELD. THAT'S WHY I SAID. . . RIGHT? DID YOU READ. . . I HAVEN'T READ THE BOOK, IS THAT RIGHT?"

M.M.: "THE MAN CAME FROM RAGS TO RICHES WITH THAT BOOK, WHEN HE WROTE THAT BOOK. . ."

L.S.: "UH, HUH, FROM THAT BOOK. . . HE GOT RICH WITH THAT BOOK."

M.M.: "WHEN HE WROTE THAT BOOK, IT WAS A HELL OF A GAIN. . . YOU KNOW? IT WAS GOOD TO KNOW ABOUT BLACKS IN THE SOUTH. BACK THEN, JUST LIKE TODAY, IF YOU WRITE A BOOK AND CAN SELL IT, MAKE YOUR OWNSELF PROUD. SO, I HEARD LATER ON THAT DYE THAT HE INJECTED INTO HIS BODY DID HAVE SOME EFFECT ON HIS EYES. HE WORE REAL THICK BLACK GLASSES. AND EVENTUALLY, HE SWOLLEN UP AND. . . GOT REAL SICK, DIED."

L.S.: "AND HIS SKIN DID TURN DARK. HIS SKIN, REALLY, IT TURNED DARKER THAN MINE. IT REALLY DID. IT WORKED. AND HE GOT ALONG, I MEAN HE WAS TREATED JUST LIKE, I GUESS I WOULD BE TREATED IF I WOULD GO IN SOME OF THOSE PLACES. 'CAUSE HE WENT IN PLACES AND WAS THROWN OUT, YOU KNOW, ON ACCOUNT OF HIS COLOR. . . I'M SURE YOU KNOW. . . YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT IT. AND THEN, WHILE WE ARE HERE, I DON'T KNOW OF SISTER SHIRLEY, REMEMBER? BUT I KNOW UNCLE MAC. REMEMBER, WE BLACKS FOLKS BACK IN THOSE DAYS, DURING SISTER THELMA. . . THAT'S WHY I WANT TO SEE SISTER THELMA'S PROGRAM."

"THE BLACK FOLKS DIDN'T HAVE NO FUNERAL HOME IN MANSFIELD. AND THEY STILL DON'T HAVE NO FUNERAL HOME IN MANSFIELD. AND WE USED ERNIE BLESSING'S. BLESSING IS STILL CARRYING HIS NAME ON HIS NAME. . . BUT HE WOULD UH, . . . THE BLACK FOLKS WOULD USE HIM. BUT HE WOULDN'T USE HIS GOOD HEARSE FOR BLACK FOLKS. HE WOULD ALWAYS USE A VAN, AND HALF OF THE CASKET WOULD BE HANGIN' IN THE VAN AND HALF OF IT OUT."

"DURING REP. CARSON'S TIME, (HE'S THE ONE PUT THE BLACK FOLKS WISE TO THAT), HE SAY 'YOU CAN STOP THAT COMING UP THAT STREET WITH YOUR CASKET HANGIN' OUT.' AND THAT'S WHEN THEY WENT TO USING THE BLACK FUNERAL HOMES IN FORT WORTH."

S.S.: "WHAT YEAR IS THIS?"

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L.S.: "A-H-H-H. . .NOW THE YEARS DON'T DO NOTHING FOR ME, BUT I KNOW THAT HAPPENED. I BEEN HERE. . ."

M.M.: "IT WAS. . .THE EARLY FORTIES. . ."

L.S.: "I AM SIXTY-FOUR YEARS OLD. . .EARLY FORTIES. . .?"

S.S.: "IN AN EARLIER INTERVIEW WE DID WITH YOU, YOU MADE THE STATEMENT THAT NO MANSFIELD FUNERAL HOME WOULD TAKE A MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY."

M.M.: "NO THEY WOULDN'T. LIKE IF YOU EXPIRED TODAY, TOMORROW THEY'D HAVE THAT FUNERAL. AND THEY WOULD USE. . .A. . .LIKE I SAY, HIS OLD VAN--A WORK VAN. AND HE'D PUT JUST ENOUGH OF THE CASKET, (IT'D BE SO SHORT), HALF OF IT WOULD BE OUT."

L.S.: "U-M-M. . .MORE WOULD BE OUT THAN WOULD BE IN. . ."

M.M.: "AND THE GRAVE WOULD BE. . .BE SHALLOW, JUST BARELY BE COVERED UP, YOU KNOW. HE WOULDN'T GO TO A EXTREME. HE WOULDN'T EMBALM OR ANYTHING. 'CAUSE LATER. . .(I WAS A KID THEN, IN THE FORTIES), BUT I HEARD LATER THAT HE WOULDN'T DO EMBALMIN'. HE'D JUST PUT YOU IN A BOX, GET THROUGH WITH IT BEFORE YOUR BODY STARTS DETERIORATING."

S.S.: "WAS THERE A. . .I'M GONNA' GO BACK SINCE WE'RE ON THIS TOPIC, U-M-M. . .IS THERE A HIGH MORTALITY RATE FOR CHILDREN IN YOUR COMMUNITY, SAY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY?"

M.M.: "OKAY. U-H-H. . ."

S.S.: "'CAUSE I MEAN IF I. . .IF I GO. . .TO SAY. . .TO GRAPEVINE'S CEMETERY, TWENTIES, THIRTIES, SPECIFIC. . .OR TEEN'S, TWENTIES AND THIRTIES. . .JUST AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF CHILDREN'S TOMBSTONES. I HAVEN'T BEEN TO YOUR CEMETERY TO LOOK. . ."

M.M.: "THERE IS A. . ."

S.S.: "AND I WAS JUST WONDERING WHETHER THAT'S A PHENOMENON. . ."

M.M.: "JUST A FEW KIDS GRAVES IN OUR CEMETERY NOW. IT USED TO BE, LONG TIME AGO, WE DIDN'T. WE JUST HAD THE ONE CEMETERY IN MANSFIELD. AND THAT WOULD BE RIGHT NEXT TO THE WHITE, WITH JUST A FENCE RUNNING THROUGH IT. AND IT'S NOT VERY MANY CHILDREN IN THERE. AND THEN, OF COURSE, NOW THEY SEVERAL MORE THEY USE ON 287, CEDAR HILL. THEN ON 1187, SKYVIEW THEY HAVE A. . .I THINK IT'S 'BABYLAND.' BOTH OF THOSE CEMETERIES, THEY CALL 'BABYLAND.' THEY HAVE A LOT OF MARKERS THERE, LOTS OF MARKERS."

S.S.: "THEN AS FAR AS THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY, THAT WAS NOT. . ."

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M.M.: "IN THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY. . .IT DON'T. THAT WAS A RARE OCCASION TO GO TO A BABY FUNERAL. VERY RARE."

S.S.: "H-M-M. . .U-H-H, AS FAR AS MEDICINE, WHAT HAPPENED WHEN PEOPLE GOT SICK IN THE COMMUNITY?"

M.M.: "MOST OF THE TIME, THEY USED HOME REMEDIES. BACK THEN, IT WAS *SLOAN'S LINIMENT*, *CATKIN'S*. THEY WOULD HAVE A. . .IF YOU HAD A COLD OR SOMETHING THEY HAD HOREHOUND TEA. . ."

L.S.: "'*COW CHIP TEA*'. . . YOU EVER HEARD OF THAT?"

M.M.: "YEAH, '*COW CHIP TEA*,' '*HOG'S TOENAILS*,' YOU KNOW. YOU EVER HEARD OF TOENAILS OFF A HOG?"

S.S.: "NO-O-O."

L.S.: "'*HOG HOOF TEA*'. . ."

M.M.: "YOU BOIL THE HOG HOOF AND THEN THEY TAKE THE '*PIZZLE*'. . .[A KIND OF ANIMAL GREASE]. DO YOU KNOW WHAT '*PIZZLE*' IS. . .?"

S.S.: "YOU REMEMBER ALL THOSE. . .?"

S.W.: "I'VE TAKEN SOME. . ."

L.S.: "THE GREASE, AND RUB 'EM DOWN IN THE CHEST."

M.M.: "THEY TAKE A MALE HOG'S TESTICLES OR HIS PENIS AND SAVE IT, AND RENDER THE GREASE OUT OF IT. AND PUT IT IN SOME KIND OF CONTAINER. AND THEN THEY'D TAKE, LIKE WHEN EVERYBODY GO TO THE SAME SCHOOL. AND WHOOPING COUGH, MEASLES, CHICKEN POX. . .YOU'D HAVE A LITTLE TOBACCO SACK. USED TO BE *BUGLER* AND *BULL DURHAM* TOBACCO SACKS THAT PULL TIGHT. THEY'D PUT '*ASAFETIDA*,' GARLIC, TIE IT AROUND YOUR NECK. THEY WOULD. . .SOME KIND OF. . .THEY WOULD TAKE GARLIC BEADS AN' PUT AROUND YOUR NECK. AND THEY WOULD ALSO HAVE. . .A-H-H. . .SARSAPARILLA ROOTS THEY WOULD STRAIN AND PUT AROUND THERE. THAT WAS FOR CUTTIN' TEETH. AND BLACK. . .FOR PEPPER, SAGE AND CINNAMON. . .IT'S JUST HOME REMEDIES. AND YOU'D SLEEP. AND DEPEND ON THE LORD. THEY'D DEPENDED ON THE LORD MORE THEN THAN THEY'D DO NOW."

L.S.: "SOMETIMES THE DOCTORS WOULD COME OUT. BUT YOU'D HAVE TO BE AWFUL, AWFUL LOW SICK BEFORE THEY WOULD MAKE HOME CALLS. IN OTHER WORDS. . ."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "BUT, THAT DIDN'T LAST LONG."

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S.S.: "WHY?"

L.S.: "WELL, I ASSUME 'CAUSE IT GOT SO DANGEROUS. AND THEN ANOTHER THING I SAID--IT WAS MONEY, TOO. . . LIKE I COULD CALL YOU TONIGHT AND SOMEBODY WAS SICK, AND MAYBE I WOULDN'T HAVE MONEY TO PAY YOU. AND THEY NOT GONNA' SERVE YOU ANY MORE. THEY WON'T COME OUT IF YOU SAY WELL, I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY. . . PEOPLE DON'T HAVE FEELINGS LIKE THAT. AND YOU KNOW, NOW IF YOU CALL THEM, THEY'RE NOT GONNA' COME. AND YOU KNOW WHY. . ."

S.S.: "YEAH. THEY'LL ASK YOU IF YOU HAVE YOUR INSURANCE CARD. . . IT'S THE SAME THING. . . U-H-H WHAT HAPPENED IF YOU WERE A SHARECROPPER? AS YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR FAMILY LIVED FROM FARM TO FARM, ON OCCASION, OR DO A TWO OR THREE LEASE AT ONE, THEN MOVE ON TO A BETTER ONE. WHAT HAPPENED IF HE HAD A BAD YEAR OR CONSECUTIVE SEASONS THAT WERE BAD, AND YOU DIDN'T GET A GOOD RETURN, OR YOU WEREN'T EVEN BREAKING EVEN? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?"

L.S.: "WELL, SOMETIMES, HE WOULD, . . . HE WOULD UH. . . TELL MY DAD HE HAD TO MOVE."

S.S.: "SO, HE BLAMED SHARECROPPERS FOR A BAD SEASON?"

L.S.: "U-H H-U-H. . . MAYBE A BAD SEASON, SOMETHING LIKE THAT."

S.S.: "I'VE SEEN THE PERIPHERY. IT'LL RAIN TWENTY FEET FROM YOU, AND YOU'D BE BONE DRY. . ."

L.S.: "AND WE NEED A GOOD RAIN OVER HERE. THAT'S RIGHT. . . I REMEMBER ONE DAY, WE U-H, WENT TO ANOTHER FARM. IT WAS ENOUGH OF US TO PICK THREE OR FOUR BARRELS OF COTTON A DAY. AND UH, THIS MAN WANTED ALL HIS COTTON OPEN, BEFORE I. . . YOU KNOW ABOUT COTTON?"

S.S.: "A LITTLE BIT."

L.S.: "THE BOB. . . WELL, HE WANTED ALL HIS OPEN BEFORE YOU START. BEFORE YOU STARTED TO GATHER IT. SO, WE ON TO ANOTHER MAN AND WE WERE GOIN' STRIP HIS COTTON FIRST. AND THEN WHEN HIS'N, [THE OTHER GUY'S], WAS READY, WE WERE GONNA' COME BACK TO HIM, [THE MAN'S FARM THAT WE LIVED ON]. BUT HE GOT THE DEVIL IN HIM AND HE DIDN'T LIKE IT. AND HE COME TO US THAT NIGHT, (I'LL NEVER FORGET). HE COME TO MY DADDY, AND WAS MAD WITH HIM, AND SAY, '*I WANT YOU TO BE OUT OF MY HOUSE TOMORROW.*' DON'T GIVE YOU NO ACCOUNT OR NOTHING.

"AND AS THE LORD WOULD HAVE IT, MY DADDY COME BACK IN THE HOUSE AND SAID, '*HE SAID WE HAD TO MOVE.*' AND HE SAID '*WHERE AM I GOING? WITH ALL OF THESE CHILDREN?*' YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYING?"

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] "AND AS THE LORD WOULD HAVE IT. THAT NIGHT BEFORE MY DADDY WENT TO BED, IT WAS ANOTHER GUY WITH A FARM, (I'LL BET IT WASN'T TWO MILES FROM US), COME THERE AND BLOWED HIS HORN. AND CALLED MY DADDY OUT THERE. AND HE SAID, 'I'VE GOT A LOT OF COTTON I NEED TO GATHER IN, AND I NEED TO GET IT IN BEFORE THE WEATHER GETS BAD.'

"AND HE SAY 'WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHEN WE'LL GET TO IT.' SAY'S UH. . . 'MISTER. (WHOEVER IT WAS WE WAS LIVIN' WITH), TOLD US WE HAD TO MOVE.' AND HE SAID 'AND I'M GOIN' HAVE TO GO AND FIND A PLACE TO CARRY MY FAMILY.'

"AND HE SAID, 'I GOT A PLACE FOR YOU.'

"WE MOVED THE NEXT DAY, FROM ONE MAN TO THE OTHER. THAT'S HOW THE LORD SENT HIM THERE. . . YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYIN'? THAT'S WHAT WE GO THROUGH. . . WENT THROUGH.

"SO, WE LEAVE ONE FARM AND GO TO THE OTHER ONE. SO NOW, WHAT HE LACK PAYING HIM. . . I DON'T KNOW IF HE WOULD GO BACK AND PAY OR NOT. HE WOULDN'T. . . YOU KNOW. . . HE DIDN'T RUN ALL HIS BUSINESS DOWN TO US, BUT I WOULD KNOW SOME OF IT. AND ON THE LAST BEFORE HE GOT THROUGH FARMING, HE WAS FARMING RIGHT IN THE EDGE OF MANSFIELD--JUST WHERE THE PRISONERS ARE RIGHT NOW. MY

"DADDY USED TO FARM ALL OF THAT LAND. AND HE HAD COTTON PICKERS COMING OUT OF. . . BY TRUCK LOADS. . . COMING OUT OF FORT WORTH. I WAS THE. . . I WOULD STAY AT THE WAGON AND KEEP THE WEIGHTS, 'CAUSE YOU HAD TO DO THAT IF YOU WANTED TO BREAK EVEN. 'CAUSE THEY'LL COME SAY THEY HAD FIFTY POUNDS AND MIGHT NOT HAVE BUT TEN. AND YOU HAD TO WEIGH FOR 'EM. AND THEN YOU HAD TO CHECK THE COTTON, WHAT THEY SAY THEY HAD. THEY LIABLE TO BE BRICKS IN THE COTTON SACK, AND ALL OF THAT KIND OF STUFF TO MAKE IT HEAVY, DIRT AND. . . ALL OF THAT.

"I'VE GONE THROUGH, ALL OF THAT. BUT I'D RATHER HAD BEEN OUT PICKING THE COTTON THAN STANDING UP ARGUING WITH 'EM. AND SEEING. . . (CHECKING YOU OUT), THE SACK WHAT'S IN IT. I WENT THROUGH ALL OF THAT. HIS NAME WAS MR. HENRY HAWKS. MR. HENRY HAWKS FARM--RIGHT OVER IN THE EDGE OF MANSFIELD. JUST WHERE. . . RIGHT OVER IN THERE."

S.S.: "SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?"

L.S.: "HE DIED. MR. HENRY HAWKS DIED. SO, THAT'S WHEN MY DADDY HAD TO RETIRE THEN, AFTER SO LONG A TIME. SO, HE BEEN DEAD FOR TWENTY YEARS. HE HAD TO. . . ALL OF 'EM HAD TO COME ON IN. . .

"SO THAT'S THE WAY WE. . . ALL THE BOY'S HAD GONE IN SERVICE IN DIFFERENT PLACES. AND SO, HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY HELP ANY WAY. BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE NO HELP TOO MUCH WHEN HE HAD TO GO TO PUTTIN' ME ON 'EM TRACTOR. . . I, WAS. . . WE WEREN'T TOO FAR FROM THE GIN. AND I'D HAVE TO HOOK FROM ONE WAGON, CARRY

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] THE COTTON TO THE GIN, GO BACK AND GET THE OTHER. THEY WAS JUST PICKIN' COTTON JUST THAT FAST. I'D GET BACK AND HAVE ANOTHER WAGON FULL. UNHOOK FROM IT, TAKE IT BACK, AND GO BACK AND GET EMPTY WAGONS AND ALL THAT. . ."

S.S.: "WERE THE COTTON PICKING CREWS IN MANSFIELD SEGREGATED?"

L.S.: "NO, THEY WASN'T. . . THEY JUST HAD THEY OWN. . . LIKE NOW, IF UH, LIKE IF BROTHER MAC'S FAMILY HAD A PLACE WHERE THEY, YOU KNOW, WAS RAISING COTTON, THEY WOULD GET THROUGH WITH THEIRS FIRST. AND IF THEY GOT THROUGH BEFORE WE DID, THEY'D COME OVER AND HELP US. THEY WASN'T SEGREGATED AT ALL. YOU KNOW?"

S.S.: "I KNOW BUT, I MEAN DID WHITE AND BLACK PICKERS WORK TOGETHER? OR NOT. . .?"

L.S.: "WELL, . . . THEY WORKED TOGETHER. BUT YOU DIDN'T SEE TOO MANY WHITE PEOPLE."

S.S.: "YOU DIDN'T."

L.S.: "NO. . . THEY'D HAVE THE FARMS AND COTTON AND STUFF. . ."

S.S.: "THEY CONTEND. . . SEE, UP IN GRAPEVINE, THEY SAY THAT THEIRS WERE MIXED."

L.S.: "YEAH. . .?"

S.S.: "YEAH. THEY SAID THAT UH. . . THAT BLACK AND WHITE PICKERS WORKED SIDE BY SIDE. SO. . ."

L.S.: "IF WE HAD ANY TO PICK, THEY WOULD, YOU KNOW. . . THEY WOULD DO WHAT WE HAD TO. . ."

S.S.: "SO, AS FAR AS SHARECROPPER, PER SE. . . WERE THERE MANY WHITE SHARECROPPERS HERE THEN, OR PREDOMINATELY BLACK?"

L.S.: "WELL, IT WOULD IT WOULD BE THEY. . . IT WOULD BE THEIR PLACE, BUT THE BLACKS WOULD BE WORKING THE FARM. IT WOULDN'T. . . THEY WOULDN'T OWN IT."

M.M.: "THERE WERE A FEW WHITE SHARECROPPERS. I DON'T KNOW IF THEY WENT THROUGH THE CHANGES THE BLACK SHARECROPPERS WENT THROUGH. BUT ALL THE WHITES THAT FARMED DIDN'T OWN ANY FARMS. IT WAS A LOT OF WHITES THEN AND THERE'S A LOT OF WHITES NOW RENT AND LEASE THOSE FARMS. BUT I DON'T THINK THEY WENT THROUGH THE CHANGES LIKE BLACK FOLKS."

"AND, IT SEEMS LIKE UH, AS FAR AS BACK THEN, AND IT WAS, IT'S SOME OF THE SAME THERE, AS IT IS NOW, YOU KNOW. YOU WORK TOGETHER ALL WEEK PICKING COTTON,

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] WHATEVER--IN GROCERY STORES, MARKETS, EVERYTHING--FROM MONDAY TO SATURDAY EVENING. THEN SATURDAY EVENING, YOU'RE SEGREGATED. SUNDAY MORNING YOU GO TO YOUR CHURCH--BLACKS GO TO THEIRS. IT WAS THAT- A-WAY THEN, AND IT'S THAT- A- WAY NOW. I NEVER HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT. IT'S THE SAME NOW, AS IT WAS BACK THEN. YOU WORK SIDE BY SIDE, EVEN KIDS GO TO SCHOOL. . .AND IT WAS BACKWARDS, TO ME, FROM INTEGRATING THE SCHOOLS. SEEM LIKE THE CHURCHES SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED FIRST. THAT'S. . .TO ME, I DON'T KNOW."

S.S.: "U-M-M-M. . . I WANT TO GO BACK TO GRIFFIN AND UH. . ."

M.M.: "I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT T. M. MOODY."

S.S.: "OKAY."

M.M.: "T. M. MOODY. . .THAT WAS JUST A LITTLE BEFORE GRIFFIN WROTE HIS BOOK. AND IT WAS BEFORE SCHOOL WAS INTEGRATED. AND THERE WAS SEVERAL WHITE GUYS CALL T. M. MOODY, WHICH LIVED RIGHT WEST OF US HERE AT THE END OF THIS PIECE OF PROPERTY. THEY THREATENED TO COME OUT AND KILL HIM.

"THEY HUNG A 'REFUGEE' ON MAIN STREET OF T. M. MOODY. AND THEY CALLED HIM THAT EVENING AND SAY THEY'S COMING OUT TO KILL HIM. AND THEY WAS. . . REALLY, IT WAS ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE OR THIRTY OR MORE, THAT WAS GETTING TOGETHER TO COME OUT AND RAID HIM. I GUESS THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL IT. AT NIGHT, AFTER DARK--NOT DAYTIME.

"BUT IT WAS SEVERAL OF T. M.'S FRIENDS GOT TOGETHER AND WAS WITH HIM HERE. THEY NEVER DID SHOW UP. IT WAS GOOD THEY DIDN'T, BUT THEY DIDN'T SHOW. AND BEFORE T. M. EXPIRED, HE WAS WELL THOUGHT OF. EVERYBODY RESPECTED HIM. BUT AT ONE TIME, EVERYBODY WAS GOIN' TRY TO KILL 'IM AND EVERYBODY. . . ALL THE BLACKS GOT WITH T. M. SAY 'WELL, IT'S JUST GOIN' BE A SHOWDOWN.' THEN, SURE ENOUGH. . .AND HE RECOGNIZED THE MAN'S VOICE THAT WAS ON THE TELEPHONE, AND HE TOLD HIM, UH. . ."

S.S.: "WHO WAS IT. . .?"

M.M.: "UH. . .PERRY. HE TOLD HIM 'MR. PERRY, YOU COME ON. . .ANYTIME YOU GET READY. IN CASE YOU DON'T GET A CHANCE TO COME OUT TONIGHT, YOU CAN COME TOMORROW NIGHT OR WHENEVER. I WILL BE HERE AT HOME. YOU WELCOME ANYTIME YOU WANT TO COME TO MY HOUSE.' "

S.S.: "THAT WAS OVER. . .HE WAS TRYING TO ATTEND. . .GET HIS CHILD TO ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL HERE?"

M.M.: "NO. . . HE DIDN'T HAVE. . . HE NEVER HAD A CHILD. HE WAS. . . HE WAS JUST PUSHING TO HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS FOR THE BLACKS. JUST. . . YOU KNOW. . . WE'D GET THE BOOKS, BUT IT LIABLE TO TWO KIDS STUDYING ONE BOOK. IT WAS. . . SOME OF THE

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] PAGES WAS TORN OUT, YOU KNOW. YOU'D READ UP TO A CERTAIN THING, THEN IT LIABLE TO BE A PAGE MISSING. . ."

L.S.: "HAND-ME-DOWN BOOKS."

M.M.: "YEAH, YOU KNOW, COME FROM WHITE LIBRARIES. AND BRING 'EM OUT HERE. AND YOU NEVER COULD. . . YOU NEVER COULD REALLY HAVE ALL YOUR ACADEMICS OR ANYTHING. YOU COULDN'T GET YOUR LESSON 'CAUSE THE BOOKS WAS WRITTEN IN, AND PICTURES DREW IN THEM. AND YOU JUST COULDN'T READ 'EM AND YOU COULDN'T COME UP TO DATE WITH YOUR EDUCATION. AND THAT'S WHAT HE WAS FIGHTING AGAINST.

"AND HE WENT AND MENTIONED IT IN THE SCHOOL BOARD. IT WAS SIX OR SEVEN OF 'EM ON THE SCHOOL BOARD. AND THEY TOLD THEIR FRIENDS AND BLEW IT UP BIG! AND THAT'S WHEN ALL THOSE GUYS GOT TOGETHER AND SAID '*WELL, WE'LL STOP HIM FROM STIRRIN' UP TROUBLE. WE'LL HANG HIM.*' AND THEY WERE GOIN' COME TO HANG 'IM OR KILL 'IM. DO WHATEVER. SCARE 'IM. BUT THEY DIDN'T DO NEITHER ONE.

"AND THEN, THAT'S WHEN GRIFFIN COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WAS RIGHT UNDER HIS NOSE. WHITES. . . HIS FRIENDS. . . WAS ACTING THAT A WAY. AND HE INJECTED SOME DYE INTO HIS VEINS AND IT TURNED HIM BLACK FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS, I THINK. AND HE WENT TO LOUISIANA. AND HE LIKE TO GOT HUNG."

S.S.: "HOW DID HIS FRIENDS. . ."

M.M.: "TREATED HIM. . .?"

S.S.: "TREAT HIM, AFTER THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN?"

M.M.: "LIKE THEY'D ME OR. . . 'CAUSE THEY DIDN'T KNOW HIM. THEY DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS HOWARD GRIFFIN UNTIL, LIKE. . . HIS SKIN GOT PINK AGAIN. AND THEN, THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. HE'D DONE WRITTEN THE BOOK THEN."

S.S.: "RIGHT. . . BUT AFTER. . . AFTER THE BOOK WAS OUT, HOW DID THEY FEEL?"

M.M.: "HE WEREN'T TOO POPULAR UNTIL HE DECEASED. . . HIS IN-LAWS STILL LIVE HERE, RIGHT DOWN THE ROAD THERE ABOUT A MILE. RIGHT DOWN RETTA. . . UH BROAD."

L.S.: "UH-HUH. STRAIGHT ON OUT BROAD. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH, THEY STILL LIVE HERE. BUT HE WEREN'T TOO POPULAR. . . WHICH, YOU KNOW. . . HE DIDN'T REALLY CARE THEN, BECAUSE. . . HE WAS A RICH MAN THEN. HA, HA, HA. . . HE DIDN'T NEED 'EM. I IMAGINE MRS. BERRY, SHE WOULD HAVE A LOT TO TELL YOU IF SHE COULD REMEMBER. . ."

S.W.: "I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE SOMETHING. . ."

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S.S.: "OKAY..."

S.W.: "... ABOUT THE FIRST BLACK TEACHER, AND PERHAPS THE FIRST BLACK PRINCIPAL. THIS WAS A LADY. THE LATE, MRS. THELMA LOUISE JONES, WAS THE DAUGHTER OF THE LATE WILLIE AND MAGGIE DAVIS-JONES. SHE WAS A NATIVE OF MANSFIELD. . SHE GREW UP IN MANSFIELD. SHE BELONGED TO THIS CHURCH RIGHT HERE. SHE SERVED AS AN EDUCATOR IN THIS COMMUNITY FOR HALF A CENTURY-- FORTY-NINE YEARS! THAT'S A RECORD!

"MRS. THELMA JONES ATTENDED FORT WORTH'S I. M. TERRELL HIGH SCHOOL. FROM THERE SHE ENTERED BISHOP COLLEGE IN MARSHALL, TEXAS. AND EARNED HER MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO. MRS. THELMA JONES WAS MY. . .

"I SHALL NEVER FORGET HER. SHE WAS A VERY WELL-GROOMED LADY. SHE WAS A VERY FRIENDLY LADY. SHE ALWAYS HAD TIME FOR EVERYONE. SHE WAS VERY APPROACHABLE. AND I ADMIRER HER BECAUSE SHE TALKED WITH ME SEVERAL TIMES WHEN I WOULD COME TO VISIT MY GRANDPARENTS. AND SHE WOULD ALWAYS SAY, 'SHIRLEY, YOU NEED TO BE THINKING ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL ONE DAY, GOING OFF TO COLLEGE.' SHE WOULD ALWAYS TRY TO INSPIRE THE CHILDREN IN THIS COMMUNITY. SHE WAS A TRAILBLAZER, AND I FEEL SO INDEBTED TO HER. I SHALL NEVER FORGET THELMA LOUISE JONES."

S.S.: "WE'LL NEED TO HAVE YOUR NAME, AND PLACE AND DATE OF YOUR BIRTH. AND HOW LONG YOU'VE LIVED HERE IN MANSFIELD."

M.E.B.: "MARY ELIZA BURR--MY NAME IS MARY E. BURR [M.E.B.]. THE 'E' STANDS FOR ELIZA. I WAS BORN APRIL THE TWENTY-FIRST, NINETEEN AND THIRTY, IN ELLIS COUNTY, AT HOME. AT THAT TIME, DR. NIFONG CAME OUT. HE AND MRS. ADA COTTON COME TO MY PARENTS HOUSE. AND I GUESS WITH THE HELP OF THE GOOD MASTER, HERE I AM. AND I HAVE. . . IT WAS NINE OF US, AND I WAS THE ONLY GIRL. AND ONE BROTHER LEFT LIVING NOW. WE HAD ONE BROTHER, AND HE IS SEVENTY-THREE YEARS OLD. AND I STAY IN A HOUSE WITH HIM NOW. ME AND HIM STAY IN FORT WORTH AT THE SAME HOME.

"BUT, ALL OF US WAS REARED UP IN ELLIS COUNTY ON THE BOBBIT FARM. AND FROM THE BOBBIT FARM, WE WENT TO THE DAVIS FARM. AND WE STAYED OUT THERE UNTIL NINETEEN, SIXTY-THREE OR FIVE--SOME WHERE ALONG IN THERE. THEN WE MOVED TO FORT WORTH. AFTER ALL THE FARMING AND EVERYTHING WENT BAD, WE DIDN'T HAVE NO FARM. SO, WE MOVED OVER THERE TO FORT WORTH. MY MOTHER, SHE PASSED AWAY IN NINETEEN AND NINETY. AND MY DADDY, HE PASSED AWAY IN NINETEEN FORTY-ONE. . . I DON'T HAVE TOO MUCH TO SAY."

S.S.: "YOU HAVE A LOT TO SAY. . ."

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M.E.B.: "I WENT TO SCHOOL IN ELLIS COUNTY AT BOOKER T. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL."

S.S.: "OH, YOU DID?"

M.E.B.: "BUT IT WAS A LITTLE BUILDING THEN. I DIDN'T GO TO NO COLLEGE OR NOTHING."

S.S.: "OKAY, UH. . . YOU TALKED ABOUT LIVING IN MIDLOTHIAN?"

M.E.B.: "YES, . . . THAT'S WHERE I WENT TO SCHOOL AT."

S.S.: "YOU WANT TO TELL US ABOUT IT?"

M.E.B.: "AS SISTER LAWSON SHEPPARD SAID, 'WE'D START OUT WALKING AND SOMEBODY'D COME BY AND PICK US UP.' A LOT OF TIMES IF MY BROTHER WASN'T. . . NOTHING, IF IT WAS RAINING, HE'D TAKE US TO SCHOOL. AND THEN, IF IT WASN'T THAT. . . THEN IF WE GOT A LITTLE OLD CAR OR SOMETHING, WE'D SHARE RIDES WITH ONE ANOTHER. WE HAD IT HARD. BUT EVERYBODY WAS NICE. I DIDN'T HAVE NO PROBLEMS 'CAUSE, I GUESS, 'CAUSE I WAS A GIRL, AS SHE. I DIDN'T GET OUT LIKE THE BOYS. I STAYED AROUND THE HOUSE."

S.S.: "WHAT DID YOU. . . WHAT DID. . . YOUR PARENTS WERE FARMERS?"

M.E.B.: "YES, SIR."

S.S.: "UH, . . . WAS THE CROPS. . . THE CROPS THAT THEY GREW. . . SIMILAR TO WHAT WAS BEING GROWN HERE?"

M.E.B.: "YEAH. THERE WAS COTTON, CORN, HAY--LIKE THAT. PULLED JOHNSON GRASS, 'KOOK-A-BURRS.' IF IT WAS TOO WET, YOU'D GET IN THERE WITH THE HOES. WENT OUT IN THE FIELD AND PULL THE WEEDS AND GRASS UP."

S.S.: "UH, . . . DURING GINNING SEASON, WERE THERE JOBS AVAILABLE AT THE LOCAL GINS IN EITHER MIDLOTHIAN OR MANSFIELD?"

M.E.B.: "MY BROTHER WORKED AT THE GIN. MY BROTHER, . . . HE WORKED AT THE GIN A WHOLE LOT."

S.S.: "UH-HUH. DID YOU SEE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIFE IN MIDLOTHIAN AND LIFE HERE?"

M.E.B.: "WELL, BACK IN THEM DAYS, YOU DIDN'T SEE MUCH. YOU WAS OUT DOWN THERE. AND WHEN YOU GET THROUGH WORKING DOWN THERE, WELL, YOU'D COME TO TOWN, GET YOU A LITTLE. . . SOME FOOD, IF YOU HAD TO HAVE SOMETHING. THEN GO RIGHT ON BACK OUT."

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S.S.: "BUT IN RETROSPECT, I'M SAYING, WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE?"

M.E.B.: "... 'CAUSE WE DIDN'T GET TO GO TO CHURCH TOO MUCH, COMING UP HERE TO MANSFIELD TO CHURCH."

S.S.: "SO THIS UH..."

M.E.B.: "THIS IS MOSTLY MY HOME TOO."

S.S.: "OKAY, WHERE IS THE NEAREST BLACK COMMUNITY CHURCH? FORT WORTH, FROM HERE?"

M.E.B.: "RIGHT HERE MANSFIELD."

S.S.: "OKAY. SO, THERE'S NOT MANY OTHER COMMUNITIES?"

M.E.B.: "THERE'S PLENTY OF THEM UP THERE. BUT I COME DOWN HERE. I BEEN HERE FOR SEVERAL, LONG, LONG, YEARS... I THINK I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD WHEN I WAS BAPTIZED."

S.S.: "WHEN... SO, WHEN FARMING KINDA'... SPECIFICALLY, COTTON AS A MAJOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT... KINDA' STARTS TO WANE, WHERE THERE JOBS IN FORT WORTH AND DALLAS THAT PEOPLE WENT TO? DID Y'ALL START COMMUTING TO THE CITIES?"

M.E.B.: "IT WAS A... WHEN WE MOVED UP THERE, IT WASN'T TOO MUCH. PEOPLE WOULD COME OUT, AS I SAY, AND HAD MY BROTHER AND THEM TILLER COTTON AND CORN--LIKE THAT. THEY'D COME OUT. SOMETIME, THEY'D ASK HIM IF THERE WAS ANYTHING TOM DO OUT THERE. AND IF HE'D SEE IT WAS GONNA' BE COMING UP A CLOUD OR SOMETHIN' OTHER, THEY'D COME ON OUT AND, YOU KNOW, HELP PULL, PICK COTTON. THEN THEY'D GO ON BACK. MY MOTHER, SHE DONE IRONING AND SEWING AND COOKING, AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF FOR THE PEOPLE WE STAYED WITH."

S.S.: "ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE... YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU WERE WORKING IN THE FIELDS A LOT. WHAT'S THE PERCENTAGE, DO YOU THINK, OF WOMEN WHO WORKED ALONG SIDE THE MEN IN THE FIELD; VERSUS THOSE WHO WORKED IN HOUSES FOR LIKE, THE DOCTORS AND PERSON'S LIKE THAT IN TOWN? WERE THERE, LIKE, MORE PEOPLE WORKING IN THE FIELDS THAN WERE DOMESTICS OR MAIDS...?"

L.S.: "UH, WELL, DURING... LIKE IN THE FALL... WELL, MOST... (YOU KNOW, LIKE MY MAMMA), WOULD GO TO THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE AND WORK. AND WHEN SHE GET OFF FROM THERE, SHE WOULD COME ON TO THE FIELD AND HELP. SHE WAS WORKING JUST LIKE YOU ALWAYS HEAR THE WORD, 'A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE?' IT WASN'T. IT STILL IS NOT. LIKE WHEN SHE WOULD GET OFF FROM OVER THERE, SHE STILL WORK FOR 'EM. BUT SHE DIDN'T, (BACK IN THOSE DAYS), SHE WOULDN'T GO TO THEIR HOUSE EVERYDAY."

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] "BUT AFTER SHE. . . THEY RETIRED FROM FARMING. . . SHE WORKED AT. . . AT THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE. AND THEN, SOMETIMES SHE WOULD WORK AT THE CLINIC. THAT'S AFTER THEY RETIRED FROM THE FARM.

"BUT NOW WHEN THEY WERE FARMING, SHE DIDN'T GO TO THEY HOUSE NO EVERYDAY. LIKE MONDAY MIGHT BE WASH DAY OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND THEN SHE MIGHT GO BACK MAYBE THURSDAY OR FRIDAY AND DO THE IRONING FOR THE FAMILY FOR THEY WEEKEND. BUT NOW, SHE WOULD HELP IN THE FIELD, TOO, JUST LIKE THE MEN WOULD."

S.S.: "LIKE WE WOULD. HA, HA. . . UH, WOULD YOU LIKE TO, SAY ANY. . . I GUESS THE QUESTION. . . (I KINDA' WANTED TO RETURN TO ABOUT GRIFFIN). . . WAS HOW MUCH INTERACTION DID HE HAVE WITH THIS COMMUNITY, HERE, AND WITH THIS CHURCH?"

L.S.: "OH HE HAD. . . I DON'T REMEMBER HIM EVER VISITING THE CHURCH. DO YOU UNCLE MAC?"

M.M.: "NOT EVER. HE NEVER VISITED THE CHURCH."

S.S.: "I DON'T EVER REMEMBER HIM VISITING THE CHURCH, BUT I KNOW HE WAS, YOU KNOW, AROUND. . . OF COURSE, NOW BEFORE HE. . . I REMEMBER BEFORE HE EVEN COME TO MANSFIELD TO THE HOLLYS. THE HOLLYS WAS FAMILY. . . WAS. . . NICE, FRIENDLY PEOPLE TO M. . . THE BLACK FOLK. THEY LIVED ON UP. . . THEY WAS PRETTY WELL-TO-DO. BUT THEY WERE VERY FRIENDLY PEOPLE TO THE DARK FOLK. THEY ALWAYS LIVED UP THAT WAY.

"AND I REMEMBER, SOMETIMES WE WOULD BE WALKING. THEY WOULD STOP AND PICK US UP. AND THEN WE WOULD HAVE OTHER LABORERS BACK UP THIS WAY. THEY MIGHT STOP. . . UH COME BY, AND KIDS LIABLE TO THROW A STICK OR SOMETHING OUT AT YOU. JUST MEDDLING. WE'D KNOW WHAT IT WAS. . . WAS JUST MEDDLING. . . HADN'T BEEN RAISED, TAUGHT RIGHT. YOU MIGHT FIND THAT NOW. . . JUST LIKE KIDS."

S.S.: "UH. . . HOW LONG DID YOU SAY YOU'VE LIVED HERE IN MANSFIELD, MRS. BURR?"

M.E.B.: "I THINK IT'S NINETEEN, FIFTY-FIVE, WE MOVED TO FORT WORTH. AND THEN BEEN COMING TO AND FRO."

S.S.: "YOU'VE BEEN COMING TO AND FRO. UH. . . I'M KIND OF GONNA'. . . WE'RE GONNA' JUMP INTO THAT PERIOD, DURING THE FIFTIES, WHEN THINGS START GETTING HEATED UP. UH, BEFORE I DO. . . THE CHURCH HERE IS REALLY STRONG AND IT SEEMS TO HAVE SOME FAIRLY STRONG LEADERSHIP. AND UH. . . OBVIOUSLY. . . WELL, MAYBE I BETTER BACK UP A LITTLE BIT. . .

"THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF SEPARATE BUT EQUAL IS BASED ON *PLECY VS. FERGUSON* WHICH IS A CASE HEARD IN 1896 OR 1897. UH. . . DID THINGS EVER. . . DID THAT, OR DID EVEN DEALING WITH JIM CROW LAWS. . . WAS THAT JUST A LEGAL KIND OF

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S.S.: [CONTINUED] CODIFICATION OF WHAT ACTUALLY ALREADY EXISTED IN TRADITION? AND MAYBE, (THIS IS A QUESTION), IT WAS ALREADY HERE. SO SOMEBODY JUST CODIFIED IT AND SAID IT WAS LEGAL TO TREAT PEOPLE THAT WAY?"

M.M.: "RIGHT. . . TREAT BLACKS THAT WAY. IT WAS ALREADY HERE."

S.S.: "OKAY. SO ROUGHLY, AN ATTITUDE BORN OUT OF LIFE BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR WAS CONTINUED--VIRTUALLY UNCHANGED, THEN CODIFIED. BASED UPON THAT. . . HOW DOES A SMALL COMMUNITY. . . WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF A SMALL COMMUNITY LIKE MANSFIELD MOVING FORWARD IN THE STATE OF TEXAS TOWARD DESEGREGATION? HOW DOES IT HAPPEN MANSFIELD, TEXAS. . . COMES TO THE FOREFRONT?"

L.S.: "I DON'T KNOW. BUT I KNOW IT HAVE. IT'S CHANGED, AND I SAID UH. . . WHAT I'M THINKING, IS NEW PEOPLE COMING TO MANSFIELD, LIKE HIM OVER THERE? [GESTURING TO FELIX] HE'S NEW. AND I'VE BEEN HERE. AND YOU KNOW, WE'VE GOT NEW PEOPLE OF OUR OWN COMING. AND IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE. AND THINGS HAVE REALLY, EXCHANGED. . . SINCE THE SEGREGATION."

S.S.: "BUT HOW DID IT. . . HOW DID IT HAP. . . HOW DID IT INITIALLY. . . I GUESS, WHAT'S THE SPARK THAT INITIALLY MAKES PEOPLE IN MANSFIELD DECIDE THAT WE WANT OUR KIDS GOING TO MANSFIELD HIGH AND NOT I. M. TERRELL?"

L.S.: "WELL, IT'S CLOSER. . . AND EVEN BETTER."

S.S.: "RIGHT. . ."

L.S.: " 'CAUSE IT'S A LOTTA' KIDS. . . WE GOT A GOOD SCHOOL DOWN HERE. WE GOT GOOD SCHOOLS. . . GOOD SCHOOLS. . . MANSFIELD CARRY THE NAME OF GOOD SCHOOLS."

S.S.: "RIGHT. . ."

L.S.: "AND WE HAVE PEOPLE ALL AROUND LIKE THIS SCHOOL. AND THEY ALWAYS OFTEN TALK ABOUT IT. THEY LIKE THE SETUP AT THE SCHOOL, AND ALL OF THAT. BUT NOW, SEEM LIKE TO ME, THE CHANGES IS GETTING. . . YOU KNOW, . . . JUST LIKE THE DOPE IS NOW.

"THE DOPE IS GETTING TO THE LITTLE TOWNS JUST LIKE IT WAS IN THE BIG TOWNS NOW. AND. . . USED TO, LITTLE TOWNS DIDN'T KNOW NOTHING ABOUT DRUGS AND ALL THAT KIND OF MESS. AND SO I SAY, . . . YOU KNOW. AND THEY MOVIN' IN DOWN HERE. AND A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT TO LEARN HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE. THAT HELPS A LOT. NOT ALWAYS, (YOU KNOW, NOT THE OTHER COLOR), US TOO. I DON'T BLAME NO OTHER SIDE ALL THE TIME. IT'S A LOT OF US TOO. IT MEANS A LOT. IT MEANS MUCH. AND THERE HAS BEEN, IT'S BEEN CHANGE.

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] "AND NOW THAT ARLINGTON IS ALMOST. . . I ALMOST CALL ARLINGTON MANSFIELD. I CAN'T HARDLY TELL THE DIFFERENCE. THEY LOOK LIKE, TO ME, THEY JUST ALMOST IN THERE RIGHT TOGETHER. AND IT REALLY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE. AND I CONSIDER MANSFIELD HAS A GOOD SCHOOL--MUCH BETTER SCHOOL THAN I HEAR OF SOME OF THEM IN FORT WORTH. . . DID I ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?"

S.S.: "KINDA'. THE LATTER, ON PART. . . OR THE MORE RECENT PART. NO. WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO IS, SAY WHAT HAPPENED IN THE YEAR 1955 THAT BROUGHT YOUR COMMUNITY OUT IN FAVOR, IN A VERY PUBLIC SENSE, IN FAVOR OF DESEGREGATION?"

L.S.: "WELL, SISTER BRISCOE TOLD YOU ABOUT THAT. YEAH. . ."

M.M.: "COULD I ANSWER THAT. . .?"

S.S.: "WHY DON'T WE BRING IN ANOTHER CHAIR. . .?"

L.S.: "'CAUSE SEE, HE WORKED ON THAT SCHOOL. . . BOARD."

S.S.: "OH, THAT'S RIGHT."

L.S.: "SEE WHAT I'M SAYIN'?"

S.S.: "THE QUESTION IS, WHY DID MANSFIELD OR THE COMMUNITY HERE DECIDE TO COME TO THE FOREFRONT ON THE ISSUE OF DESEGREGATION IN 1955?"

M.M.: "UH, T. M. MOODY, JOHN F. LAWSON AND BUCK WILSON, WILBUR LAWSON--SEVERAL OF THE DEACONS OF THE CHURCH DECIDED WE PAY TAXES IN MANSFIELD, SCHOOL TAXES, PROPERTY TAXES, COUNTY TAXES. AND WE STILL HAVE TO PAY TRANSPORTATION TAX OR MONEY TO GO TO FORT WORTH. WHY WE HAVE TO PAY DOUBLE FOR AN EDUCATION WHEN WE COULD GO RIGHT ACROSS THE STREET?"

"AND THAT'S WHY WE STARTED PUSHING IT, FOR OUR KIDS TO GO MANSFIELD SCHOOL. BECAUSE WE DIDN'T WANT TO PAY TAXES HERE, IF THE KIDS COULDN'T GO AND GET. . . SCHOOL TAXES. . . WE SHOULDN'T PAY SCHOOL TAXES. THAT'S WHY WE PUSHED IT. SO, . . . THAT'S WHY THEY GOT SO AGGRAVATED WITH T. M. MOODY. BECAUSE HE WAS PUSHIN' IT SO HARD FOR THE KIDS TO GO SCHOOL HERE OR INTEGRATE THE SCHOOLS. BUT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTEGRATING THE CHURCHES, AND THEN THE SCHOOLS. DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?"

S.S.: "GREAT. WHEN. . . WAS THERE A CON. . . I GUESS IN THE EARLY DAY'S, IN THOSE EARLY DAY'S OF. . . LIKE I'M GONNA' STRADDLE TWO AREA'S HERE. ONE IS. . . VOTING RIGHTS. AND HAD THIS COME UP PRIOR TO THIS, AND HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE TO THE NAACP TO BRING THEIR ATTORNEY DAVIS?"

M.M.: "OKAY, UH. . . TO VOTE. TO VOTE. . . YOU COULDN'T VOTE. I CAN REMEMBER WHEN YOU COULDN'T VOTE. BLACKS COULDN'T VOTE. AND THEN WHEN THEY COULD

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] VOTE, YOU'D HAVE TO PAY A DOLLAR, SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS FOR YOUR POLL TAX TO VOTE. AND THEN, CLIFFORD DAVIS. . . ? IS THAT THE DAVIS YOU'RE SPEAKING OF--THE LAWYER? CLIFFORD DAVIS, HE WAS BROUGHT INTO IT THEN. ALONG WITH THE OTHER ATTORNEYS AND EVEN THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY. FOR. . . TO LET BLACK PEOPLE VOTE, YOU COULDN'T VOTE. IF. . . YOU'D HAVE TO GO AND FILL AN APPLICATION TO VOTE. THEY'D HAVE. . . ."

S.S.: "YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT BEING ASKED QUESTIONS THAT YOU COULDN'T ANSWER. . . .?"

M.M.: "AH. . . WE COULDN'T VOTE. BLACKS COULDN'T VOTE BACK IN THOSE DAYS. AND THEN, WHEN IT GOT WHERE CLIFTON DAVIS AND SOME OF THE DIST' ATTORNEYS, AND 'LIEUTENANT GENERAL' AND THE GOVERNOR GOT IT WHERE BLACK'S COULD VOTE IN THIS STATE.

"THEN THEY HAD A QUESTIONARY. YOU'D HAVE TO FILL OUT A QUESTIONARY. AND IF YOU COULDN'T FILL OUT THE QUESTIONARY, YOU WEREN'T LEGAL ENOUGH TO VOTE. YOU HAD TO PASS. . . YOU HAD TO PASS YOU TEST, UH. . . QUESTIONARY. LIKE YOU WOULD IF YOU. . . IT WAS A DRIVING LICENSE. AND THEN YOU'D HAVE TO PAY A DOLLAR, SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS IF YOU HAD IT. AND NINE TIMES OUT OF TEN YOU DIDN'T HAVE A DOLLAR, SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS TO PAY. TO GET YOU INTO OFFICE OR GET YOU OUT OF OFFICE IT. IT WOULDN'T BE WORTH THAT MUCH TO YOU.

"AND SAY FOR INSTANCE, THEY'D HAVE TWO DIFFERENT QUESTIONNAIRES. THEY'D HAVE ONE FOR JUST. . . SIMPLE FOR *YOU* TO FILL IT OUT. AND THEN THEY WOULD HAVE ANOTHER ONE FOR *ME*. LIKE '*WHICH WAY IS IT TO CALCUTTA, NEW MEXICO?*' '*WHAT'S THE GOVERNOR?*' I THINK IT WAS. . . GOVERNOR LEO DANIELS WAS THE GOVERNOR THEN. '*WHAT'S THE GOVERNOR'S WIFE NAME?*' AND '*WHAT WAS HER MAIDEN NAME?*' WELL, WHO CARED ABOUT HER MAIDEN NAME? YOU KNOW. . . ?

"THEN WE COULDN'T FILL IT OUT. THEN WE FLUNKED THE TEST AND COULDN'T VOTE. THEN WE GOT CLIFTON DAVIS AND SEVERAL MORE ATTORNEYS TO GET TOGETHER. AND THEY GOT IT LEGAL WHERE WE COULD. . . DIDN'T HAVE TO HAVE A QUESTIONARY--JUST PAY A DOLLAR SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS AND VOTE. AND THEN AFTER THEN. . . NOW. . . YOU JUST GET POLL TAX. YOU DON'T VOTE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY."

S.S.: "THAT'S. . . STRANGE RATIONALE. STRANGE USE AND MISUSE OF DEMOCRACY."

M.M.: "HA, HA, HA. . . JIM CROW. . ."

S.S.: "UH. . . FORGET. . . TO RETURN TO A QUESTION ABOUT JIM CROW. UH. . . I, I, MADE THE INFERENCE THAT JIM CROW IS ESSENTIALLY LEGALIZING CONDITIONS THAT HAVE EXISTED PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR AND AFTER THE CIVIL IN THE SOUTH. AND I ASKED WEATHER YOU AGREED WITH THAT?"

M.M.: "NO. I REALLY DIDN'T AGREE. THE JIM CROW LAW WAS HERE BEFORE. ABOUT THE TIME THE BLACK'S GOT HERE. AND THEY JUST MORE OR LESS EXERCISED IT ON

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] THE BLACKS MORE OR LESS, THAN ANY OTHER NATIONALITY. THE BLACKS HAS ALWAYS SUFFERED FROM, OR HAVE BEEN THE GUINEA PIG FOR, WHATEVER LAWS OR TECHNIQUES YOU HAD. YOU'D TRY IT OUT ON THE BLACKS BACK THEN. NOW, THEY DON'T GO FOR IT AS MUCH AS THEY'D THEN . . . BACK THEN, THEY DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. THEY EITHER. . ."

S.S.: "BUT THE TRADITIONS WERE ALL IN PLACE. ALL JIM CROW DID WAS MAKE IT LAW. . . AND MAKE IT LEGAL. . .?"

M.M.: "MAKE IT LAW. . . MAKE IT LEGAL. . . AND YOU KNOW. . . AND SOME OF THE PEOPLE, THEY WENT EXTREME. . . WENT TO EXTREMES TO PUSH IT. TO ENFORCE IT.

"THE. . . SPEED LIMIT WAS RIGHT FOR YOU, BUT THE SPEED LIMIT FOR ME, WELL. . . 'YOUR CAR IS NOT SAFE TO DRIVE AT FIFTY-FIVE MILES AN HOUR. . . SO, YOU DRIVE THIRTY-FIVE.' YOU KNOW? IF YOU GET CAUGHT GOING FORTY-FIVE IN A FIFTY-FIVE MILE ZONE, YOU SUBJECT TO GET A TICKET. THAT'S SOME OF THE JIM LAWS I WENT THROUGH. . ."

S.S.: "UH HUH. . ."

M.M.: "'CAUSE, YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY? WELL, YOU LOOK AT YOUR CAR HERE. IT'S NOT ADEQUATE ENOUGH TO GO THAT FAST. . . YOU KNOW? THAT'S JUST THE WAY SOME OF THE JIM CROW LAW WORKED THEN. . ."

S.S.: "HOW AH. . . HOW OFTEN WAS THIS? WAS. . . SAY YOU BEING STOPPED?"

M.M.: "JUST ABOUT AS OFTEN AS YOU'D, UH, COME THROUGH THE TOWN. . . UH, DOWN MAIN STREET. JUST AS REGULAR AS YOU COME THROUGH MAIN STREET YOU'D GET STOPPED. IF YOU GO ON THE SECOND, THIRD STREET, OR BACK STREET, THEY WOULD CALL IT, OR GO AROUND TOWN. YOU WOULDN'T GET STOPPED, . . . (UNLESS YOU, EH, YOU KNOW, GO IN TOO FAR OVER IN THE WHITE SETTLEMENT), IF YOU DIDN'T. UNLESS YOU HAD SOME BUSINESS DRIVING A CAR IN THE WHITE SETTLEMENT, YOU DIDN'T HAVE NO BUSINESS THERE. YOU'D STOP THERE THEN. SO, YOU DIDN'T HAVE, REALLY, BUT TWO STREETS TO UH. . . TO COME THROUGH TOWN."

S.S.: "AND WHAT STREETS WERE THOSE. . .?"

M.M.: "THAT WOULD BE BACK STREET GOING, AND SIDE STREET COMING BACK. AND YOU'D GET THROUGH IT AS QUICK AND AS EASY AND QUIET AS YOU COULD. YOU DIDN'T. . . AND IF YOU WENT DOWN FRONT STREET WALKING OR DRIVING WHEN YOU CAME BACK, YOU'D BETTER HAVE A SACK IN YOUR HAND WITH SOMETHING IN IT THAT YOU HAD BOUGHT.

"YOU JUST DIDN'T WALK DOWN FRONT STREET AND STAND AROUND ON FRONT STREET--STOP AND STAND HERE IN MANSFIELD. THAT'S WHERE I WAS RAISED. I DON'T KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE OTHER TOWNS. AND IF YOU. . . SAY FOR INSTANCE, IF YOU GO TO A COKE BOX, YOU'D BETTER BUY YOU A FRUIT DRINK. YOU COULDN'T BUY YOU

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] A COCA COLA OR DR. PEPPER. YOU HAVE TO BUY 'GRAPETTE,' ORANGE, STRAWBERRY..."

S.S.: "WHY...?"

M.M.: " 'CAUSE YOU WERE BLACK, YOU DON'T DRINK COKES. 'YOU DON'T DRINK THE SAME FOUNTAIN DRINK THAT I DRINK, OR MY FAMILY DRINK. AND WHEN YOU MEET MY WIFE OR DAUGHTER COMING DOWN THE STREET, YOU PULL YOUR HAT OFF AND GET ON THE STREET. YOU DON'T WALK ON THE SAME SIDEWALK MY WIFE WALK AND DAUGHTER WALK ON,' (IN MANSFIELD HERE). 'I CAN MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER OR I CAN DATE YOUR DAUGHTER, BUT DON'T YOU LOOK AT MINE. DON'T LOOK AT THEM'. . (NOT. . LET ALONE DATE 'EM). 'YOU DON'T LOOK AT 'EM. IF YOU DO, WE'D FIND YOU IN A DITCH SOMEWHERE.'

"THAT WAS THEN, AND SOMETIMES IT'S THAT-A-WAY NOW. THAT WAS THE JIM CROW LAW, THAT I KNEW ABOUT."

L.S.: "I REMEMBER WHEN UH, MANSFIELD ONLY HAD. . I DON'T KNOW IF HE CALL HISSELF A POLICE. . A CONSTABLE OR WHAT. HE DIDN'T HAVE NO CAR, BUT IF HE'D SEE BLACKS COME ALONG, HE WOULD SEE YOU MAYBE TWO BLOCKS AWAY. HE WAS WALKING HIMSELF. HIS NAME WAS BUD PIERCE. AND HE'D. . I. . HE'D HAVE A OLD GUN ON, AND HIS CLOTHES BARELY HANGING ON HIM.

"AND HE WOULD HOLLER, 'HEY! WHATCHA' DOIN' DOWN THERE?.' AND HE'D HOLLER AT YOU AND TELL YOU TO WAIT FOR HIM TO GET DOWN THERE TO YOU, TO QUESTION YOU. HE MIGHT WANT TO ASK YOU, 'WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' THERE? WHAT YOU DOIN' DOWN HERE?' AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF. I REMEMBER THOSE DAYS.

"AND IF THAT WASN'T JIM CROW, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WOULD CALL IT. AND HE WOULDN'T EVER WANT YOU ON THE STREET. NEVER NO BLACK FACE ON FRONT. AND IF IT'D BE A NEW FACE IN MANSFIELD, WELL, IT WOULD JUST BE. . HE WOULD JUST RIDE 'EM DOWN. JUST 'CAUSE THEY WAS A NEW FACE."

S.S.: "SO, HOW LONG WAS HE IN POWER FOR?"

L.S.: "UNTIL HE DIED. . UNTIL HE DIED."

M.M.: "FIVE OR SIX YEARS OR SO. . HE DIED FROM OVEREATING!"

M.M.: "I UH. . PURCHASED A TRUCK STOP ON MAIN STREET. I BOUGHT IT OUTRIGHT 'CAUSE YOU COULDN'T BUY IT ON CREDIT. THEY WOULDN'T LOAN YOU THAT KIND OF MONEY. I BOUGHT IT OUTRIGHT--RIGHT ON MAIN STREET. THEN THE CITY. . HAD A SQUAD CAR THEN. AND WHAT THE POLICEMEN. . THEY HAD TWO POLICEMEN THEN. AND WHAT THEY WOULD DO. . (LUNCH TIME OR WHATEVER TIME, BUT MOST OF THE TIME, LUNCH TIME). . .

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "THEY WOULD COME AND PUT THEIR CAR ON MY GREASE RACK. SO, YOU COULD RAISE THE CAR UP OFF THE GROUND AND WALK UP UNDER IT--CHANGE THE OIL. THEY'D PUT THEIR CAR ON THE GREASE RACK AND TAKE THE KEYS. THEY WOULD. . . IF YOU HAD TO DO SOMETHING TO IT, THAT WOULDN'T BE NO MONEY. THEY'D TAKE THE KEYS AND THEY'D BE GONE FOR AN HOUR, (HOUR AND A HALF), AND TIE UP YOUR WASH RACK AND GREASE RACK. OR THEY'D LEAVE IT PARKED--TO BE FILLED UP WITH GAS IN MY SERVICE STATION. AND THEY WOULD GO SOMEWHERE WITH THE KEYS, AND YOU COULDN'T MOVE IT.

"AND THAT WAS IN SEVENTY. . . I OWNED IT FROM SEVENTY-NINE, (NO FROM SIXTY-NINE, UNTIL SEVENTY-FOUR). SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN IN SEVENTY. SO ONE DAY HE DID LEAVE HIS KEYS. AND I HAD ME SOME MADE FOR HIS CAR--THE POLICE CAR. AND THAT WAS A NO-NO. YOU KNOW. . . HE'D LEAVE HIS CAR SITTING IN MY DRIVE WAY OR ON MY GREASE RACK. HE'D COME BACK AND HE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW I WAS MOVING HIS CAR.

" 'WHY WOULD YOU MOVE MY CAR?' "

" 'WHY WOULD YOU LEAVE IT ON MY LOT?' "

" 'WELL, YOU COME GO WITH ME THEN AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT. . . '

"A GUY WAS MAKING A U-TURN AND RAN INTO ME. . . I GOT THE TICKET. . . JUST BECAUSE I WAS ON FRONT STREET. I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN THERE.

" 'IF YOU HADN'T OF BEEN THERE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOT HIT.' TORE UP MY CAR.

"BUT HE NEVER DID. . . HE EXPIRED NOT KNOWING HOW I CAN MOVE HIS CAR WITH THE GEARS LOCKED TOO, IN PARK. HA, HA, HA. HE WASN'T SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW I HAD A KEY FOR IT. AND, THAT WAS. . . THAT WAS A FUN TIME TO ME. YOU KNOW? HE'D LEAVE HIS CAR AND I'D DRIVE IT OFF.

"AND THEN. . . HE HAD. . . I HAD GOTTEN A LETTER A COUPLE OF TIMES THAT 'TOMORROW IF YOU OPEN UP, THE DOOR WILL BLOW UP IN YOUR FACE,' OR SOMETHING. . . 'YOU'LL HAVE A TRAGEDY HERE IF YOU OPEN YOUR BUSINESS TOMORROW.' JUST CRANK JOKES. AND THEN ONE MORNING, MY HELPERS, (I HAD THREE GUYS WORKING FOR ME), OPENED THE DOOR AND WENT IN THERE AND THERE WAS SOME RATTLESNAKES."

S.S.: "AND THIS WAS IN THE SEVENTIES?"

M.M.: "YEAH IT WAS IN SEVENTY-TWO. BECAUSE I SOLD IT SEVENTY-TWO. THOSE SNAKES. . . OTHER WORDS, SOME OF THE CUSTOMERS HAD BEEN IN THE . . . GREASE RACK, WASH RACK AREA AND HAD THOSE SNAKES. THEY STILL DO HAVE RATTLESNAKE HUNTS. ROUND 'EM UP, YOU KNOW. AND THEY PUT A COUPLE OF THEM. . . THEY WAS SMALL, BUT THEY STILL WAS RATTLERS. JUST THINGS. . . TO HUMILIATE YOU."

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S.S.: "WHEN YOU, AS A YOUNGER MAN, WOULD GO TO STORES IN MANSFIELD, WERE THERE STORES THAT WOULD NOT SELL TO YOU, OBVIOUSLY? AND WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES, IF YOU CAN REMEMBER THEM. . .?"

M.M.: "...THE PEOPLE THAT OWNED THE STORES?"

S.S.: "YEA-H-H."

M.M.: "AH-H. . .LET ME SEE. THERE WEREN'T BUT ABOUT THREE STORES IN MANSFIELD--SID GIBSON, TROY AND HAROLD SALES, AND WYNN AND CABNEY'S. THEY'D SELL YOU BEANS, PIG KNUCKLES OR FEET, OR SOME KIND OF PORK. BUT WHEN YOU GET READY TO BUY BEEF, THEY'D SAY 'WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH THAT KIND OF MEAT?' 'YOU GET THIS. . .THIS IS A GOOD. . .CUT.' AND THEN WHEN YOU GO TO THE REGISTER TO PAY FOR IT AND I HAVE A BASKET FULL. AND 'YOUR' WIFE WOULD BE THERE, AND SHE'D BE BEHIND ME. . . 'CAN I HELP YOU MISSES SO-AND-SO? . . .UH, SHE'S IN A HURRY. . . YOU STAND RIGHT HERE.' AND YOU KNOW. . . YOU'D HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL YOUR WIFE PAID FOR HER THINGS.

"THEN YOU PAY FOR YOURS. AND THEN THEY WOULD. . . THEY HAD A ONION SACK, A CABBAGE SACK, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THEY WOULD PUT YOUR GROCERIES IN THAT. THEY WOULDN'T PUT IT IN PAPER SACK, AND THEY DIDN'T HAVE PLASTIC BAGS. THEN, AND THEY WOULDN'T PUT IT A PAPER SACK. AND IF YOU WOULD ASK FOR A PAPER SACK, 'WELL, THIS IS A LOT MORE STRONGER. YOU CAN THROW THIS ON YOUR BACK AND WALK OUT OF HERE WITH IT.' THEY HAVE DID ME THAT-A-WAY. AND THEY WOULDN'T HAND IT TO YOU. THEY'D. . . YOU KNOW.

"AND IF YOU. . . THEY'S GIVING YOU CHANGE BACK. . . IF YOU GIVE 'EM A DOLLAR, AND YOU HAD TWENTY-FIVE, THIRTY CENTS CHANGE. AND YOU HAD YOUR HAND OUT TO GET IT, THEY WOULDN'T PUT IT IN YOUR HAND. . . THEY'D LET IT FALL. BUT YOU HAD TO BUY IT, BECAUSE COULDN'T WALK TO FORT WORTH TO, GET IT OR NOWHERE.

"KENNEDALE WAS EVEN WORSE. STILL IS. . . FOREST HILL. . . COULDN'T WALK THERE AND GET IT, YOU KNOW, JUST WHAT EVER YOU WANTED. . . YOU NEED FOOD. AND THAT WAS SOME OF THE LAWS. THE JIM CROW LAWS THAT CITIZENS WENT TO EXTREME'S TO PUSH, YOU KNOW. THAT WASN'T NO LAW. THAT WAS JUST A LAW, THEY MADE. . . TO HELP THEMSELF."

S.S.: "JUST MEANNESS. . ."

M.M.: "THAT WAS THEIR LAW. AND WHEN YOU RIDE THE BUS, YOU WOULD BE THE LAST ONE ON. BUT YOU HAD TO SQUEEZE THROUGH THE WHITES TO GET TO THE BACK. AND THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO TOUCH THEM. IF YOU HAD TO GO TO THE BACK, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST ONE ON, YOU KNOW, IF THEY DIDN'T WANT TO GET TOUCHED.

"BUT THAT WAS THE WAY IT WAS. TRAINS. . . YOU BE IN THE ARMY AND YOU'D BE COMING OUT OF. . . JUST. . . SAY FROM WEST, CALIFORNIA OR ARIZONA, MEXICO. YOU'D

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] HAVE TO RIDE TOGETHER. JUST MIXED UP TOGETHER. BUT WHEN YOU'D GET TO EL PASO, IF YOU WERE COMING FROM OUT WEST, (COMING OUT TWENTY TO GET TO EL PASO), THEY WOULD STOP. AND YOU WOULD HAVE TO GET IN YOUR PART WHERE IT SAYS 'COLORED.' 'COLORED' FOUNTAINS, AND 'WHITE.' 'COLORED' RESTROOMS, AND 'WHITE.' IT DIDN'T SAY *WHAT* COLOR. YOU JUST PRESUMED IT MEANT YOU. 'COLORED.' YOU KNOW, YOU'RE 'COLORED.' SOME COLOR, YOU KNOW. THAT'S THE WAY THEY'D HAVE ON THE. . . IT WRITTEN DOWN. 'COLORED.' AND THEY JUST PRESUMED THAT YOU KNEW IT WAS FOR YOU.

"AND THEN THERE WAS A TIME YOU'D GO INTO STORES. AND THEY WOULDN'T HAVE. . . SOME COMPANIES WOULDN'T HAVE. . . RESTROOMS THAT HAD 'COLORED' ON IT, OR FOUNTAINS FOR 'COLORED.' AND IF YOU'D BE IN THAT STORE AND YOU HAD TO USE THE RESTROOM, YOU KNOW IT'S NOTHING TO. . . YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ANY WHERE TO GO. SO, I WAS ALWAYS THE TYPE THAT MADE SOME NOISE.

"I WENT TO *PENNEY'S.*' YOU EVER OF *J. C. PENNEY'S.* AND IN THE BASEMENT, THEY HAD HOUSEWARES. AND 'NOPE,' THEY DIDN'T HAVE A RESTROOM. 'NAW, YOU CAN'T USE, YOU CAN'T USE THAT RESTROOM.' THEY HAD THOSE BIG TUMBLER TEA GLASSES, I CAN SEE IT. AND I CAN REMEMBER I BOUGHT ONE, AND TOLD THAT GUY TO 'STAND HERE AND I'M GOIN' USE THAT GLASS,' IF HE DIDN'T HAVE A RESTROOM. HE SAID 'YOU GO ON RIGHT IN THERE AND YOU CAN GO.' SOMETIME YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE A LITTLE NOISE."

L.S.: "DEMAND THINGS. . ."

M.M.: "YOU JUST GOTTA' D'MAND. OTHERWISE, THEY'D JUST PUSH YOU BACK. I JUST TOLD HIM. HE SAID 'WHAT ARE YOU GONNA' DO WITH THAT GLASS?' I JUST TOLD HIM, 'YOU DON'T HAVE TO SACK IT, I'M JUST GOIN' SET IT BACK UP HERE.'

" 'BUT IT'S WORTH A DIME.' "

" 'I'M JUST GOIN' USE IT RIGHT HERE AND SET IN DOWN.' "

" 'OH NO! YOU CAN COME GO ON IN THERE. I'LL STAY HERE AT THE DOOR.' "

"SEE THAT, TO ME, THAT MEAN. A BIG THING. BUT TO SOME OF THEM, THE AREAS THAT SAW IT WAS COMING TO 'EM. BUT IT WASN'T COMING TO ME. IT WAS SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO. AND IF YOU DONE PURCHASED MERCHANDISE IN THERE, THEY SHOULD HAVE FACILITIES FOR YOU.

"AND THAT WAS IN THE SEVENTIES. . . THAT WEREN'T BACK IN THE FIFTIES THAT WAS UP IN THE SEVENTIES."

S.S.: "AND WHERE WAS THAT?"

M.M.: "EXCUSE ME? . . ."

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S.S.: "WHERE WAS . . ."

M.M.: "DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH, I THINK IT WAS. . .PENNEY'S, A FIVE AND TEN CENT STORE? IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WOOLSWORTH."

S.S.: "WOOLSWORTH?"

M.M.: "YEAH. WOOLSWORTH, FIVE AND TEN CENT STORE. I THINK IT MIGHT BE STILL DOWN THERE. I DON'T KNOW."

S.S.: "YEAH. THE SIGN IS. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH. THAT WAS RIGHT NEXT DOOR."

S.S.: "THAT'S BARELY TWENTY YEARS AGO."

M.M.: "IT'S STILL SOME OF THOSE LAWS. . ."

L.S.: "YOU STILL RUN INTO SOME OF 'EM."

M.M.: "YEAH. YOU RUN INTO SOME NOW. . ."

S.S.: "WHAT HAPPENED HERE DURING PROHIBITION?"

M.M.: "DURING WHAT'S THAT. . .?"

S.S.: "PROHIBITION. . .LIKE UP IN NORTHEASTERN TARRANT COUNTY. THEY, THERE'S SOME INDICATION THAT THERE'S A. . .WAS LOT OF BOOTLEGGING GOING ON."

M.M.: "AW, YEAH. THERE WERE THERE. AND THERE WAS SOME BOOTLEGGING GOING ON HERE, ALSO. IT WAS SEVERAL WHISKEY STILLS BOOTLEGGING. AND THEN, THEY WOULD GO TO FORT WORTH OR WHERE EVER YOU BUY IT IN BOTTLES. IT WAS ALREADY. . .IT WAS SEALED WHISKEY, BRAND WHISKEY, KENTUCKY WHISKEY, BOURBON--WHATEVER. AND THEY'D BRING IT BACK AND THEY'D BOOTLEG. . .THEY'D SELL IT. YOU KNOW RE-SELL IT. THEY'D BUY IT IN PINTS, AND THEN RE-SELL IT. BUT THEN THERE WERE SOME OF THE GUYS HERE THAT MADE IT OUT OF CORN. CALLED IT 'CORN WHISKEY' AND 'GRAPE WINE', . . .MADE WINE AND MADE, UH. . .BEER OUT OF SWEET, UH. . .'OSH' POTATOES.

S.S.: " 'WHAT IS AN 'OSH' POTATO?"

M.M.: "THAT'S 'CHOCK'. . .'CHOCK.' "

L.S.: " 'IRISH' POTATOES. . .'WHITE' POTATOES."

M.M.: "THEY'D TAKE 'OSH' POTATOES. 'IRISH POTATOES,' YOU KNOW. WHAT YOU MAKE FRENCH FRIES OUT OF? IS THAT, 'IRISH' OR WHAT KIND OF POTATO?"

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L.S.: "IDAHO..."

M.M.: "IDAHO POTATOES. WELL, OKAY. I WASN'T DISCRIMINATING. 'OSH' POTATO. I WASN'T DISCRIMINATING. 'IRISH.' BUT THAT'S WHAT I'VE HEARD, IDAHO POTATOES. THEY WOULD TAKE THE HULLS, AND YOU CAN MAKE BEER OUT OF THAT. YOU CAN TAKE CORN. . . UH YELLOW. . . WHITE CORN, AND YOU CAN MAKE WHISKEY JUST LIKE WATER."

S.S.: "H-M-M-M. . ."

M.M.: "IT WAS A LOT OF BOOTLEGGING GOING ON."

L.S.: "I REMEMBER BACK IN MY DADDY'S LIFE TIME. HE USED TO SAY, WHEN WE WERE SMALL. . . THEN THEY DIDN'T HAVE CARS AND THINGS. THEY HAD WAGONS AND THEY WOULD GO TO FORT WORTH. IT WOULD TAKE 'EM A DAY TO GO WHERE THEY WERE GOING. AND THEY WOULD GET THE WHISKEY AND STUFF. . . THAT THEY WOULD GO AND. . . AND IT'D TAKE 'EM A DAY TO COME BACK."

S.S.: "UH-HUH. . ."

L.S.: "BUT THEY WOULD ALWAYS GET A SUPPLY AND BRING IT BACK AND BOOTLEG IT."

S.S.: "H-U-M-P-H. . ."

L.S.: "BUT, THEY'D BET NOT GET CAUGHT WITH IT. BUT I. . . I REMEMBER ALL OF THAT STUFF. BUT NOW THEY WOULD GO THERE AND. . . TRYIN' TO MAKE A LIVIN', YOU KNOW, ALONG WITH WHATEVER ELSE THEY HAD. COURSE THEY RAISED. . . YOU KNOW, . . . HE HAD . . . WE DIDN'T NEVER HAVE TO BUY NO MEAT OR NOTHING LIKE THAT. SO, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO ARGUE ABOUT NO MEATS. 'CAUSE HE ALWAYS SEEN TO IT US HAVING CHICKENS, COWS. . . JUST WHATEVER KIND OF MEAT YOU'D NAME--WE HAD IT. BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE NO GOOD WAY TO KEEP IT. BUT BACK IN THOSE DAYS, WE HAD A SMOKEHOUSE, IF YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF A SMOKE HOUSE. . ."

S.S.: "OH YEAH. . ."

L.S.: "WE HAD SMOKEHOUSES. AND WE WOULD HANG THOSE HAMS AND LIKE. WHEN CHRISTMAS COME UP, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO BUY NO HAM. . ."

M.M.: "USE A SALT BOX, TOO."

L.S.: "ALL OF THE PLACES. . . UH, HUH, SALT IT DOWN. SOME OF IT BE HANGIN' THERE. YOU COULD GO OUT THERE AND CUT A PIECE OFF AND JUST EAT IT RIGHT THERE. IT'D BE DONE CURED OUT. BUT YOU CAN'T DO THAT NOW-A-DAYS. IT WON'T CURE OUT. LIKE, YOU HEAR. . . YOU DON'T HEAR OF IT NO MORE."

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] "AND MY MOTHER. . . PEOPLE WOULD COME OUT OF FORT WORTH AND ALL. THEY WOULD. . . THEY WOULD COME THERE 'CAUSE THERE WASN'T NO TELEPHONE THEN. AT LEAST WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A TELEPHONE WAS. . . 'CAUSE IF WE USE THE TELEPHONE, WE HAD TO GO TO THE BOSS PEOPLE'S HOUSE AND USE THEY TELEPHONE AND CALL. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A TELEPHONE WAS COMING UP. THAT'S WHY TELEPHONES AND TV'S AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF, IT DON'T BOTHER ME. 'CAUSE I DIDN'T GROW UP WITH IT. SO, WHY I'M GOIN' ACT A FOOL OVER IT NOW."

S.S.: "HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE. . . THROUGH THE MAIL?"

L.S.: "THROUGH THE MAIL. WHEN WE USE TO GET CLOTHES, MY MAMA WOULD MAIL, SHE MIGHT WOULD, UH, ORDER A OLD SPEG. . . I DON'T KNOW IF Y'ALL'S OLD COMPANY, NAMED *SPIEGEL*. WE ALWAYS HAD A CATALOG. WE'D GET IT EVERY MONTH.

"AND WHEN THEY'D GET THROUGH WITH THE CATALOG, IT GO TO THE OUT HOUSE. THAT WAS THE TOILET TISSUE. AND SHE WOULD ORDER. . . LIKE SO MANY BLOCKS OF. . . HEY HAD THOSE BIG BUNDLES OF. . . 'OUTING.' SHE DONE OUR OWN SEWING. . . SAME THING 'BOUT DRESSES AND EVERYTHING LIKE THAT. SHE MADE 'EM. THAT'S HOW WE WOULD SHOP."

S.S.: "H-M-M-M. . ."

L.S.: "THROUGH THAT. . . AND LETTERS. IT WOULDN'T BE NO TELEPHONE. NO PHONE CALLING AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF. NO ELECTRICITY. . . LAMP BURNING, KEROSENE. YOU CAN HAVE KEROSENE, NOT NO GAS."

M.M.: ". . . WOOD STOVE."

L.S.: "WOOD STOVE. . . ALL OF THAT KIND OF STUFF."

S.S.: "WHEN DID, UH Y'ALL GET ELECTRICITY?. . . AND OTHER UTILITIES LIKE GAS AND WATER AND SEWER?"

M.M.: "ME. . . WHEN I GOT, IS WHEN I BOUGHT MY OWN PLACE. WHEN I LIVED ON THE WHITE GUY'S PLACE, HIS HOUSE NEVER DID HAVE. . . IT'D USUALLY BE JUST UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH THE WATER DIDN'T RUN TO THE RENT HOUSE. AND THEN, ONE OF THE GUY'S PLACE I LIVED ON, HE HAD A. . . HE DIDN'T HAVE ELECTRICITY. HE HAD SOMETHING THEY CALLED A 'CHARGER.' WIND WOULD CHARGE IT AND MAKE HIS LIGHTS. AND IT WOULD KEEP. . ."

S.S.: "THAT'S A TURBINE."

M.M.: "YEAH. IT COULD CHARGE UP AND IT'D MAKE LIGHT. IT WASN'T AS BRIGHT AS ELECTRIC LIGHT, BUT IT WAS BRIGHT. AND IF THE WOOD WAS DAMP, YOU DIDN'T EAT RIGHT AWAY. YOU'D HAVE TO WAIT TILL THAT WOOD DRY. YOU HAVE TO BRING IT IN FROM OUTDOORS. . . AND STINGING SCORPIONS WOULD BE IN THAT WOOD. PUT IT IN

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] THERE, AND WHEN THE HOUSE GET WARM, THOSE STINGING SCORPIONS WOULD COME OUT OF THAT WOOD, OUT OF THE BARK. AND THEY WOULD BITE YOU--BIG TIME. . .STING YOU! THAT'S, . . . THAT WAS. . .BUT IF YOU DOWN, AND YOU NEVER BEEN UP, YOU DON'T NEVER KNOW YOU DOWN. YOU KNOW, IF YOU NEVER BEEN UP, YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE DOWN."

L.S.: "WE HAVEN'T BEEN TOO AWFUL LONG GOT WATER. . .IN THE CITY."

M.M.: "HOW'D YOU GET KEROSENE?"

L.S.: "AND WE STILL DON'T HAVE GAS. . .IN THE CITY."

S.S.: "YOU STILL DON'T HAVE GAS?"

L.S.: "WE DON'T HAVE GAS IN THE CITY."

M.M.: "KEROSENE. . .YOU. . ."

L.S.: "WE GOT BUTANE, YOU KNOW. EACH INDIVIDUAL HAVE AT THEIR OWN HOUSE. BUT THE GAS DON'T COME FROM THE CITY. ELECTRICITY COMES FROM 'EM. WE GOT THAT, NOW. WE'VE HAD THAT ELECTRICITY LONGER THAN WE HAVE HAD ANYTHING."

S.S.: "WHEN DID Y'ALL GET ELECTRICITY?"

M.M.: "OH. . .ELECTRICITY HAD BEEN OUT FOR UH, AT. . .ON THIS SIDE OF TOWN FOR QUITE AWHILE. BUT WATER. . .THEY HAD A. . .ABOUT A TWO AND A HALF INCH PIPE THAT. . ."

L.S.: "I WAS THE ONE THAT STARTED THE WRITING UP FOR THAT. . .AFTER I GOT GROWN."

M.M.: "THAT SERVED EVER ONE OUT HERE. AND AT THE PEAK OF THE DAY OR AT PRIME TIME IN THE EVENING, YOU DIDN'T HARDLY HAVE A STREAM OF WATER. IT WAS, YOU KNOW, AT NIGHT WHEN EVERYBODY GO TO BED. IT WAS, YOU KNOW, WATER WOULD SHOOT FIVE OR SIX FOOT OUT YOUR HYDRANT.

"THEN I GOT ON THE CITY COUNCIL. SO, ABOUT FIFTEEN YEAR AGO. AND THEN, UH, WHAT THEY HAD HERE, YOU HAD YOUR GARBAGE, TRASH. . .N YOU'D HAVE TO BURN IT. THE CITY PASSED AN ORDINANCE THAT YOU COULDN'T BURN THE TRASH, BUT WASN'T NOWHERE TO DO IT. AND THEN THEY GOT US A TRASH WAGON, GARBAGE WAGON, SUPPOSEDLY TO COME PICK IT UP.

"AND THEN, WE GOT SEWAGE. I WAS ON THE COUNCIL. AND, AND, I GUESS BY MY PRESENCE BEING THERE ALONE, (THIS ONE BLACK GUY ON THERE), WE WENT TO AUSTIN AND GOT A GRANT, OR THE CITY PLANNERS AND ALL GOT US A GRANT FOR SEWAGE. NOW WE HAVE SEWAGE, WATER. WE HAVE THE CITY FACILITIES EXCEPT GAS.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "AND THEN I FOUND OUT WHY WE COULDN'T GET NATURAL GAS. BECAUSE, UH. . . *LONE STAR*, I THINK, (A HUNDRED FOOT EITHER DIRECTION FROM YOUR HOUSE), THAT THEY WOULD PIPE. IF YOUR HOUSE WAS THERE, THEY'D PIPE TO THIS HOUSE A HUNDRED FOOT. BUT IF IT'S TWO HUNDRED FOOT, YOU'D HAVE TO PAY."

S.S.: "FOR THAT EXTRA HUNDRED. . ."

M.M.: "THAT EXTRA HUNDRED OR. . . WERE MORE LIKE THIS FAR OUT, IT'S MORE OR LESS LIKE, UH, THREE OR FOUR HUNDRED YARDS OR FARTHER. SOME HOUSES ARE FARTHER THAN THREE OR FOUR HUNDRED YARDS. AND UH, YOU NEEDN'T HOLD MY FEET SO FAR. BUT I THINK IT'S THAT-A-WAY NOW. IF YOU GET GAS, YOU HAVE TO PAY EXTRA MILES, WHAT EVER IT TAKES TO GET HERE. THEY'LL GIVE YOU A EXTRA HUNDRED FOOT, I THINK I'M RIGHT, OR IT USED TO BE THAT-A-WAY. AND. . . BUT RIGHT DOWN THE STREET COMING OUT THIS WAY, IT'S WIDE UNTIL YOU GET OUT RIGHT AT THE WEST SIDE OF TOWN. IT'S LIKE AS FUNNEL. IT'S WIDE. . . THEN IT. . . THEN IT COMES OUT. . . YOU'LL SEE WHEN YOU GO BACK."

S.S.: "UH HUH."

M.M.: "IT'S A GOOD STREET, BUT, I MEAN, STILL YOU DON'T BE WALKING AT NIGHT. WHEN YOU'RE WALKING AND THE SUN IS IN THE WEST, YOU'RE DRIVING AND YOU'RE WALKING, YOU DON'T SEE NOBODY WALKING. YOU'LL RUN OVER SOMEBODY."

S.S.: "CAN'T SEE?"

M.M.: "YOU KNOW, BUT LIKE I SAY, IT'S LIKE A FUNNEL. BUT BROAD STREET IS FIXIN' TO GO EAST TO 360. AND I THINK IT MIGHT BE THREE OR FOUR LANES GOING THERE."

L.S.: "THAT'S GOING EAST OR GOING WEST?"

M.M.: "THAT'S GOING EAST, NOT COMING WEST. YEAH, GOING EAST. AND IT'LL BE CEMENT. COMING HERE, IT'S CHIPS AND TAR, AND CHIPS OR GRAVEL. . ."

L.S.: "AND THE GAS STOP RIGHT AT ME, RIGHT UP THE HILL."

M.M.: "SO, THE LAST WHITE GUY, (THAT'S THE LAST HOUSE), IS THE GAS STOP. AND THEN THEY CHANGED THE RULES."

L.S.: "BUT IT'S CITY LIMITS. . . INSIDE THE CITY LIMITS."

S.S.: "OKAY, UH-H. . ."

M.M.: "YOU KNOW, IT'S A PARK. IT'S TWO PARKS ON THIS SIDE OF TOWN NAMED AFTER ME."

S.S.: "UH HUH. . ."

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M.M.: "BUT THEY WAS. . . THEY CAME FIRST. . . PUT YOU A GOOD PARK HERE--GOOD LOOKING PARK. PUT YOU SOME CEMENT ON ONE. PUT YOU SOME LIGHTS ON ONE. ONE WOULD HAVE A BASKETBALL GOAL. AND THEN, (WHEN THEY PUT THE FIRST ONE IN), THEY HAD THE BASKETBALL GOAL AND THE PICNIC AREAS.

"AND THEN THEY GO ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN. AND THEY PUT IN A MIDNIGHT PARK. A MILLION OR MORE DOLLARS. AND THEN, THEY COME AND PUT ANOTHER MC CLENDON PARK. AND THEN, RIGHT UNDER YOU NOSE, AT ALLMON PARK, THEY. . . THAT'S HALF A CENT SALES TAX. BUT I MEAN, THAT STILL BESIDES THE POINT.

"THEY PUT YOU THIS. . . 'SHUT UP! YOU GOT THAT! YOU GOT SOMETHING, NOW YOU SHUT UP!' . . . AND WE'LL DO WHAT WE WANT THERE.' YOU KNOW? THAT. . . SOMETIMES. . . IT JUST GRIPES YOU. BUT IT'S WHAT CAN YOU DO? PLAY IN YOUR OWN YARD. BECAUSE EVERYBODY OUT THIS WAY OWN THEY OWN PROPERTY. SO, OH THEY CAN PLAY IN THEIR OWN YARD. THEY DON'T HAVE TO PLAY IN NO PARK. AND THEN TOO, I'M TOO OLD TO SHOOT A BASKETBALL ANYWAY. HA, HA,HA. . .

"THAT'S JUST SOME OF THE LAWS THAT'S STILL ENFORCED. YOU KNOW SOMETIMES THE CITY, THE CITIES. . . AND CITY GOVERNMENTS, THEY STILL SORTA' LEAN BACK TO THE FIFTIES. THEY DON'T WANT TO COME ON UP."

S.S.: "WHO'S EVER IN POWER. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH. YOU KNOW IF YOU GET, SAY, . . . YOU'RE IN POWER AND YOU WEREN'T RAISED THAT-A-WAY, YOU MORE OR LESS GO STRAIGHT DOWN THE LINE. BUT IF YOU WERE IN POWER AND YOU WERE RAISED THAT-A-WAY, WELL, YOU SORTA' BEAR THE WAY YOU WAS RAISED, YOU KNOW. IF YOU WEREN'T RAISED WHERE EVERYBODY GET TO EQUALS, THEN YOU DON'T PUSH IT. AND I CAN DIG IT."

S.S.: "TODAY, IN SOME OF OUR DISCUSSIONS SPECIFICALLY TALKING ABOUT SELF SUFFICIENCY FOR BLACK FARMERS, UH. . . ARE WE TALKING. . . IS THIS A GENERAL PATTERN FOR BOTH SHARECROPPING FARMERS AND PEOPLE WHO OWN THEIR OWN FARM? WHERE THEY ARE MAKING SURE THAT THEY RAISE CHICKENS, YOU KNOW. . . AND LIVE STOCK TO SUPPLY THEIR MEAT DIETARY NEEDS IN ADDITION TO BOTH VEGETABLE AND FRUIT?"

M.M.: "WHAT IS THAT? WAY BACK IN FIFTY, THE SHARECROPPERS AND. . ."

S.S.: "YEAH. I WANT TO TAKE IT BACK TO TEEN'S, TWENTIES, THIRTIES--BEFORE FARMING KINDA' DIES."

M.M.: "OKAY, YEAH, UH. . . THE SHARECROPPERS, BACK THEN, MORE OR LESS, YOU GREW EVERYTHING THAT SUPPLIED YOUR FAMILY'S NEEDS; EXCEPT CLOTHES, FLOUR, MEAL. YOU CHOP YOUR CORN AND GRIND IT. YOUR MEAT, YOU RAISED YOUR PIG AND YOU KILLED IT. YOUR CHICKENS, YOU HAD TO HAVE THAT. THAT'S WHEN YOU'RE SPLURGING, WHEN YOU EAT YOUR CHICKEN. AND BIG-TIME SPLURGING WHEN YOU EAT ONE OF YOUR TURKEYS.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "BUT YOUR BEEF, YOU DON'T PUT A BEEF IN SALT OR SMOKE IT. BEEF IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN FRESH. YOU KNOW, FRESH RED BEEF. THAT'S WHY BACK THEN, I DON'T THINK THEY KILLED BEEF. SOME FOLKS OWNED THEIR BEEF. LIKE HER FATHER, HE OWNED HIS OWN BEEF. BUT YOU DIDN'T SMOKE BEEF, OR IF YOU DID, IF YOU SMOKE IT, IT WOULD'A BEEN JERKY. YOU DON'T HAVE NO. . .NO T-BONE STEAK AS JERKY. SO THAT'S WHY THEY DIDN'T KILL BEEF.

"THEY KILLED PORK; SMOKED IT AND PUT IT IN SALT. CHICKEN, WHEN YOU WERE SPLURGING AND HAVING A GUEST OVER AND HAVE FRIED CHICKEN. OR CHICKEN AND DRESSING. THEN TURKEYS IS LIKE THIS TIME OF THE YEAR. HAM, YOU COULD HAVE IT ANY TIME 'CAUSE IT'S YOURS. YEAH, THEY REQUIRED YOU. . .

"AND THEN LIKE YOUR CLOTHES, YOU GET A BIG OL' CATALOG, LIKE SHE WAS SAYING--*SPIEGELS, WARDS, SEARS*. AND WHEN YOU ORDERED YOUR CLOTHES, YOU KNEW YOUR SIZE. YOU TAKE YOUR SIZE, AND THEY HAD A PIECE OF MATERIAL IN THERE. THAT YOU COULD FEEL THAT MATERIAL. . .SEE WHAT YOU WAS. . .SUIT, DRESS, PANT WAS GONNA' LOOK LIKE LITTLE OL' PIECE OF MATERIAL GLUED IN THERE. AND YOU ORDERED 'EM, TWO, THREE WEEKS, A MONTH. THEY WOULD RETURN, AND HOPEFULLY, YOU MET THE MAIL MAN BEFORE RAIN GOT ON IT. GET IT WET 'CAUSE SOMETIME IT HANGING OUT THERE AND YOU IN THE FIELD. AND IT'D BE RAINED ON AND IT 'D RUIN IT."

S.S.: "WAS. . .WAS THIS, WERE THESE ITEMS STRICTLY OR PRODUCED STRICTLY FOR THE BLACK MARKET?"

M.M.: "NOT NECESSARILY, 'CAUSE. . ."

S.S.: "DID THEY. . .WERE THEY AWARE? I MEAN, THEY WERE OBVIOUSLY AWARE THAT THEY WERE GETTING A LARGE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION."

M.M.: "YEAH. . . THEY KNEW THAT MORE OR LESS. THEY'D GET QUITE A FEW BLACKS. BUT REMIND ME NOW, BACK THEN, THERE WAS A LOT OF POOR WHITES. . .A LOT OF 'EM. AND IT WAS MORE POOR WHITE FOLKS THEN, THAN IT WERE NEGROES. BECAUSE IT WAS MORE WHITES AND THEY LIVED POORER THAN THE NEGRO. BECAUSE YOU COULD JUST TELL WHEN YOU SEEN A POOR WHITE GUY, SOMETHING LOOKED ABOUT HIM. YOU COULD SEE HIM DOWN HE ROAD AND SAY, 'AW, MAN, THAT GUY'S POOR. LET'S HELP HIM.' IT'S JUST SOMETHING WAS ABOUT IT.

"BUT NO. . .IT WASN'T JUST FOR STRICTLY BLACKS. IT WAS FOR EVERYBODY. BUT THAT'S THE WAY I AND THE PEOPLE I KNEW ORDERED THEIR CLOTHES. THAT THEY WANTED 'CAUSE YOU JUST DIDN'T GO IN THIS ONE DRY GOODS STORE IN MANSFIELD. *MANDELSTEP'S AND MEDWALL'S*, AND TRY ON. THEY. . .*MEDWALL'S* WAS FROM JERUSALEM. . .HE WAS A JEW."

S.S.: "JERUSALEM?. . .WHERE? HE WAS JEWISH?"

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M.M.: "YEAH HE WAS A JEW. AND HE HAD A ACCENT. AND HE WOULD TELL YOU 'NAW.' *DON'T PUT THAT ON.*' HE DON'T WANT YOU TO PUT THAT ON. HE WOULD TAKE HIS COAT AND PUT IT ON YOUR BACK, YOU KNOW--PRESS IT UP AGAINST YOUR BACK. AND IF HE DID PUT IT ON YOU, AND IT WAS TOO LARGE. AND THAT'S WHAT HE WANTED YOU TO HAVE, HE WOULD TIGHTEN IT UP AT THE BACK, AND LET YOU LOOK IN THE MIRROR IN THE FRONT. AND TELL YOU THAT IS. . ."

L.S.: " *'THAT FIT YOU GOOD,*' HE SAYS, AS HE'S HOLDING IT IN THE BACK."

M.M.: "YEAH. IT'S ALL WRINKLED UP, FOLDED UP IN THE BACK, AND YOU'D BUY IT. *'DON'T BRING IT BACK EITHER. WHEN YOU BUY IT, IT'S YOURS.'* "

L.S.: "HA, HA, HA. THAT'S TRUE. . . *'YOU CAN'T COME BACK.'* "

M.M.: " *'DON'T COME BACK.'* I MEAN IF YOU WAS WEAK ENOUGH TO LET HIM, YOU KNOW, FOLD THAT IN THE BACK, (AND HE'D HUG YOU AND HOLD IT IN THE BACK IN THERE). AND HE'D HAVE IT FITTING JUST LIKE THIS SHIRT ON ME. AND YOU'D THINK YOU HAD YOU A FITTING SUIT, BUT IT WOULD BE TOO LARGE. AND YOU TRY THE COAT ON.

"BUT THE PANTS. . . YOU JUST DIDN'T SLIP OUTTA' YOUR PANTS AND GET IN THEM PANTS UNLESS YOU BUY 'EM. THAT WAS A NO, NO. SHOES. . . YOU KNOW, THAT'S JUST LIKE NOW. BUYING A PAIR OF SOCKS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY ON A PAIR OF SOCKS. YOU KNOW YOU JUST PRESUME THAT'S WHAT YOU GOIN' WEAR. AND YOU JUST TAKE 'EM OUT WITH YOU."

L.S.: "YOU KNOW YOUR SIZE. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH. . . THAT'S THE WAY. . . THAT'S THE WAY YOU DID YOUR CLOTHES BACK THEN. . . YOU JUST TAKE. . . SHOES. SAME WAY, YOU DIDN'T PUT YOUR FOOT IN ANOTHER PAIR OF SHOES. AND. . . YOU ASK 'WH?' HE SAY *'WELL, I MIGHT WANT TO BUY THAT PAIR OF SHOES AND TRY IT ON, AND I DON'T WANT MY FOOT IN THERE WHERE YOU HAD YOUR FOOT IN THERE.'* YOU KNOW, JUST THAT BLUNT. AND WELL, IF YOU DIDN'T BUY IT FROM HIM AND GO NEXT DOOR AND BUY IT, IT'D BE THE SAME WAY. SO, YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO AHEAD AND ACCEPT IT FROM HIM."

S.S.: "GOING BACK TO THE ONE DAY TRIP TO FORT WORTH, WERE THERE MANY PEOPLE WHO WOULD GO TO FORT WORTH? WOULD THEY SHOP FOR THEIR FRIENDS? SAY IF YOU WERE A FARMER, ON WHAT OCCASION DO YOU GO TO FORT WORTH?"

M.M.: "WELL NOW, MORE OR LESS, I DON'T REALLY KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT THAT. 'CAUSE, LIKE I SAY, I WAS A KID AND I DIDN'T GET TO GO TO FORT WORTH ANY WAY."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "WELL, MOST OF THE TIME, (LIKE WHEN MY DAD AND THEM WOULD GO), IT WOULD BE LIKE A *'WAGON PULL'*. . ."

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S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "THEY'D GO AND THEY'D SHOP FOR THEMSELVES, EACH ONE. AND THEY. . . 'CAUSE THEY KNOW THEY GOIN' BE GONE FOR A DAY OR SO. 'CAUSE THAT'S. . . THAT WAS A LONG WAYS. AND IT WOULD TAKE 'EM A DAY TO GO, AND TAKE 'EM A DAY TO COME BACK. AND THEY'D DO THEIR SHOPPING, (YOU KNOW), LIKE NIGHTS I GUESS WHEN THEY GET THERE.

"THEN, YOU COULD JUST STOP ANYWHERE AND STAY. IT WASN'T LIKE IT IS NOW. YOU COULD JUST, YOU KNOW, LAY ANY WHERE. LIKE, I KNOW, YOU'VE SEEN THESE WAGONS AND THINGS. THEY WAGON TRAILS AND THINGS. AND THEY STOP WHEREVER THEY GET TIRED. AND THEY CARRY THEIR OWN WATER, THEY CARRY THEIR OWN FOOD--STUFF LIKE THAT. IT'D JUST BE THE SAME AS. . . LIKE THEY WAS GOING ON A VACATION. AND, YEAH. IT WOULD BE FRIENDS WITH 'EM. SOMETIMES IT WOULD BE MORE THAN ONE WAGON WOULD GO.

"AND IT WAS FUN TO THEM 'CAUSE THAT'S ALL THEY KNEW BACK IN THOSE DAYS. AND THEN, YOU KNOW, WHEN MY DADDY WOULD TELL ME ABOUT IT, (TELL US ABOUT IT). NOW I TOLD YOU IT WAS A BIG FAMILY OF US. . ."

S.S.: "WAS THERE AN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT IN FORT WORTH? SOMETHING LIKE 'DEEP ELLUM' OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?"

M.M.: "YEAH, THEY HAD A LOT OF ENTERTAINMENT. . ."

L.S.: "PLENTY. . ."

M.M.: "THEY HAD UH. . . THEY WOULD HAVE DANCES IN RESIDENCE, YOU KNOW. IN SOMEONE'S HOME, OR THEY'D HAVE NIGHTCLUBS. . ."

L.S.: ". . . MOSTLY PARTIES."

M.M.: "THEY'D HAVE LADIES OF THE NIGHT. THEY'D HAVE *RINGLING BROTHERS-BARNUM AND BAILEY*. THAT'S ONCE A YEAR. . . YOU KNOW?"

L.S.: "WE DIDN'T WANT TO MISS THAT. . . ME AND MY BROTHERS."

M.M.: "YEAH. . . AND THEY WOULD HAVE LOTS OF ACTIVITIES. THEY'D HAVE A ZOO. YOU'D GO TO THE ZOO ONCE A YEAR, THE NINETEENTH OF JUNE. AND LET'S SEE, SOMETHING ELSE THEY HAD, THEN. . . BUT, WELL, USUALLY WHEN YOU GO LIKE I WAS SAYIN', IF YOU JUST LOOKED AT ME, I'M BLACK. YOU JUST PRESUME IN YOUR MIND, NOW WELL, HE'S POOR. HE AIN'T GOT NOTHING.

"BUT IF I LOOKED AT YOU AND YOU HAD MONEY, WELL, YOU COULD TELL IT. BUT IF YOU WAS POOR AS I AM, YOU COULD SEE YOU AS FAR AS YOUR EYES COULD SEE. AND YOU COULD TELL THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE NOTHING. AND YOU WOULD BE THE VERY

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] ONE I'D HAVE TO WATCH, BECAUSE YOU WOULD BE THE HARDEST ONE TO TRY TO, YOU KNOW. . . BE THE MAN AT THE BIG HOUSE.

“BUT YOU LIVED IN A SMALLER HOUSE--HAD TO COME THROUGH MY YARD TO GET TO YOUR HOUSE. YEAH, THAT'S WHY YOU WOULD BE SO ROUGH BACK THEN IN THE FIFTIES. AND THEN, MOST WH. . . NOW, MOST OF THOSE GUYS BACK IN THE FIFTIES AND FORTIES, THEY WERE GROWN, MY AGE, THEN. . . WELL, THEY ALL DONE DECEASED. AND THEY GONE ON, AND THEIR CHILDREN. . .”

S.S.: “CARRIED ON. . .”

M.M.: “. . . THAT WENT TO SCHOOL WITH MY KIDS SAW THAT BLACKS WEREN'T AS BAD AS THEIR FOREPARENTS HAD PRETENDED THAT THEY WERE. THAT THEY WERE HUMAN BEINGS, AND THEY BLOOD WAS RED. THEY'RE A LITTLE BIT BETTER NOW, AND THAT'S WHY IT'S A LITTLE BIT BETTER NOW.

“BUT THERE'S STILL SOME THAT REMEMBER THE GRANDPARENTS. WHAT THE GRANDPARENTS SAID. AND THEY DIDN'T FORGET IT. SOMETIMES THAT THEY WORKING AT THE BIGGER HOUSE WITH THE RAZOR WIRE AROUND IT, BUT THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS. . .”

S.S.: “H-M-M-M. . . WELL, I LIVED IN GEORGIA SO I. . .”

M.M.: “IT'S B-A-D. . . AW, IT WAS BAD THEN, AND DOUBLE BAD NOW IN GEORGIA. . .”

L.S.: “WERE YOU BORN HERE?”

S.S.: “I WAS BORN IN CALIFORNIA. . . THE WHOLE SOUTHERN EXPERIENCE IS DIFFERENT FOR ME. . .”

M.M.: “BUT. . . BUT. . . LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT CALIFORNIA, TOO. CALIFORNIA WAS BAD, BUDDY. . .”

S.S.: “OH-H, YEAH. . . OH, YEAH.”

M.M.: “. . . CALIFORNIA WAS JUST AS BAD AS LOUISIANA OR KENTUCKY. RIGHT NOW, THINGS ARE JUST WIDE OPEN OUT THERE. . . WIDE OPEN.”

S.S.: “YEAH. . . RIGHT NOW. . . A VERY. . . DEFINITE RESURGENCE OF TRADITIONAL VALUES.”

M.M.: “I'D RATHER FOR YOU BE FROM TENNESSEE, THAN BE FROM CALIFORNIA. . .”

L.S.: “WE'VE HAD SOME GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES.”

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S.S.: "I'VE. . . I HAVE A FINAL QUESTION IN HERE. I SAY, SOMETIMES PEOPLE USE HUMOR TO DEAL WITH INTOLERABLE CONDITIONS THAT THEY ARE FORCED TO ENDURE, DO YOU HAVE ANY EXAMPLES OF THAT?"

M.M.: ". . . I DON'T GUESS I GOT THE QUESTION."

S.S.: "SOME PEOPLE USE HUMOR TO DEAL WITH CONDITIONS THAT ARE INTOLERABLE. AND I WANTED TO ASK IF YOU COULD SHARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THAT?"

M.M.: "FOR THE HUMOR?"

S.S.: "YEAH. . ."

M.M.: "LIKE UH. . . NOW IF I'M GETTIN' THE DEFINITION OF, '*FOR HUMOR.*' THAT MEANS IF I'M IN A BAD HUMOR?"

M.M.: "THAT AIN'T WHAT IT MEAN. . . WELL, TELL ME WHAT MEAN YOU, AND I'LL ANSWER IT."

S.S.: "N-O-O. I MEAN IF, YOU WILL USE A JOKE TO DEAL WITH SOMETHING THAT, THAT'S PAINFUL OR HUMILIATING."

M.M.: "YEAH. OH YEAH, THAT'S ME. THAT'S NINETY PERCENT OF MY LINE RIGHT NOW. YOU DO SOMETHING TO ME, (WELL EVEN IT HURTS MY FEELINGS SO BAD I COULD CRY), BUT I'LL MAKE A JOKE OUT OF IT. YOU KNOW I'LL JUST GO AND MAKE A JOKE OUT OF IT AND SAY, '*THAT POOR BOY SURE NEED SOMEONE TO TEACH HIM A LESSON,*' I'LL MAKE A JOKE OUT OF IT. YEAH. THAT'S. . . I'LL USE THAT NOW, RIGHT NOW.

"YOU KNOW I WORK IN A PUBLIC PLACE. AND YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MANY TIMES A DAY MY FEELINGS GET HURT. BUT YOU DON'T LEAVE HOME GOING TO WORK WITH YOUR FEELINGS ON THE ENDS OF YOUR FINGERS EITHER. YOU KNOW. YOU DON'T TAKE YOUR FEELING'S TO WORK YOU. . . BUT SOMETIMES, YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE WORKING AT A COMPANY AND THEY SAY, '*YOU BE NICE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS,*' OR WHATEVER. YOU GOTTA' BE THAT. YOU DO THAT BECAUSE SOMEBODY'LL GET YOU JOB AND YOU JUST BE NICE, SMILE, AND GO ON. BUT THERE'S A LOTTA' TIMES THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO SMILE. . . YOU DIDN'T MAKE JOKES.

"JUST THE OTHER DAY, A LADY ASK ME UH. . . I'M A COOK. AND SHE ASK ME, . . . UH, '*DO YOU KNOW YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO PUT YOUR HANDS IN THAT,*' YOU KNOW, I WAS MAKIN' A PIE. '*YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO PUT YOUR HAND'S,*' SHE WHISPERED--LIKE IT WAS SOMEONE AROUND. . .

"I TOLD HER, '*TALK LOUD. AIN'T NOBODY HERE LISTENING!*' . . .

". . . IF IT IS, I MEAN THAT'S MY JOB, WHAT IS IT?"

" '*YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO THAT.*' . . .

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] I TOLD HER. YOU KNOW. 'HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET IT IN THERE? YOU KNOW. THIS IS THE ONLIEST WAY I KNOW TO USE MY HANDS. THAT'S THE ONLIEST TWO I GOT. YOU SUPPOSED TO USE YOUR HAND'S.'

" 'WASN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO USE YOUR GLOVES. . . ?'

"I SAID, 'USE GLOVE'S TO MAKE A PIE' (AND I'M MAKING OVER A HUNDRED OF 'EM). 'USE GLOVES OR A SPOON? YOU DON'T MAKE. . . YOU DON'T FILL PIES WITH NO SPOON WHEN YOU GOT OVER A HUNDRED TO MAKE.'

"SHE SAY, 'WELL, I'M FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT. AND I'M GOIN' DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.'

"I SAID, 'WELL, THAT'S GOOD THEN. I WON'T HAVE TO WORK. YOU SHOULD DO THAT.'

"BUT SHE WASN'T. . . SHE WAS JEST, YOU KNOW. . . I MADE A JOKE OUT OF IT. BUT. . . SHE WAS SERIOUS. SHE WAS REALLY. . . SHE DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO USE YOUR HANDS TO. . . IF YOU. . . TO MAKE A PIE. TO PUT MERINGUE ON A PIE. . . THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN DO IT. YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT PIE AND TURN IT UP, SPIN IT AROUND, AND GET IT BACK UP. YOU GOT TO KEEP IT UPRIGHT. SO I MADE A JOKE OUT OF IT, BUT IT SORTA' HURT MY FEELINGS."

L.S.: "YOU KNOW I WORKED FOR THE PUBLIC TOO, FOR A GOOD WHILE. AND CUSTOMERS WOULD COME IN, AND JUST LIKE HE SAID, YOU CAN'T GO 'ROUND WITH YOUR FEELINGS IN YOUR HAND. AND YOU'RE WORKING. AND SAY I WAS. . . IF THEY COME THROUGH HE DOOR, AND THEY ALWAYS SAY 'THE CUSTOMERS IS RIGHT AND YOU WRONG.' HA, HA, HA. . . AND THEY ALWAYS SAY THAT IF SOMETHING GO WRONG, WELL, 'I'M RIGHT AND YOU'RE WRONG, 'CAUSE I'M THE CUSTOMER.' "

S.S.: "THAT'S RIGHT. . ."

L.S.: "SO YOU JUST. . . YOU KNOW. . . A LOT OF TIMES HAVE TO TAKE IT. THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY. AND I SAY IF YOUR A CHRISTIAN, YOU'LL BE THINKING OF A WAY. AND THEN, IF YOU BRING UP THE LORD, JUST MENTION THE LORD TO SOME OF 'EM IT'D SCARE 'EM. AND THEN THEY, 'WELL, I'M SORRY I EVEN SAID THAT. . .' AND. . . 'YOU MUST GO TO CHURCH,' AND SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW? BUT, THERE IS A WAY L.S.: [CONTINUED] THAT, YOU KNOW, YOU CAN HANDLE THINGS LIKE THAT--NOT EVEN WITH A FIGHT. . . YOU CAN JUST TURN 'EM OFF."

S.S.: "ARE THERE OTHER EXAMPLES, SAY. . . THAT YOU HAVE LIVED AT. . . IN THE PERIODS THAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT WHERE THAT WAS HAPPENING--ESPECIALLY THEN?"

L.S.: "YEAH. . . LIKE THE ONE COME IN, SAY, 'WELL, I TRIED TO DO THIS.' AND I SAY 'WELL NOW I BEEN DEALING WITH YOU SUCH AND SUCH A LONG. . . SO, I KNOW YOU BY

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M.E.: Michael Evans

L.S.: [CONTINUED] NOW,' AND 'WE GOIN' SETTLE IT.' YOU KNOW? NOT IN NO UGLY WAY. SO WE CAN. . . CAN GET IT SETTLED.

"MOST OF THE TIME, IF YOU WORK WITH A PERSON A LONG TIME, IN A BUSINESS ANYWHERE, (JUST LIKE BROTHER MAC JUST GOT THROUGH), . . . YOU ALMOST KNOW THE CUSTOMERS WHEN THEY COME IN THROUGH THE DOOR. AND YOU ALMOST KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM, IF YOU WORK THERE A LONG TIME. . . YOU ALMOST KNOW HOW TO TREAT 'EM."

M.M.: "YOU KNOW. . . THERE IS SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE, SOME OF THE WHITES, THAT WAS BACK IN THE FORTIES, FIFTIES. . . THEY AREN'T ALL DEAD. THEY'RE IN YOUR CONVALESCENT HOMES AND YOUR REST HOMES. FORTIES AND FIFTIES. . . YOU COULD NOT GO THROUGH THEIR FRONT DOOR OR SIT ON THEIR FRONT PORCH.

"BUT TODAY, I'M AN ORDERLY. I'M TAKING THAT SISTER TO THE BED PAN, TO THE SHOWER, TURNING HER OVER. AND SHE'S ENJOYING IT, AND LIKING IT. THAT'S HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED. BACK IN THE FORTIES AND FIFTIES, I'D WALK IN A WHITE LADY'S BEDROOM, (I DIDN'T DO THAT), THAT'S. . . YOU DIDN'T DO THAT. BUT TODAY, THEY'LL RING THAT BUTTON AND THAT LITTLE RED LIGHT'LL BE OUT THERE AND THEY WANT YOU TO COME IN AND GET 'EM AND HELP 'EM ON THAT PAN--CLEAN 'EM. AND SOME OF THEM DON'T. THEY'RE NOT GRATEFUL ENOUGH RIGHT NOW TO SAY THANK YOU. AND CAN'T TURN OVER.

"BUT DO YOU KNOW? THINGS NOW IS MUCH BETTER. BUT THAT'S NOT AN UPGRADE FOR ME--TO TURN YOU OVER AND PUT YOU ON A BED PAN. THAT'S A DOWN GRADE. THAT'S PUTTING ME DOWN EVEN LOWER, YOU KNOW. . . SO IT'S JUST. . . IT'S STILL SIX IN ONE HAND AND HALF A DOZEN IN THE OTHER. A TWO DEAL. IT'S. . .

"BUT MANSFIELD HAS BEEN REALLY GOOD TO ME. REALLY GOOD. I HAVE. . . I HAVE ADVANCED FROM WAY BACK. AND IT'S JUST BECAUSE IT WAS THE PEOPLE THAT MADE THE JIM CROW LAW--AND THE ONE'S THAT ENFORCED IT--MADE ME AND ADVANCE.

"SO, I'D WORK BESIDE YOU. AND YOU GETTING BIG DEALS AND I'M GETTING MINIMUM WAGES. AND MINE IS GOING FURTHER. AND THAT MEANS THAT I'M EATING FOOD FROM THE VINES THAT I DIDN'T RAISE, DRINKING WATER FROM THE WELLS I DIDN'T DIG. SEE, THAT'S GOING A LONG WAY. AND I'M TAKING THAT MINIMUM WAGES, GIVING A SHARE BACK TO THE LORD--LIKE HE SAID.

"AND IT GOES A LONG WAY. I'M SURE SOME OF THE WHITES DOES THAT TOO. BUT MY DOLLAR CAN GO AS FAR OR FURTHER. BECAUSE WHERE HE HAVE TO GO TO *STEAK AND ALE'S* AND EAT TO FILL UP, I CAN GO DOWN TO *BEEFERS* FOR NINETY-NINE CENTS, BUDDY. AND I'M JUST AS FULL AS YOU ARE. AND BELCH A LOT LOUDER. B-L-A-G-H-H-H. . . BIG TIME. NOW THAT DOESN'T MAKE A LOT OF SENSE DOES IT?"

S.S.: "YEAH. IT DOES. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH. . ."

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M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

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S.S.: "THAT'S . . ."

M.M.: "YOU'RE SMILING. . . I'M FOR REAL. . . YOU KNOW I'M FOR REAL DON'T YOU?"

S.S.: "I KNOW YOU ARE. HA, HA, HA, HA. . ."

M.M.: "I'M GOING, GEE, MY MAMMA SHOULD BE HERE NOW. HA, HA, HA, HA."

S.S.: "UH. . . ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC OTHER ITEMS THAT BOTH OF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?"

M.M.: "YEAH, I WOULD. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR TAKING YOUR TIME."

S.S.: "OH! . . . MY. . ."

M.M.: ". . . FOR DOING THIS. AND YOUR STAFF, OR WHOEVER'S OVER IT IN YOUR STAFF. I'D LIKE. . . I WANT TO THANK YOU. . ."

S.S.: "WELL, THANK YOU. . ."

M.M.: ". . . AND I WANT TO LET YOU AND WHOEVER SEES THIS TAPE KNOW THERE'S NOT ANY ANIMOSITY FROM ME. BECAUSE I'M HAVING THE BIGGEST SMILES THAT I'VE EVER HAD. . . LIVING GOOD. AND THEN. . . LIKE I SAY, I, I WAS DOWN AND I DIDN'T KNOW IT. AND IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN UP, YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE DOWN. YOU THINK THAT'S THE WAY THINGS SUPPOSED TO BE.

"AND. . . *UNCLE REMUS* NEVER DID KNOW HE WAS ON A PLANTATION. IT WAS SO LARGE HE NEVER DID KNOW THAT IF YOU GO OUTSIDE THE GATE, YOU'D BE IN ANOTHER WORLD. HE THOUGHT HE WAS. . . RIGHT THERE UNTIL A LITTLE BIRD LIT ON HIS SHOULDER AND TOLD HIM--THE BLUEBIRD. AND HE MADE A SONG OF IT. YOU NEVER HEARD OF *UNCLE REMUS* HAVE YOU?"

S.S.: "NO. . . WHERE'S HE FROM. . .?"

M.M.: "SEE THEY. . . BACK THEN, THOSE GUYS FROM JIM CROW, THEY WOULD WANT TO GIVE YOU A NAME. WANTED TO. . . LIKE THE MAN WAS NAMED '*WILLIE*.' THE LADY IN THERE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW '*HAPPY JACK*' WASN'T HIS NAME. SHE THOUGHT THAT WAS HIS NAME, AND JUST KEPT SAYIN' IT. BUT HIS NAME WAS '*WILLIE*,'--WROTE ON IT JUST AS BIG. SHE THOUGHT HIS NAME WAS '*HAPPY JACK*.'

"SEE, THE JOKE WAS ON HER. IT WASN'T ON '*HAPPY JACK*.' HE'S LAYING THERE SMILING. . . SHE JUST GIVE HIM THAT NAME. SHE LEFT. THE MAN DIED. SHE THINKING HE WAS HARD OF HEARING, SHE'S HOLLERIN' AT HIM, '*H-A-P-P-Y- J-A-C-K*,' '*HAPPY JACK*.' DIDN'T KNOW WHO HE WAS. SHE'D CALLED HIM '*WILLIE*.' HE'D ANSWER JUST LIKE THAT. HE DIDN'T KNOW IT. SO I THANK YOU."

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S.S.: "THANK YOU."

L.S.: "I WOULD LIKE TO SAY I APPRECIATE YOUR QUESTIONS AND ALL. AND I GOT TO DISCUSS A LOT OF STUFF TO YOU. AND I IMAGINE TO YOU 'CAUSE HE'S NEW HERE IN MANSFIELD. HUH?"

S.S.: "WE'LL ALWAYS BE NEW IN MANSFIELD, EVEN IF WE LIVED HERE. . ."

L.S.: "I KNOW YOU'VE HEARD A LOT OF STUFF THAT YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IN MANSFIELD. THAT WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT SUCH AS, YOU KNOW--USING THE WHITE FUNERAL HOME. AND I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WAS IN HERE OR NOT, WHEN WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE HEARSE. WAS YOU HERE?"

M.M.: "I'VE TOLD HIM. . . RIGHT AT THE CITY COUNCIL."

L.S.: "YEAH. . . WE USED TO USE THE WHITE FUNERAL HOME, AND HOW THEY WOULD UH, WHEN TIME COME FOR THEM TO BURY THE BLACKS, THEY WOULD USE, INSTEAD OF USING A HEARSE, THEY'D USE A VAN, WITH HALF THE CASKET HANGIN' OUT. NOW I KNOW THESE YOUNG ONES DON'T REMEMBER THAT. LENA [BRAZELL] DON'T REMEMBER THAT. ALL THAT STUFF. . ."

M.M.: "THEY PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF IT."

L.S.: "HUH?. . . PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF IT."

M.M.: "THEY DIDN'T EMBALM YOU THEN. . ."

L.S.: ". . . AND THE NAME WAS STILL. . . IT WAS ERNIE BLESSING. SO, THAT MEANS THAT THE NAME GOES ON WITH THE FUNERAL HOME IN MANSFIELD. BUT WE HAVE CHANGED. THAT'S. . . IT'S CHANGING TIMES. SO, WE STILL DON'T HAVE FUNERAL HOMES HERE, BUT WE HAVE GOOD FUNERAL HOMES IN FORT WORTH."

M.M.: "WE HAVEN'T CHANGED THAT MUCH. IF I WAS TO EXPIRE AND YOU ASK HIM TO COME PICK MY BODY UP, HE WOULD BE, HE WOULD ADVISE YOU TO CALL SPENCER OR WHATEVER. OR IF HE WOULDN'T, I GOT MY FIRST BLACK TO SEE IN HIS FUNERAL HOME. DID. . . HE'D WANT YOU TO HURRY UP. HE WOULDN'T WANT TO EMBALM YOU."

L.S.: "BUT IT WAS SOME OF THE PEOPLE WAS THINKING. THAT'S ALL, YOU KNOW, THAT WE COULD DO WAS JUST CALL HIM. AND HE'D COME OUT HERE WITH THAT LITTLE. . . AND IT WASN'T. . . WE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER HE WAS GOIN' MAKE IT TO THE CHURCH OR NOT. IT WAS RUNNING SO BAD. THAT WAS IN THOSE DAYS. . . THAT'S WHAT WE'VE COME THROUGH."

S.S.: "I WANTED TO ASK PASTOR EVANS PROBABLY. . . JUST TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH HERE."

L.S.: "SURE. . . HE CAN TAKE MY SEAT."

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S.S.: "AND WE CAN BREAK FOR LIKE THREE. . ."

S.S.: "WHAT I'D LIKE TO. . . WE'LL ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTIONS, OF GIVE YOUR NAME, PLACE, DATE OF YOUR BIRTH, AND TELL US HOW LONG YOU'VE LIVED HERE. AND UH, THEN GIVE US SOMETHING, SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH. U-M. . . I THINK SOME OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS WE SAW. . . ALSO OF TH. . . THE UH. . . LARGE BAPTISMS IN WALNUT CREEK IS IMPORTANT INFORMATION. AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THE PAST PASTORS AND LEADERS FROM THIS CONGREGATION."

MICHAEL EVANS, [M.E.]. "ALRIGHT, MY NAME IS MICHAEL EVANS AND I'M ORIGINALLY FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS. I WAS BORN IN 1966. I CAME TO BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH ORIGINALLY IN 1989. I BEGAN SERVING AS PASTOR IN '91, AND I'VE ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED, IF YOU WILL, WITH THE HISTORY OF BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE WHO MADE UP THAT HISTORY. THEREFORE, I'VE ASKED A LOT OF QUESTION'S ABOUT OUR HISTORY. I THINK THAT WHEN YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE THAT YOU'VE BEEN CALLED TO SERVE, IT GIVES YOU A GOOD. . . A GOOD WINDOW TO LOOK THROUGH. IT GIVES YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO KIND OF FRAME YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE.

"AND, OUR CHURCH WAS FOUNDED IN 1870, UNDER WHAT SISTER BRISCOE, (AS SHE MENTIONED EARLIER IN THE DAY), UNDER A BRUSH ARBOR. WHICH IS JUST THAT. IT'S A. . . REALLY LIKE A BIG SHADE HUT TYPE THING. AND THE PEOPLE WOULD MEET THERE.

"ORIGINALLY THE CHURCH. . . AND FOR QUITE A FEW YEARS, WELL, INTO THE 1930'S, THE CHURCH ONLY MET TWICE A MONTH. AND I'M THINKING IT WAS THE FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN. AND WE AT THE TIME OF COURSE, THE CHURCH WAS A, IT WAS DEFINITELY THE GATHERING PLACE.

"ONE THING THAT WAS DISCOVERED, I THINK TODAY, IS THE FACT THAT QUITE A FEW OF THE MEMBERSHIP LIVED ON THESE. . . AND OF COURSE BEING A CITY BOY, THEY LIVED ON THESE. . . H-U-G-E PIECES OF LAND AND WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY CAME FOR THEM TO GATHER TOGETHER. . . I MEAN YOU SAW, GOSH, WELL, OVER A HUNDRED AND SOME ODD PEOPLE WOULD GATHER TOGETHER FOR SERVICE. THIS WAS THEN AND EVEN NOW, ONE OF THE LARGEST BLACK CHURCHES IN THE AREA.

"YOU SEE. . . RIGHT NOW EVEN THE LARGEST, PROBABLY THE LARGEST CHURCH IN THIS IMMEDIATE AREA NOW IS MAYBE ABOUT 25 MILES. AND THAT'S MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH IN ARLINGTON. IT WAS EVEN. . . IT WAS SMALLER THAN BETHLEHEM. BETHLEHEM SERVED AS PRETTY MUCH THE CHURCH THAT FED OTHER CHURCHES, MORE SO IN THE FORT WORTH AREA.

"YOU MENTIONED THAT CONNECTION, QUITE A FEW OF THE PASTORS WHO SERVED HERE AT THE BETHLEHEM CHURCH LIVED IN FORT WORTH. IF YOU WOULD AND, WHEN

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] WE BECAME, LET'S SAY, A FULL TIME CHURCH MEETING EVERY SUNDAY IN THE MONTH, THAT WAS UNDER REVEREND C.C. CARSON.

"HE LATER ON WENT TO PASTOR THE MOUNT CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS ON VERBENA STREET. HE SERVED LATER, ALSO, AS WHAT WE CALL OUR 'DISTRICT MODERATOR,' WHERE HE SERVED OVER THIRTY SOME-ODD CHURCHES. AND HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL AGAIN IN SEEING TO IT THAT CHURCH SERVICE WENT ON EVERY SUNDAY. AND HE WAS HERE FOR SOME NINE YEARS. AND THAT WAS FROM THE THIRTIES INTO THE FORTIES.

"AND IT WAS INTO THE FORTIES THAT THE MAN, WHO BUILT SOME OF THIS FURNITURE HERE, BECAME THE PASTOR--REVEREND L. E. BILLINGSLEY. HIS WIFE WAS AN EDUCATOR. . . PASTOR BILLINGSLEY.

"AND THE BUILDING THAT WE'RE IN RIGHT NOW--THIS EDIFICE. THIS WAS THE LAST SEGREGATED SCHOOL HERE IN MANSFIELD. RIGHT HERE. RIGHT WHERE WE ARE.

"AND THE CHURCH, (AT THAT TIME), WAS LOCATED ABOUT A MILE FROM HERE OR LESS THAN A MILE AT MC CLENDON--WHERE MC CLENDON PARK IS NOW. THERE'S A BRICK HOUSE THERE. THAT AREA AND BETHLEHEM, AT THE TIME, (AND IT'S EVEN SHOWN IN PICTURES), WAS VIBRANT. AND I'M HAPPY TO SAY NOW, (EVEN WITH THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS), IS BECOMING THAT AGAIN--A VIBRANT CHURCH. AND A CHURCH THAT'S ALIVE. UH. . . AND THIS PROPERTY ALONE. . . IF YOU WOULD. . . AFTER HAVING BEEN GIVEN TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND BOUGHT BY THE CHURCH. . .

"I THINK IT WAS MENTIONED EARLIER IN THE DAY WHERE ONE OF THE DEACONS OF THE CHURCH WAS THREATENED, (IF YOU WOULD), BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT HE WANTED TO INTEGRATE THE SCHOOL WITH HIS RELATIVES. AND HIS HOUSE IS THAT OLD HOUSE DIRECTLY WEST OF US RIGHT NOW. . . HERE NOW. . . AND UH, BETHLEHEM.

"AS A MATTER OF FACT, SOME OF THE STORIES WE'VE HEARD ABOUT. . . THAT IS, THAT THE MEN ALL LEFT THE CHURCH. . . THAT IT WAS ON A SUNDAY, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN. . . THEY ALL LEFT CHURCH THAT SUNDAY AND WENT HOME AND GOT THEIR GUNS AND WENT OUT THE DITCH. AND THEY WERE WAITING, YOU KNOW. BUT EH. . . BUT QUITE A BIT OF THAT TALK GENERATED UP AROUND THE CHURCH, YOU KNOW. 'WELL, GOIN' TAKE CARE OF BROTHER MOODY,' AND WHAT HAVE YOU. AND THEY DID THE BEST THEY COULD.

"AND OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN THE PLACE WHERE THE AUTHOR, (I CAN'T THINK OF HIS FIRST NAME, HIS LAST NAME IS GRIFFIN), WHO WROTE THE BOOK *BLACK LIKE ME*. HE WOULD COME IN THE FIFTIES. AND AGAIN, ALL THIS IS HISTORY THAT I'VE. . . THINGS THAT I'VE READ. HE'D COME IN THE FIFTIES AND HE WOULD. . . AND SIXTIES. . . AND HE WOULD TALK WITH THE PEOPLE HERE AT THE CHURCH ABOUT THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE. AND HE WOULD EVEN, IF YOU WOULD, COME AND SAY TO THEM, 'I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH NOW,' (YOU KNOW), 'THAT I'VE DONE THIS THING TO MYSELF.'

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] "AND OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN VIBRANT. IT'S BEEN A CHURCH THAT'S BEEN ACTIVE EVEN IN THE POLITICAL STRATA AS BROTHER MC CLENDON MOODY, WHO PRECEDES ME, SERVES AS A COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE. WELL, QUITE A BIT OF THAT MOVEMENT, YOU KNOW. . . QUITE A BIT OF THAT SPRUNG UP FROM THE CHURCH, IF YOU WOULD. AND EVEN NOW, IN REGARD TO VOTER REGISTRATION, WE MAY HAVE VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS IN THE PROGRAM ON SUNDAY MORNING. AND SAY, DURING THE OFFERING, FILL THEM OUT.

"DURING THE TIME OF SEGREGATED SCHOOLS, THE CHURCH WAS. . . IN MANY CASES. . . WAS PROBABLY THE FORUM WHERE SOME OF THE NAACP LAWYERS AND WHAT HAVE YOU, WOULD COME. AND THEY WOULD HOLD FORUM AS TO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO INTEGRATE THESE SCHOOLS. AND EVEN TODAY, WE STILL HAVE A WORKSHOP ANNUALLY. . . THE NAACP. SO, OUR CHURCH, LIKE I SAY, HAS REALLY BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF A LOT OF THAT ACTIVITY. I'M JUST HAPPY TO SERVE AT A PLACE--AT A CHURCH LIKE THAT."

S.S.: "STRONG HISTORY. . ."

M.E.: "VERY STRONG HISTORY."

S.S.: "I WAS COMMENTING TO YOU, (I THINK EARLIER TODAY), REMARKING ABOUT A PHOTOGRAPH THAT SHOWED A RATHER LARGE BAPTISM HELD ON WALNUT CREEK. I THINK IT WAS. AND THE CAPTION ON IT READ, 'COLORED BAPTISM.' AND IT WAS 1912, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND I REMARKED, 'WELL, . . . THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF ANGLO PEOPLE THERE.' YOU KNOW? AND I WAS KIND OF SURPRISED BY THAT. CAN YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT THE INCIDENT, OR INCIDENTS, THAT FOLLOW THE SAME TREND?"

M.E.: "WELL, HISTORICALLY SPEAKING, YOU KNOW, . . . THERE'S EVEN A SONG THAT UH, . . . A NEGRO SPIRITUAL THAT SAYS, 'I'M GOING DOWN TO THE BIG BAPTIZING, I'M GOING DOWN TO THE BIG BAPTIZING' AND THAT'S JUST WHAT A BAPTIZING WAS WHEN YOU HAD IT IN THE CREEK, IF YOU WOULD. AND I THINK THERE WAS 'ROCK CREEK' THAT THE DEACON MENTIONED.

"WHEN YOU GO DOWN TO THE CREEK TO BE BAPTIZED, I MEAN, IT WAS AN EVENT! THE WOMEN WOULD, UH. . . EVERYBODY WOULD DRESS UP IN WHITE. THE CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM WOULD DRESS UP IN WHITE. THE WOMENS' HEAD WOULD BE COVERED IN WHITE. AND YOU WOULD HAVE . . . MY GOD. . . THE EMOTIONS WOULD BE HIGH, YOU KNOW.

"AND JUST, . . . AND IF YOU JUST SAID THE NAME 'JESUS,' THE PEOPLE WOULD BE ON THE BANKS SHOUTING, 'A-MEN.' YOU WOULD HAVE INDIVIDUALS WHO, UH. . . IF YOU WOULD. AND I'M SURE QUITE A FEW OF OUR FOLKS DIDN'T KNOW THAT THEN, THAT SOME PEOPLE, (WHO ARE HISTORIANS), KNOW NOW. BUT EH, FROM THEIR BLACK HERITAGE, THEY WOULD BE ON THE SHORE, SHOUTING, DANCING, JUMPING, YOU KNOW? BECAUSE IT WAS A JUBILANT, (I MEAN GOOD LORD), EVENT.

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] "AND WHAT YOUR ANGLOS WOULD DO, THEY WOULD JUST . . . THEY WOULD COME BECAUSE. . . OF . . . OF ALL OF THE EMOTION, YOU KNOW, INVOLVED. IT WAS A SPECTACLE, IF YOU WOULD. QUITE A FEW OF THEM, (IF YOU WOULD, AND EVEN TODAY), WOULD SAY, . . . 'GOSH! . . . I WISH. . . THAT MY CHURCH COULD WORSHIP LIKE THIS CHURCH, OR HAVE A SERVICE LIKE YOU GUYS DO.' YOU SEE?"

"AND EH, QUITE A FEW PEOPLE WOULD COME. EVEN THE WHITE PASTORS WOULD KIND OF COME TO COPY SOME OF THAT STYLE. YOU KNOW? AND UH, THAT RHYTHM THERE. . . THAT WAS THERE. . . I MEAN, GOSH, THESE PEOPLE WOULD BE ON THE BANKS. YOU'VE GOT SAY. . . YOU'VE GOT A HUNDRED SOME ODD FOLKS ON THE BANKS. AND THEY WOULD BE HUMMING THESE SONGS, AND MOANING THESE NEGRO SPIRITUALS. AND IT WOULD MAKE YOUR FLESH CRAWL!"

"AND UH, THAT'S WHY, (IN THAT PICTURE YOU SAW), SO MANY PEOPLE, YOU KNOW, . . . ATTENTIVE AND LOOKING. . . BECAUSE OF THE HEIGHT OF THE EMOTION THERE. AND WHEN THAT PASTOR IMMersed THAT PERSON IN THAT WATER, (YOU SEE, AND THE SENIORS CAN ATTEST TO THIS). WHEN THEY BROUGHT THAT PERSON OUT OF THE WATER, (OH, MY GOD! YOU KNOW)? YOU COULDN'T, UH. . . I MEAN IT WAS OVER. I MEAN, . . . WHATEVER YOU WERE TRYING TO DO, YOU COULDN'T DO IT WITH ANY SET LITURGY, (IF YOU WOULD), BECAUSE IT WAS JUST A . . . YOU KNOW. . . 'A PENTECOSTAL MOMENT.'

"AND MAN, THE LADIES AND THE BROTHERS WOULD BE SHOUTING--ESPECIALLY IF IT WAS A SENIOR. MAN, IF IT WAS A SENIOR MAN OR A SENIOR WOMAN. . . YOU SEE, UH. . . THE PEOPLE WOULD BE SO HAPPY THAT THIS PERSON DID NOT DIE BEFORE BEING BAPTIZED. BECAUSE, EVEN THOUGH WE KNOW THAT BAPTISM IS SYMBOLIC, (IF YOU WOULD), OF ONE'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION. YOU KNOW, A SIGN OF DOING WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US. THE BELIEF IS, (AS IS WITH CATHOLICS AND OTHERS), THAT IF A PERSON DIES AND IS NOT BAPTIZED, THEN THEY'RE GONNA' GO TO HELL."

"YOU SEE? THAT WAS THE THOUGHT PROCESS AT THE TIME. AND BEARING IN MIND, YOU SEE, HEAVEN WAS, (IN MANY INSTANCES), THE BEST THING THAT AFRICAN AMERICANS OR BLACK PEOPLE HAD TO LOOK FORWARD TO. SO, MY GOD.. 'IF DAD WASN'T BAPTIZED, IF MAMA WASN'T BAPTIZED, THEN I WON'T SEE 'EM EVER AGAIN! BECAUSE, SURELY, I'M NOT GOING TO HELL' SEE? THAT WOULD ALWAYS BE THE LINE, I'M NOT. . . YOU KNOW? 'IF MAMMA DON'T GO, I'LL GO. IF THE PREACHER DON'T GO, I'LL GO.' (YOU KNOW), 'I'LL GO IF I HAVE TO GO BY MYSELF.' THAT'S THE SONG THAT'S LIKE THAT."

"AND IT WAS A GREAT OCCASION BECAUSE THEY WERE SAYING THAT, 'LATER ON, AFTER ALL THIS HELL, AFTER ALL THIS MESS. LATER ON, WE'RE GONNA' SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. AND WHEN WE SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.' ANOTHER SONG SAYS, 'I GOT SHOES, YOU GOT SHOES, ALL O' GOD'S CHILDREN GOT SHOES.'"

"WELL, WHAT IT MEANT WAS. . . WHAT IT MEANT WAS, 'NO LONGER ARE WE SLAVES. NO LONGER ARE WE OPPRESSED.' YOU SEE, BECAUSE EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT 'ALL GOD'S CHILDREN GOT SHOES.' SLAVES DIDN'T GET TO WEAR SHOES. BUT IN HEAVEN, YOU

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] SEE? THAT MEANS THAT EVERYBODY WAS BROUGHT TO A LEVEL. . . OF BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD, RIGHT AND EQUALITY. . . WHICH MADE THAT A POWERFUL EVENT."

S.S.: "YOU'RE A GOOD ORATOR. HA, HA, HA. WHERE IS 'ROCK CREEK' AND. . . YOU QUALIFY IT BY USING 'WALNUT CREEK' AS 'ROCK CREEK?'"

M.E.: "SURE. . ."

S.S.: "WHERE IS THAT?"

M.E.: "WELL, THEY JUST COVERED IT UP. HA, HA, HA. BUT, THEY DIDN'T REALLY COVER IT UP, THEY JUST SMOOTHED OUT THE ROAD. IF YOU WENT. . . THIS VERY NEXT BLOCK HERE--WEST OF THE CHURCH, GO TO THIS BLOCK, MAKE A RIGHT, AND RIGHT AT MOODY LANE, (IT'S NAMED AFTER BROTHER MOODY). RIGHT THERE, AT MOODY LANE YOU'LL. . . EH, THE DIPS AREN'T THERE ANYMORE ARE THEY. . . OLD FELIX? THEY TOOK CARE OF THAT BUSINESS. GOD BLESS YOU. GOOD JOB, FELIX. . ."

" 'ROCK CREEK' WOULD FLOOD EVERYBODY OUT, BUT EH. . . IT'S RIGHT THERE AT MOODY LANE. YOU SEE, MOODY LANE. AND I THINK IT'S A LITTLE BRIDGE THERE KINDA'. BUT YOU CAN SEE DEBRIS ON THE SIDE THERE. AND THERE MIGHT BE SOME WATER STANDING, THAT'S ABOUT WHERE. . ."

S.S.: "SO, THAT WAS THE PLACE FOR BAPTIZING, NOT 'WALNUT?'"

M.E.: "RIGHT. . . BUT, WEREN'T THEY REALLY BOTH THE SAME. . .?"

M.M.: "YEAH, THEY WERE THE SAME. . ."

M.E.: "YEAH, THEY WERE THE SAME. BUT, AGAIN, THE NAMES. . . WE CALLED IT 'ROCK,' THEY CALLED IT 'WALNUT,' YOU KNOW. 'WALNUT' WAS BEAUTIFUL, 'ROCK' WOULD FLOOD YOU OUT. IT'S. . . IT'S THE DIFFERENCE."

S.S.: "HOW OFTEN DID THE COMMUNITY GET FLOODED OUT? AND THE OTHER QUESTION I REALLY WANTED TO KNOW, IS WHEN DID THE COMMUNITY, AS WE KNOW IT HERE, BECOME DEFINED? BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, ALL I'VE HEARD TODAY IS THAT EVERYBODY'S LIVING DISPERSED OVER THE PRAIRIE."

M.E.: "THAT'S A GOOD QUES. . . AS A MATTER OF FACT, VERY LATE. . . AND YOU MAY WANT MOODY BACK UP HERE FOR THAT. THAT CAME VERY LATE, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CITY LIMITS WASN'T EVEN OUT THIS FAR AT ALL."

M.M.: ". . . IT WAS DOWN BY LILLIE SHEPPARD."

M.E.: "RIGHT. . . AND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT MID-SEVENTIES. IT WAS. . . WAY UP THE ROAD THERE. EVEN THE PARK THERE, THAT YOU GUYS PASSED. . . THAT WASN'T THE

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M.E.: Michael Evans

M.E.: [CONTINUED] CITY LIMIT. SEE WHAT I'M SAYIN'? SO, ALL OF THIS WAS. . . YOU HEARD BROTHER LAWSON MENTION 'THE TIMBERS?' WELL, ALL OF THIS WAS SEEN AS THE RURAL.

"AND YOU CAN EVEN TELL THE DIFFERENCE TODAY, BECAUSE YOU'LL SEE CEMENT AND THEN, PAVEMENT. YOU SEE? WELL, THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHERE YOUR SPLIT CAME. WE DIDN'T HAVE THE PROVERBIAL RAILROAD TRACK. WE HAD THE DIFFERENCE IN THE ROAD THERE. THAT'S STILL THERE. . . AND. . . YOU CAN SEE THAT, AND THIS DIDN'T BECOME A PART OF MANSFIELD UNTIL SEVENTY, SEVENTY-EIGHT."

M.M.: "RIGHT ALONG IN THERE."

M.E.: "YESSIR. THIS WAS ALL DIRT ROAD. BUT WHEN THE CHURCH MOVED OVER HERE IN SEVENTY, . . . HAD TO BE SEVENTY-SEVEN. . . WHEN THE CHURCH MOVED HERE IN SEVENTY-SEVEN, (IN NINETEEN, SEVENTY-SEVEN), THERE WERE INDIVIDUALS. . . WELL, THE CHURCH. . . WE HAD OUT-HOUSES AT THE CHURCH IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-SEVEN. WE'VE GOT UH. . . THE CHURCH SECRETARY IN THE SEVENTIES, FOR EXAMPLE, . . . THEY WERE, YOU KNOW, . . . THEY WERE BLESSED.

"HERE'S A FAMILY, (JUST TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF THE KIND OF STRENGTH OF THIS CHURCH). HERE'S A FAMILY WITH SIXTEEN, SEVENTEEN CHILDREN, OKAY? AND THE PARENTS. . . MADE THEIR LIVING BY WORKING THE LAND, LITERALLY. LITERALLY. SO, QUITE A FEW OF THE AMENITIES THAT WE HAVE NOW. . . AND WE'RE GETTING READY TO GO INTO ANOTHER RENOVATION PHASE HERE AT OUR CHURCH. . . BUT, I MEAN, WAS JUST LIKE, WELL, WE WERE. . . 'HIGH COTTON'. . . REALLY LIVING--LIVING LARGE. I MEAN, IT WAS JUST SOMETHING.

"SO, WE'RE TALKING LATE SEVENTIES. LATE SEVENTIES THAT THIS PARTICULAR PART OF MANSFIELD CAME INTO EXISTENCE. ON THIS SIDE OF TOWN YOU HAD THE. . . YOU HAD QUITE A FEW OF THE HOG PENS 'CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY THE PEOPLE MADE THEIR LIVING.

"AND I REMEMBER TEN YEARS AGO, TALK TEN YEARS AGO, (EIGHTY-THREE, EIGHTY-FOUR), AND, (THIS AGAIN COMES FROM THE FORMER COUNCILMAN), THERE WHERE. . . THEY WERE TRYING TO MAKE THE PEOPLE GET RID OF THEIR HOGS IN EIGHTY THREE. AND MAN, THEY WERE GONNA' KILL HIM BECAUSE, . . . AGAIN, THERE'S THAT JOKE HERE IN TOWN WHERE. . . YOU DIDN'T HAVE THAT KIND OF RUCKUS IN THIS TOWN. YOU SEE?

"AND MANSFIELD, NOW, IS CHANGING SO FAST--I MEAN THE DEMOGRAPHICS HERE. IN THE SEVENTIES, EARLY EIGHTIES, QUITE A FEW OF THE RURAL BLACK REMNANT, (IN REGARD TO YOUNG PEOPLE), MOVED OUT. THEY MOVED TO ARLINGTON AND FORT WORTH. THEY LEFT IN NINETEEN, NINETY-ONE AND NINETY-TWO. A DIFFERENT TYPE AFRICAN AMERICAN BEGAN TO MOVE TO MANSFIELD. TRANSPLANTS FROM ARKANSAS, FROM, YOU KNOW. . .

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)

M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

F. L.: Fred Lawson

S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

M.E.: Michael Evans

M.E.: [CONTINUED] "JUST. . . AS THE DIFFERENT COMPANIES SHIFTED, THE PEOPLE, A DIFFERENT TYPE PEOPLE MOVED HERE. PEOPLE WHO DID NOT KNOW THE SOCIAL ETHOS, HAVE ANY IDEA OF THAT, OR ANY IDEA OF THE HISTORY. THEY'RE COMING BACK. AND YOU KNOW, WHERE YOU HAVE FOLKS WHO REMEMBER WHEN THE EFFIGY WAS HUNG UP THERE AT THE CITY LIGHT HERE. YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT TYPE PERSON COMING IN. AND THEY JUST LOVE THE COUNTRY. . . 'OH, HOW BEAUTIFUL THIS IS!' YOU KNOW? THEY'RE LIVING IN A ONE-HUNDRED-FIFTY-THOUSAND DOLLAR HOUSE.

"AND NOW, THEY'RE COMING. . . AND IT'S AN EXPERIENCE IN ITSELF. WATCHING THE TWO DIFFERENT TYPE BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE MESH, SAY MIX. AND IT'S SOMETHING, BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT TWO DIFFERENT TYPE NOW. PEOPLE THAT'S COMING TO MANSFIELD AND PRESERVING THIS HISTORY IS GOOD, BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW THE STORY."

S.S.: "IT'LL BE SWALLOWED UP."

M.E.: "OH, MY GOSH! THIS. . . TEN YEARS FROM NOW, NEXT YEAR, WHEN THEY OPEN UP 360. . . WE'RE TRYING TO HELP FELIX UNDERSTAND THIS--HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT THEY GRASP HOLD TO THIS OPPORTUNITY NOW. HIS OFFICE KNOWS THAT YOU'VE GOT PRIME LAND OUT HERE. IF YOU CAME BACK OUT HERE IN TEN YEARS, I DON'T THINK ANY OF THIS WILL LOOK LIKE IT LOOKS NOW."

S.S.: "WELL, I THINK THERE IS AN OCCASION TO ADDRESS THAT IN NORTH DALLAS, WHICH IS A SEA OF TWO-HUNDRED-FIFTY, THREE-HUNDRED, FOUR-HUNDRED, FIVE-HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR HOMES.

"THERE'S THIS INTERSECTION AT SPRING VALLEY AND PRESTON. AND THERE'S THIS LITTLE BLACK CHURCH THAT HAS THE CORNER. THAT IT HAD. . . IT ALWAYS HAD THAT CORNER, BECAUSE THAT WAS A FARM AND MARKET ROAD. AND THAT WAS ANOTHER ONE OF THESE NASCENT COMMUNITIES THAT I SPEAK ABOUT THAT IT HAS BEEN--THEY LITERALLY GET SWALLOWED UP. AND THEN THE TAXES. . . BECAUSE OF THE SURROUNDING PROPERTY VALUES, EVENTUALLY PUSH THEM OUT.

"BUT IT'S. . . I CAN AT LEAST ENUMERATE ABOUT FIVE THAT I KNOW OF, AND IT REALLY. . . WHEN I FIRST CAME TO DALLAS, I WAS VERY SURPRISED TO FIND THAT IT'S OCCURRING AT A DRASTIC AND HORRIFIC RATE. AND THAT'S JUST THE SWALLOWING UP OF RURAL LAND FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS."

M.E.: ". . . AND LET ME OFFER THIS. WHEN YOU GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE DOWN THESE ROADS HERE, (WHICH I HOPE YOU GET THE CHANCE TO DO THIS COMING WEEK), YOU'LL FIND THAT MOST OF THE HOME OWNERS ARE SENIOR CITIZENS. AM I RIGHT?"

M.M.: "YOU'RE RIGHT. . ."

M.E.: "MOST OF THEM ARE SENIORS, HOLDING ON TO THAT LAND. BUT THEY'RE IN THEIR LATE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES. IT'S GONNA' BE GONE. . . IT'S NO NEED IN US

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

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M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr

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M.E.: Michael Evans

M.E.: [CONTINUED] TRYING TO. IT'S GONNA' BE GONE. AND UH, . . . THESE ARE PEOPLE, RIGHT TODAY. YOU CAN GO AND. . . MRS. BRISCOE, (WHO WAS HERE), HER HOME IS STILL THERE. NOW SHE LIVES IN WALNUT CREEK--ACROSS FROM THE COUNTRY CLUB. BUT HER LITTLE HOUSE IS STILL THERE. AND HER GRAND CHILD STAYS THERE, YOU SEE.

"BUT. . . THAT'LL BE GONE. THAT'LL BE GONE. AND. . . ONE THING THEY HAVE TO HOLD ONTO IS THE LEGACY, I BELIEVE, THAT'S HERE AT THE BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH. SO WHY THAT'S. . . YOU SEE. . . WE'VE HELD ONTO PICTURES. AND YOU HAVE OUR LITTLE HISTORY BOOK THAT WE KEEP. IT IS BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT SOMETHING. . . SOMETHING VALUABLE IS HERE. AND WE'RE GONNA' BE HERE ANOTHER HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. WE PRAY."

S.S.: "WE TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT. . . WELL YOU MENTIONED THAT I SHOULD DO A TOUR OF THE CEMETERY. IN ANOTHER LIFE, I HAD WORKED IN COASTAL GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA ON A PLANTATION. AND. . . THERE ARE CURIOUS PRACTICES SUCH AS MARKING GRAVES WITH STONES OR WITH SHELLS OR WITH THINGS THAT ARE AFRICAN. . ."

M.E.: ". . . SAME HERE."

S.S.: ". . . IN ANTECEDENT, THE DISCUSSIONS TODAY, WHICH I FOUND REALLY INTERESTING, DEALT WITH THE BAGS WHICH WERE HUNG AROUND THE NECK. . ."

M.E.: "ASAFETIDA. . . ? KEEP YOU FROM GETTING SICK."

S.S.: "RIGHT. . . BUT THAT, TOO, IS VERY AFRICAN."

M.E.: "YEAH."

S.S.: "AND IT'S THE SURVIVAL THROUGH THE TRADITIONS AND WHETHER THEY'RE INTERMIXED AND REINFORCED IN LOUISIANA, YOU KNOW, WITH THE INFLUX OF HAITIANS. . . IT'S STILL A TANGIBLE COMPONENT THAT WAS THERE NOT SO LONG AGO. . . I THINK THERE'S SOME INTERESTING THINGS THAT NEED TO BE LOOKED INTO A LITTLE MORE IN DEPTH."

M.E.: "YOU'VE GOT QUITE A FEW STORIES AND LEGENDS, YOU KNOW, I'M SURE AS YOU'VE FOUND IN SOME OF YOUR OTHER STUDIES, . . . AS YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU DID ABOUT THE CEMETERIES--ONE IN PARTICULAR BECAUSE IT WAS A BLACK CEMETERY. THIS HAPPENED YEARS AGO. . . YOU CAN ASK ANY OF THOSE SENIORS M.E.: [CONTINUED] THAT WAS HERE TODAY. AND THEY CAN PROBABLY TELL YOU THIS THING THEY SPOOKED ME WITH IT.

"BUT HERE YEARS AGO, I FORGET THE DATE WHEN IT WAS, (LIKE THE TWENTIES OR THIRTIES), WHEN THERE WAS A WHOLE BOXCAR. . . (REMEMBER THAT)? . . . OF THOSE. . . MEXICANS. WHO SOMEHOW, THEY GOT TRAPPED IN THIS BOX CAR. AND QUITE A FEW OF THEM DIED. I MEAN, ALL OF THEM DIED--LIKE THIRTY OR FORTY OF 'EM.

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] "AND THE LEGEND IS. . . THAT OUT THERE. . . AND YOU CAN SEE IT'S. . . AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S THERE BECAUSE I HAVEN'T LOOKED. BUT YOU CAN SEE WHERE THE AREA KINDA' SINKS IN. BUT IT'S SUPPOSEDLY A HUGE HOLE. THEY DUG A MASS GRAVE AND JUST DUMPED THEM IN IT. YOU SEE. AND THAT KINDA' THING. AND EVERY GOOD FRIDAY, WHEN WE GO. . . THEY SAY, '*THEY'RE RIGHT OVER THERE.*' HA, HA, HA.

"BUT YOU KNOW, YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE WHO ARE OUT THERE FROM THE 1800'S. . . IT'S IN A DEPLORABLE STATE, YOU SEE. AND THAT'S BEEN ONE OF OUR PET PROJECTS AS A CHURCH--TO TRY TO GET THAT THING WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE, BECAUSE. . . LEGENDS LIKE THAT ARE THERE.

"IT'S REALLY. . . THAT'S GONNA' BE AN ADVENTURE FOR YOU. I REALLY MEAN IT, BECAUSE IT'S GRAVES EVERYWHERE. IT'S NO PATTERN IT'S JUST. . . AND YOU CAN SEE THE ROCKS AND YOU'LL KNOW, SOMEBODY'S THERE. . . I MEAN, BECAUSE OF THE WAY THE THING IS MARKED. IT'S A LOT OF STUFF THERE. UNSPOKEN HISTORY THAT. . . YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAP TODAY."

S.S.: "INITIAL INTERVIEWS ARE KINDA' TOUCHY BECAUSE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW YOU AND ALWAYS'LL BE KINDA' FROWNING AND VICE VERSA"

M.E.: "WELL, THAT'S ONE I WANTED TO GET OUT, BECAUSE I WANT SOMEBODY TO GO LOOK. HA, HA, HA. AND I WANT TO BE THERE. HA, HA, HA. . ."

S.S.: "I GUESS I GET TO BE THE GUINEA PIG. . ."

M.E.: "LOOKS LIKE A LEG TO ME. . ."

S.S.: "LET HIM DO IT. HE'S CRAZY. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE. . . I'M KINDA' GOING INTO BRAIN OVERLOAD?"

M.E.: "I UNDERSTAND, IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY."

S.S.: "HOW MANY SUCCESSIVE CHURCHES WERE THERE? OR SUCCESSIVE LOCATIONS?"

M.E.: "I'M THINKING, . . I'M THINKING THREE. ONE BACK BY THE WILSON PLACE BY BROTHER MOODY, AM I RIGHT?"

M.M.: "RIGHT. RIGHT BY MY HOUSE. BY THE TREE. . ."

M.E.: "YES SIR. BY BROTHER MOODY'S. AND WE SKIPPED OVER HERE AND WENT OVER BY THE PARK. AND THEN, HERE. EIGHTEEN PASTORS, SEVENTEEN. . . I'M NUMBER EIGHTEEN."

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S.S.: "THERE WAS ONE QUESTION IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE THAT DIDN'T GET ASKED, AND THAT WAS, WHO BUILT THE HOUSES? MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT LIVED IN THEM, OR WERE THERE BLACK CARPENTERS?"

M.M.: "MOST OF THE TIME, THE ONE'S THAT LIVED IN THEM. AND THEY WERE BLACK."

M.E.: "... AND THE CHURCH MEMBERS."

M.M.: "... MOST OF THE TIME, AND THEN CHURCH MEMBERS JUST WHEN THEY WEREN'T WORKING THE FIELDS. . . SAY, 'HEY, WE'RE GOING OVER TO BROTHER SO AND SO'S. . . AND BRING YOUR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS.' AND WE GO TO HELP HIM RESTORE HIS HOUSE. BUILD HIM A HOUSE."

S.S.: "SO, IF I FOUND ANY HOUSES FROM THE TWENTIES THAT ARE HISTORICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH FAMILIES FROM THIS CONGREGATION, THEY'RE GONNA' BE BUILT BY. . ."

M.E.: "BUILT BY THE FOLKS. AS I SAY, THE PASTOR THAT PROCEEDED ME, (WELL, TWO PASTORS BEFORE ME), THAT'S WHAT HE DID. OF THIS STUFF, HE BUILT ALL OF IT. HE DID IT ALL. HE BUILT THE CHURCH. THAT'S RIGHT WHEN THEY DID THE RENOVATION. HE DID IT. SO. . . THEY BUILT IT THEMSELVES. FOLK GET TOGETHER, AND LIKE I SAY, JUST GO OUT AND DO IT."

S.S.: "SO DURING THE DEPRESSION. . . (I'LL CONFIRM THAT AGAIN), DURING THE DEPRESSION THINGS ARE NOT AS BAD FOR PEOPLE HERE BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT DEPENDENT ON JOBS FOR FOOD?"

M.M.: "THAT IS RIGHT. IT'S HARD TO TELL NOW WHO IS POOR AND WHO IS RICH. EVERYTHING IS ANYONE WHO IS ABLE TO GO OUT AND GET IT GETS IT. AND THE ONES THAT DON'T HAVE IT ARE THE ONES WHO DON'T GO GET IT."

M.E.: "RIGHT. . . THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK THAT'S PRETTY CONSISTENT IN MOST RURAL COMMUNITIES AT THE TIME. BECAUSE MY GRANDMOTHER SAYS, 'WELL, WE MISSED THE DEPRESSION.'

"WE ALWAYS. . . WE MAY NOT HAVE HAD ALL THE CLOTHES THAT WE NEEDED, BUT WE ATE EVERYDAY. BECAUSE THEY RAISED THEIR FOOD, YOU SEE. . . THEY DID. AND AS I MENTIONED IN REGARD TO MEAT, YOU KNOW, THERE WAS A LITTLE BOLOGNA. . . WHEN YOU'RE POOR AND YOU DON'T KNOW IT, IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU. AND YOU DIDN'T HAVE TELEVISION TO LOOK AT. A RADIO, YOU MAY HAVE HAD A RADIO. . . BECAUSE EVEN THE LANDOWNER. . . Y'ALL DIDN'T DRESS TOO FAR APART--WE DIDN'T HAVE THE NAME BRANDS. . .

"ONE THING YOU HEAR AROUND THE CHURCH ALL THE TIME, IN PARTICULAR. . . SAY IN REGARD TO THE NEW REFORMS IN WASHINGTON. QUITE A FEW OF THE SENIORS OF OUR CHURCH. . . THEY KIND OF SHRUG IT OFF. THEY SAY, 'AW, HECK. WE HAVEN'T NEEDED THAT STUFF ANYWAY,' IN REGARD TO THE WELFARE."

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S.S.: "WHAT ABOUT MEDICAID THOUGH?"

M.E.: "THAT'S A GOOD POINT. . . MOST OF THE PEOPLE YOU SAW HERE TODAY. . . THEIR CHILDREN TAKE CARE OF THEM. ISN'T THAT SOMETHING? MRS. BRISCOE, HER SON WAS A STATE SENATOR--WORKED DURING THE REAGAN ERA. . .WORKED FOR REAGAN. AND HE TOOK CARE OF MAMA. AND THAT'S WHAT QUITE A FEW PEOPLE DID.

"I FOUND OUT ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO, THAT QUITE A FEW OF THE SENIORS HERE WEREN'T EVEN ON SOCIAL SECURITY. ISN'T THAT SOMETHING. HOW DO YOU APPLY? IN HOUSTON, TEXAS EVERYBODY KNEW. ISN'T THAT SOMETHING? SO, THEY'LL TELL YOU IN A MINUTE. A BAG OF RICE AND SOME BEANS, AND YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER. AND YOU WOULD! PREACHERS NEVER WENT HUNGRY BACK THEN. I GUARANTEE YOU THAT THEY ATE EVERY WEEK."

S.S.: "THIS IS A REAL. . . A VERY DIFFERENT COMMUNITY FOR ME TO WORK, BECAUSE I'VE BEEN WORKING IN THE URBAN AREAS. IT'S REAL DIFFERENT."

M.E.: "HERE'S A COMMUNITY THAT'S MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM RURAL TO SUBURBAN. . .YOU'VE LITTLE POCKETS OF DRUG ACTIVITY, LITTLE POCKETS OF A LITTLE GANG ACTIVITY. BUT IT'S HIDDEN. IT'S UP IN THE WOODS THERE. AND I GUESS IT'S GONNA' BE LIKE THE SPOTTED OWL. WHEN THEY START SPREADING OUT THIS DIRT AND THIS LAND HERE, IT'S GONNA' RUN 'EM OFF TO BURLESON OR SOMEWHERE. YEAH, . . . IT'S FUNNY. . . BUT PEOPLE LOVE TO MOVE HERE."

S.S.: "THAT'S THAT. WELL, THANK YOU. . . VERY MUCH."

M.E.: "THANK YOU."

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

F. L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

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**MANSFIELD, TEXAS ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS
RECORDED
DECEMBER 1995**

**STAN SOLAMILLO, INTERVIEWER
TRANSCRIBED BY HOWARD BURLEY
EDITED BY PAM ARMSTRONG**

[*STAN SOLAMILLO*], [S.S.]. "WHENEVER YOU WANT [TO] START."

[*BETTY BENJAMIN*], [B.B.]. "I [HA]VE LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE, AND I WAS BORN IN 1909. AND MY BIRTHDAY IS APRIL THE TWENTY FOURTH. AND I [HA]VE LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE. THIS IS MY HOME[,] I LIVE HERE. I DON'T KNOW [] [ANY] OTHER PLACE. . .AND THAT'S THAT."

S.S.: "WERE YOUR PARENTS HERE?"

B.B.: "MY PARENTS [] [ARE] ALL DEAD. NOW [THERE] [ISN]'T [ANY]BODY LIVING BUT ME."

S.S.: "MA'AM?"

M.B.: "*I'M MAGGIE JACKSON BRISCOE*, [M.B.]. I WAS BORN ON JULY THE TENTH IN 1917 IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS. MY PARENTS W[ERE] *JOHN AND LOULA JACKSON*. WE[] C[A]ME TO MANSFIELD IN 1927 [IN] OCTOBER. WE'VE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE. MY PARENTS ARE DECEASED."

S.S.: "HOW [A]BOUT YOU, SIR?"

F.L.: "*I'M FRED LAWSON*, [F.L.]. BORN AND RAISED UP HERE. BORN MARCH THE SIXTH, NINETEEN AND EIGHTEEN. I [] LIVED HERE UNTIL I LOST MY FATHER, WHICH WAS IN 1934. I LEFT AND WENT OFF TO SCHOOL [AND] WAS GONE A COUPLE OF YEARS. [I] CAME BACK AND STAYED TWO OR THREE MONTHS, (OR MAYBE ABOUT SIX MONTHS). THEN I LEFT AGAIN AND WENT TO FORT WORTH. FROM THERE [I WENT] TO OKLAHOMA [AND THEN CAME] BACK TO FORT WORTH.

"THEN [I] WENT IN[TO] THE ARMED SERVICES [AND] SPENT ABOUT TWO YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS. [I] CAME OUT[,] AND JUST [] ON OCCASION[S], (FUNERAL OCCASIONS AND WHAT NOT), [ON] SPECIAL DAYS [I] WOULD COME BACK. SO [THERE IS] VERY LITTLE I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT [] [THAT] WENT ON IN-BETWEEN THAT TIME."

S.S.: Stan Solamillo
B.B.: Betty Benjamin
F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe
M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)
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L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard
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S.S.: "ALL YOUR CHILDHOOD MEMORIES, TOO, ARE REAL[LY] IMPORTANT BECAUSE YOU'VE HEARD THINGS THAT THE REST OF US [HAVE] N[O]T. [] I GUESS WHAT I NEED TO ASK FIRST OF ALL, IS WHAT DID YOUR PARENTS DO FOR A LIVING?"

F.L.: "FARM. . . FARM."

S.S.: "HOW [A]BOUT YOU, MA'AM?"

M.B.: "THEY WERE FARMERS. THEY WORKED ON A FARM. DID YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT WHEN WE WENT TO . . . WHEN WE [WERE] UNITED WITH THE CHURCH OR WHERE WE WENT TO SCHOOL?"

S.S.: "YES, IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO INTO THAT. THAT'S. . . ."

M.B.: "WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW, I JUST. . . ."

S.S.: "WE'RE GO[ING] [TO] BE. . . WE'LL BE REAL LOOSE HERE. SO [] SOME OF THE QUESTIONS ARE GO[ING] [TO] [] JUMP AROUND. AND THAT'S OKAY."

M.B.: "WELL, I UNITED WITH THE *BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH* IN [. . .] 1931. AND ON JUNE [] ON AUGUST THE TWENTY-EIGHTH, I WAS FIFTEEN. AND I [HA]VE BEEN WITH THE CHURCH EVER SINCE. [. . .] I MARRIED *MILTON BRISCOE* WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN, ON DECEMBER THE TWENTY-SECOND, 1922, [19]32. AND I LIVED WITH HIM UNTIL HE. . . HE [WAS] LOST[,] HE WAS DECEASED.

"TO THAT UNION, WE HAD FOUR CHILDREN--TWO GIRLS AND TWO BOYS. MY OLDEST DAUGHTER [I]S *EDNA BRISCOE*; MY OLDEST SON [IS] *WILLIAM BRISCOE*; THEN OUR . . . MY THIRD . . . SECOND . . . THIRD CHILD [I]S *MILDRED BRISCOE--MILDRED LOUISE BRISCOE*. AND THAT'S HER OVER THERE. AND THEN, MY YOUNGEST [I]S *LEONARD EDWARD BRISCOE*. WE HAVE FOUR CHILDREN AND THEY'RE ALL HERE--STILL ALIVE."

S.S.: "HOW [A]BOUT YOU MA'AM? ARE YOU MARRIED AND DID YOU HAVE CHILDREN?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE] "AUNT BETTY, HE'S TALKIN[G] TO YOU."

B.B.: "NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN."

S.S.: "YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN? OKAY[.]"

B.B.: "MY HUSBAND. . . I LIVED WITH MY HUSBAND RIGHT DOWN THERE. AND HE PASSED AWAY IN [19]83. [HIS NAME WAS] *C. B. BENJAMIN*, AND THAT'S WHAT MY NAME IS[.] AND I WENT TO SCHOOL HERE IN MANSFIELD. AND I [. . .] JOINED THIS CHURCH A LONG TIME AGO. AND IT WASN'T [ANY]THING BUT [] A LITTLE BITTY FRAME [*HOUSE*]."

S.S.: "WHAT YEAR WAS THAT WHEN YOU JOINED THE CHURCH?"

B.B.: "I CAN'T THINK OF IT NOW."

S.S.: Stan Solamillo
B.B.: Betty Benjamin
F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe
M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)
S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard
M.E.B.: Mary Eliza Burr
M.E.: Michael Evans

S.S.: "WHAT DID YOUR HUSBAND DO FOR A LIVING?"

B.B.: "YOU KNOW [], WE WORKED ON A FARM. WE PLOWED AND CUT [AND] PICKED COTTON. AND I PICKED COTTON AND CHOPPED COTTON. BUT HE GOT TO A PLACE WHERE HE COULDN'T CHOP ANYMORE. SO THAT WAS THAT!"

S.S.: "WHAT DID HE DO WHEN HE COULDN'T CHOP COTTON ANYMORE?"

B.B.: "WELL, HE STAYED AT HOME. WE [] WISH[ED] HE W[OULD] GET[] BETTER, BUT HE HAD A THING THAT HE COULDN'T GET RID OF."

S.S.: "[] YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR PARENTS ALSO FARMED."

B.B.: "YES, MY PARENTS WORKED ON THE FARM. AND MY MOTHER [] ALWAYS WORKED AND PICKED COTTON TOO. AND ALL THE REST OF THEM PICKED COTTON. AND I LIKED TO PICK COTTON. I COULD DO A LITTLE BIT NOW, I THINK."

S.S.: "HOW [A]BOUT YOU SIR? YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR PARENTS HAD FARMED AS WELL?"

F.L.: "OH, YEAH."

S.S.: "OKAY. AND WAS IT PRETTY MUCH COTTON FARMING?"

F.L.: "COTTON, CORN, OATS--PRACTICALLY ANYTHING THAT YOU COULD RAISE AROUND IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY."

S.S.: "[DID] YOU RAISE. . . [DID] ANYONE RAISE ANY LIVE STOCK?"

F.L.: "OH, YES. COWS, HORSES, AND CHICKENS, TURKEYS, AND SOME [OTHER] KIND[] OF ANIMALS."

S.S.: "THE VAST PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION HERE IN MANSFIELD. . . WERE THEY PICKING COTTON PRETTY MUCH?"

F.L.: "RIGHT."

S.S.: "[] I WANT TO GO BACK TO [] [WHEN] YOU WERE CHILDREN. WHAT DID YOU HEAR FROM YOUR PARENTS OR FROM YOUR RELATIVES [] ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY AND HOW IT GOT STARTED? DOES ANYONE KNOW?"

F.L.: "WELL MY PARENTS SAID THEY ORIGINATED FROM [. . .] KENTUCKY--AS WELL AS I CAN REMEMBER. AND [] MY GRANDFATHER, (WHO'S NAME WAS BOB LAWSON) [] USED TO SIT DOWN, [. . .] AND TALK TO US ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD AND [] HOW HE [GREW] UP. [. . .] HIS MOTHER WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE. AND HE WAS AROUND [] EIGHT OR TEN YEARS OLD [] BEFORE THEY CAME OUT FROM UNDER *SLAVERY*."

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F.L.: [CONTINUED] "AND HOW SHE [HIS MOTHER] USED TO COOK. AND HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT BISCUITS [HARDLY] W[ERE] [] UNTIL HE HAD GOT[TEN] ALMOST [. .] TO HIS TEENS. AND B[ECAUSE] HIS MOTHER COOK[ED] EVERY NOW AND THEN, HE'D GET A BISCUIT AROUND BREAKFAST TIME. AND MANY TIMES SHE HAD TO SLIP THAT TO HIM, (I GUESS WHAT YOU WOULD CALL STEALING), AND PASS IT ON TO HIM. AND HE THOUGHT THAT WAS CAKE. YOU KNOW, JUS[T] LIKE CAKE. IT WAS JUS[T] LIKE CAKE TO HIM. AND [HE WOULD TELL US ABOUT] MANY, MANY OTHER THINGS THAT IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO GO THROUGH."

S.S.: "THAT'S OKAY. I WANT YOU TO TAKE THE TIME. NO, FEEL FREE TO SAY MORE."

F.L.: "BUT [] NEVERTHELESS, HE PURCHASED THE FARM--I GUESS A[ROUND] THE TIME I WAS BORN. [HE BOUGHT] EIGHTY-TWO ACRES IN WHAT WE CALL 'THE TIMBERS.' AND [] I LIVED THERE A LONG TIME AFTER THAT. HE LOST HIS WIFE IN 1918, WHEN I WAS BORN. AND [] HE LIVED THERE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS UNTIL HE [] [WAS] UNABLE TO TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF. AND MY DADDY'S YOUNGEST BROTHER T[OOK] CARE OF HIM MOST OF HIS LIFE, UNTIL [] GRANDFATHER PASSED [DIED].

"[THERE ARE] SO MANY THINGS THAT I JUST BARELY [] REMEMBER. I DIDN'T THINK [] MUCH [ABOUT THIS PLACE] AFTER I LEFT [] HERE. I COULD TELL YOU SOME THINGS THAT WOULD SOUND FUNNY NOW. AFTER MY FATHER PASSED, WE HAD, . . . (ME AND MY BROTHER--[THE] ONE NEXT TO ME), . . . WE HAD A CROP ON THE PRAIRIE. [] [THERE] WAS] ABOUT TEN ACRES. WE HAD [A] COTTON CROP AND WE PICKED TWO OR THREE BALES OF COTTON OFF OF IT. THINGS WERE SO HARD THEN. A DOLLAR JUST REALLY MEANT SOMETHING--TO HAVE A DOLLAR.

"SO, I REMEMBER IN THE FALL I [. .] [WAS] GETTING READY TO BUY CLOTHES, YOU KNOW, FOR [. .] SCHOOL THAT WINTER. I WENT OUT AND BOUGHT SOME SHOES IN FORT WORTH. I FORGET THE NAME OF TH[E] STORE, BUT IT WAS A JEW[ISH] [OWNED] STORE [] ON 19TH STREET. IT WAS A FAVORITE PLACE [TO] [. .] GO AND BUY SCHOOL CLOTHES. AND I BOUGHT SOME SHOES.

"AND IT WAS NEAR[LY]. . . IT WAS IN THE FALL [WHEN] A RAIN [CAME]. AND MANY TIMES, WE LIKED TO HUNT SQUIRRELS AND RABBITS AND DUCKS, OR WHAT EVER. [WE WERE] GOING OUT HUNTING ONE DAY AND IT RAINED. AND THOSE SHOES . . . I PAID A DOLLAR, NINETY-EIGHT CENTS, (SOMETHING LIKE THAT) FOR, [] GOT WET AND [] THE [WHOLE] BOTTOM C[A]ME OUT. AND THAT TICKLED MY BROTHER. NOW TH[OSE] W[ERE] HARD [] [TIMES], BUT [. .] [THEY WERE] BETTER TIMES THAN WHAT WE'RE LIVIN[G] IN NOW."

S.S.: "BETTER TIMES?"

F.L.: "BETTER TIMES."

S.S.: "WHY?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo
B.B.: Betty Benjamin
F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe
M.M.: McClendon Moody (Mac)
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F.L.: "BECAUSE. . . YOU DID NOT HAVE TO BE AFRAID TO GO OUT DOORS. YOU COULD LEAVE YOUR HOUSE OPEN [AND THE] NEIGHBORS [. . .]WOULDN'T BOTHER YOU. [THEY] WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING. IF THEY W[ERE] HUNGRY, YOU WOULD G[IVE] THEM SOME FOOD AND LEAVE IT AT THAT. SO, [. . .] I THINK THAT[] [THOSE WERE] BETTER TIMES THAN WHAT WE'RE LIVING [] NOW.

"BUT NEVERTHELESS, [] I THOUGHT I HAD BOUGHT M[YSELF] SOME REAL GOOD SHOES. AND I HAD SOME MONEY ON ME. AND I WENT OUT AND TRIED TO CATCH M[YSELF] A RABBIT TO EAT--TO HAVE SOME MEAT, (WHICH WE REALLY DIDN'T HAVE TO DO). BUT IT WAS JUST [] THAT I LIKED RABBIT MEAT--COTTON TAILS ESPECIALLY.

"BUT I LIKE TO LOOK BACK OVER THOSE TIMES AND SEE WHERE THE LORD HAS BROUGHT ME []."

S.S.: "AND WHERE WAS THE FAMILY LOCATED?"

F.L.: "BACK UP HERE--ABOUT THREE MILES."

S.S.: "OKAY. YOU SAID YOUR GRANDFATHER ACQUIRED LAND THERE?"

F.L.: "YES, HE DID. AND ALSO MY FATHER."

S.S.: "DID THEY HAVE TO PURCHASE THIS?"

F.L.: "THEY DID PURCHASE IT."

S.S.: "WHAT YEAR WAS TH[AT]?"

F.L.: "OH, THAT WAS [], WELL I WAS GROWN. AND HE [HIS GRANDFATHER] PURCHASED THAT [LAND]. AND MY FATHER [] PURCHASED TWO-HUNDRED AND TWENTY ACRES ADJACENT TO IT. AND WE RAISED ALL KINDS OF POTATOES, FRUITS, VEGETABLES, AND WHAT NOT. AND WE DIDN'T HAVE TO BUY TOO MUCH--MAYBE A LITTLE FLOUR. [WE] RAISED OUR OWN [AND] WHAT NOT. SO NEVERTHELESS, I NEVER DID KNOW [] [VERY MUCH] ABOUT [THE] DEPRESSION [. . .]."

S.S.: "HOW [A]BOUT YOU MA'AM? WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?"

M.B.: "WHAT DO I REMEMBER?"

S.S.: "ABOUT HOW MANSFIELD GOT ESTABLISHED?"

M.B.: "I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHEN WE GOT HERE. MANSFIELD WAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED WHEN WE MOVED IN 1927. BUT [] I DO KNOW WE HAD A LITTLE SCHOOL BACK OVER HERE. AND WE LIVED [ON] WHAT THEY CALL[ED] [] 'THE PRAIRIE.' AND WE HAD TO WALK FROM [WAY] OUT ON THE PRAIRIE BACK OVER HERE TO THE TWO-ROOM SCHOOL.

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M.B.: [CONTINUED] "AND [] *MISS THELMA LOUISE JONES* WAS THE PRINCIPAL[,] AND *MISS BEATRICE BROCK* WAS HER ASSISTANT[,] THERE [] [WERE] JUST TWO TEACHERS AT THIS SCHOOL. LATER, THEY BUILT ANOTHER ONE. AND THAT [ONE] WENT TO ABOUT THE FIFTH OR SIXTH GRADE. LATER, THEY BUILT ANOTHER ONE AND IT WENT TO THE SEVENTH GRADE. EVEN AFTER WE GOT HERE AT [] THIS SCHOOL, IT WAS, (I WAS WRONG) BUT TH[AT]'S [WHERE] THE CHILDREN W[ENT]. AND WE HAD A LITTLE OLD SCHOOL FIRST BACK OUT HERE [OF] ABOUT TWO. . .IT HAD TWO ROOMS [AND WAS LOCATED] OVER OFF [THE] THICKET BETWEEN HERE AND THE HOUSE DOWN YONDER."

S.S.: "ABOUT WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?"

M.B.: "OH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YEAR [IT WAS] BACK IN THE THIRTIES, I IMAGINE. [BE]CAUSE, [YOU] SEE, WE MOVED HERE IN [19]27."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

M.B.: "AND [] I REMEMBER M[YSELF] WALKING FROM WAY OUT THERE TO THE SCHOOL. FIRST, IT WAS DOWN THERE ACROSS FROM WHERE BROTHER MAC LIVE[S]. AND WE WENT THERE. WELL THEN THEY FINALLY DECIDED, THEY BOUGHT A LITTLE TWO-ROOM [] BUILDIN[G]. AND [THEY] PUT IT OVER NEAR THE VERY END OF THIS ROOM--[BE]TWEEN HERE AND THE HOUSE DOWN THERE. AND WE WERE [I]N SCHOOL [] TILL THEY BUILT THIS SCHOOL FOR THE CHILDREN.

"I WAS ALREADY GROWN AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME WHEN THEY BUILT THE SCHOOL HERE FOR THE CHILDREN. MY CHILDREN WENT TO SCHOOL HERE. [. .] THEN THEY DIDN'T HAVE [TO] GO [ANY] FURTHER THAN THE SEVENTH GRADE HERE. THEN THEY HA[D] TO BE BUSSED TO FORT WORTH TO *I. M. TERRELL [HIGH SCHOOL]*. [] WHEN MY CHILDREN WENT ON, T[HERE] W[ERE] TWO BUS DRIVERS. ONE WAS, [] I BELIEVE HIS NAME WAS. . .THEY CALLED HIM '*LAWYER*.' THAT WASN'T HIS NAME, THOUGH. WHAT WAS HIS NAME MILDRED? DO YOU REMEMBER?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "*STRAUS*."

M.B.: "*STRAUS*. *STRAUS* WAS HIS LAST NAME."

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "GO BACK TO YOUR CHILDHOOD. [. .] YOU SKIPPED YOUR CHILDHOOD."

M.B.: "WELL, [] THAT'S WHAT I'M. . . I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT MANSFIELD, WHEN IT [] [WAS] ESTABLISHED [. .] [BE]CAUSE I WAS [A CHILD OF] ABOUT SIX, [OR] SEVEN YEARS OLD WHEN WE MOVED HERE."

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "TALK ABOUT YOUR GROWIN[G] UP AND YOUR GOIN[G] TO SCHOOL."

M.B.: "WELL, I [HA]VE TALKED ABOUT GOIN[G] TO SCHOOL OVER THERE. AND THEN THEY MOVED THE BUILDING OVER THERE. AND WE WENT TO SCHOOL, BUT [] WE

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M.B.: [CONTINUED] DIDN'T GO [] [ANY] FURTHER THAN THE SEVENTH GRADE. SO, IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE RELATIVES IN FORT WORTH, OR A FRIEND. . . WE [. . .] DIDN'T HAVE TRANSPORTATION TO GO LIKE PEOPLE DO NOW. WE DIDN'T HAVE CARS.

“BUT THERE W[ERE] SOME OTHERS [WHO] WENT ON TO THE TENTH GRADE IN FORT WORTH. THEY HAD FRIENDS THEY LIVED WITH. AND THEY RENTED AND WENT [TO SCHOOL]. AND MAYBE SOMETIMES THEY, WELL THEY[] [WOULD] GO AND STAY AND COME HOME. BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY [TRANSPORTATION], SO WE DIDN'T [GO]. I DIDN'T GO [] [ANY] FURTHER THAN [THE SEVENTH GRADE] HERE. AND THAT[] [WAS] AS FAR AS WE WENT. [BE]CAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE RELATIVES IN FORT WORTH, NOR ANY ESTABLISHED FRIENDS DOWN THROUGH THE LINE.”

S.S.: “WHY DID YOUR FAMILY DECIDE TO MOVE FROM CORPUS TO MANSFIELD?”

M.B.: “WELL THEY [*HER FAMILY*] HAD MOVED FROM CORPUS TO BRYAN. AND THEN MY MOTHER HAD A BROTHER [] [WHO] LIVED OVER HERE AT LILLIAN--JUST OUT[SIDE] OF LILLIAN. AND OF COURSE HE WOULD COME INTO BRYAN EVERY SO OFTEN. AND HE TOLD THEM THAT THE LIVING UP HERE WAS BETTER THAN DOWN IN BRYAN. SO, THEY DECIDED TO COME UP HERE ON A COTTON PICK. AND THEN THEY STAYED.”

S.S.: “W[ERE] THERE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT WOULD COME IN?”

M.B.: “OH YES. THERE [] [WERE] A LOT [OF] PEOPLE.”

S.S.: “TO PICK COTTON AND THEN STAY?”

M.B.: “YEAH, [BE]CAUSE A LOT OF [TH]EM WOULD COME FROM FORT WORTH DOWN HERE AND TAKE WHAT [. . .] THEY CALL[ED] ‘*THE HOUSES*’ OUT ON THE FARMS. THEY WERE OLD HOUSES, BUT THEY [*THE SHARECROPPERS*] RENTED THEM AND THEY STAYED IN THE[M] TILL THE COTTON PICKIN[G] WAS OVER. TH[E]N THEY[] [WOULD] GO BACK [] [TO] FORT WORTH. SOME WOULD COME ON TRUCKS.

“SO WE GOT [THEM] IN ONE OF THOSE OLD HOUSES. AND O[F] COURSE MY FATHER WORKED ON THE FARM. THAT[] [WAS] ALL HE KNEW. AND WE JUST STAYED. AND THEN AFTER WE GOT UP, OH, ABOUT GROWN, WE C[A]ME FROM BETWEEN LILLIAN AND [. . .] WAY OUT THERE [AND MOVED] CLOSER TO MANSFIELD. [. . .] WE [HAVE] BEEN AROUND [] THIS AREA EVER SINCE.”

S.S.: “M-M-M, OKAY. NOW MA'AM, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD AS A CHILD ABOUT HOW THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY GOT STARTED HERE?”

B.B.: “NO, I CAN'T.”

S.S.: “YOU CAN'T? DID YOU HEAR ANY. . . YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANY STORIES ABOUT. . . HOW LAND WAS ACQUIRED OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT? OKAY, UM.”

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

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M.E.: Michael Evans

M.B.: "NOW I USED TO HEAR THE OLD PEOPLE TALK ABOUT [THE TIME] BEFORE WE HAD CHURCHES. THEY HAD CHURCHES ON THE FRONT 'BRUSH ARBOR'"

S.S.: "ON THE 'BRUSH ARBOR'?"

M.B.: "UH-HUH. THEY TALKED ABOUT THAT [] QUITE A BIT."

S.S.: "THAT WOULD BE IMPORTANT."

M.B.: "[. . .] WE WOULD GO THERE. [TO THE FRONT BRUSH ARBOR]. THEN THE FIRST CHURCH I REMEMBER[ED] [] THEM HAVIN[G] WAS DOWN HERE. JUST BEFORE YOU. . . RIGHT AFTER YOU PASS. . . YOU KNOW, [] BEFORE YOU START DOWN THE HILL TO MANSFIELD. YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW WHERE THAT IS[,] BUT [THERE WAS] A CHURCH [THERE]. [THERE IS] A HOUSE OVER THERE NOW WHERE THE CHURCH USED TO BE. AND THEN WE [] [WOULD] WALK FROM WAY OUT ON THE PRAIRIE TO TH[AT] HOUSE-- THAT CHURCH HOUSE. AND THEN, I GUESS IT MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT. . . ."

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "TOWARDS *MC CLENDON PARK*."

M.B.: "HUH?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "WE USED TO GO TO *MC CLENDON PARK*."

M.B.: "YEAH, TO [] *MC CLENDON PARK*[] WHERE THE. . . THAT'S WHERE THAT HOUSE IS. THAT [] [WAS] WHERE OUR CHURCH WAS FOR YEARS. AND [] WHEN. . . THAT [] [WAS] THE FIRST CHURCH I REMEMBER [] GOING TO. THEN, LATER THEY TORE TH[E] [CHURCH] DOWN AND RE-BUIL[T]."

"AND THEN LATER THEY ACQUIRED *THIS* BUILDING. BUT [OF] COURSE, I WAS GROWN AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME--[BE]FOR[E] THE CHURCH. BUT THIS CHURCH HAS BEEN HERE SINCE. BUT WE WORSHIPPED DOWN THE HILL THERE IN MANSFIELD, AND THEY HAD [] OUTSIDE TORCH LIGHTS ALL AROUND. AND WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY ELECTRICITY OR [ANY]THING. WE HAD WOOD HEATERS. AND [. . .] WE WALKED FROM WAY OUT ON THE PRAIRIE TO THE CHURCH."

S.S.: "WAS EVERYBODY SCATTERED, AS FAR AS WHERE THEY LIVED, OR WAS THERE A DEFINED COMMUNITY? SAY IN THE 1910'S AND [19]20'S? SO, YOU [WERE] SCATTERED, LITERALLY, ON ISOLATED FARMS?"

M.B.: "YES."

S.S.: "OKAY. DID ANYBODY HEAR ANY STORIES ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS? I GUESS [. . .] SOME OF MY QUESTIONS MAY SEEM NAIVE, BUT I THINK [. . .] THEY'RE IMPORTANT. WE OFTEN HEAR THAT A FEDERAL OFFICER, (AT THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR), [] ARRIVES AT THE PORT OF GALVESTON AND ANNOUNCES THAT THE SLAVES OF TEXAS ARE FREE. BUT WE NEVER FIND OUT HOW PEOPLE IN SMALL COMMUNITIES SCATTERED THROUGHOUT TEXAS FOUND OUT THAT THEY WERE FREE."

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F.L.: "THE SLAVE OWNERS TOLD THEM."

S.S.: "THEY TOLD THEM?"

F.L.: "BUT THEY WERE STILL UNDER *SLAVERY*. THEY WOULD GIVE THOSE OLD SETTLERS, (OUR '*FOREPARENTS*' [WHO] W[ERE] [FORMERLY] UNDER SLAVERY), MAYBE AN ACRE OF GROUND--TWO ACRES OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT--JUST BIG ENOUGH TO PUT A HUT ON. BUT YOU W[ERE] STILL SLAVING FOR THEM."

S.S.: "SO, THEY WOULDN'T PAY YOU FOR ANY WORK YOU DID?"

F.L.: "OH, IF THEY LET YOU HAVE SOME MONEY [. . .] [IT WAS WHEN] YOU W[ERE] [] SHARECROPPIN[G]."

S.S.: "M-M-M."

F.L.: "WELL, [] THEY [] [WOULD] TAKE EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAD [. . .] IN THE FALL."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "[] DIDN'T THEY CALL IT HAL[VES] OR SOMETHING? WHAT DID THEY CALL IT?"

F.L.: "THIRD AND FOURTHS."

S.S.: "THEY CALLED [IT] THIRD AND FOURTHS."

M.B.: "AND SOME W[ERE] ON HAL[VES]. IF YOU HAD YOUR OWN TEAM, YOU WORKED THIRDS AND FOURTHS. BUT IF YOU W[ERE] LIKE MY PARENTS [AND] DIDN'T HAVE Y[OUR] [OWN] TEAM--THEN [] [YOU] WERE SUPPOSED TO BE [] WORKING ON THE HAL[VES]. AND OF COURSE, AS HE SA[ID], [*HER PATERNAL GREAT GRANDFATHER*], THEY W[ERE] [. . .] SUPPOSED TO [] BUY [] ALL YOUR SEEDS, [] THIS, THAT, AND THE OTHER [FROM THE LANDOWNER]. AND WHEN [. . .] [THEY WOULD] [*THE SHARECROPPERS*] GATHER THE CROP [IN THE FALL], [] [THEY] DIDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY [LEFT]."

S.S.: "M-M-M."

M.B.: "I REMEMBER THAT."

F.L.: "YOU OWED IT ALL."

S.S.: "SO, YOU WERE ALWAYS IN DEBT AS WELL?"

F.L.: "SO THEREFORE WHEN I LOST THOSE SHOES IN THE MUD, I S[AW], IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE THIS PLACE. AND I LEFT HERE SIXTY-ONE YEARS AGO."

S.S.: "UM, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THAT. [] IT SEEMS TO BE SOMETHING THAT . . . THAT'S ENDEMIC TO THE SOUTH. UM, CAN YOU TELL US ANY

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S.S.: [CONTINUED] MORE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE UNDER THAT. . . THAT SYSTEM, WHETHER IT'S CALLED SHARECROPPING OR SLAVERY? AND I GUESS THE OTHER THING I NEED TO FIND OUT, WAS THERE EVER TITLE GIVEN TO YOU?"

F.L.: "OH YES. THEY [] [WOULD] GIVE YOU TITLE."

S.S.: "THEY [] [WOULD] GIVE YOU TITLE?"

F.L.: "I KNOW MOST PEOPLE IN A. . . YOU KNOW. . . WHEN I WAS COMING UP [GROWN] TO SIXTEEN, THAT [] [WAS] WHEN I LEFT HERE. THAT [] [WAS] THE YEAR MY FATHER PASSED [DIED]--1934. SO [] THAT [] [WAS] SHARECROPPIN[G]. [] I GUESS [THERE WAS] NOT MUCH I C[OULD] RELATE TO AFTER I LEFT FROM HERE BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TOO MANY MEMORIES OF WHAT WENT ON BACK HERE."

M.B.: "MY PARENTS DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROPERTY UNTIL AFTER WE HAD GOTTEN GROWN. AND WE JUST BOUGHT A LITTLE HOUSE, YOU KNOW, AND ENOUGH LAND TO PUT THE HOUSE ON. BUT WHILE WE WERE GROWING UP, WE [] STAY[ED] IN THE HOUSE[S] ON THE FARMS WHERE WE WORKED. AND WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY LAND UNTIL AFTER THEY GOT. . . WE GOT GROWN. AND THEY BOUGHT A LITTLE HOUSE AND MAYBE STAYED THERE A WHILE. AND MAYBE THEY MOVED A LITTLE FURTHER, OR DECIDE[D] [THEY] W[ERE] ABLE TO ADD SOME MORE TO IT. THEY D[ID] THAT. BUT WE WERE GROWN AND MARRIED WHEN WE BEGAN TO GET OUR LITTLE HOUSES."

S.S.: "HOW [A]BOUT YOU, MA'AM? CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT [] YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER, WHETHER THEY HAD PROPERTY OR WHETHER THEY SHARECROPPED?"

F.L.: "MOSTLY, THEY WERE SHARECROPPERS."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "TELL HIM SOMETHING ABOUT UNCLE OSCAR[S] [EXPERIENCE] WORKING DOWN ON THE WHITE OAKS FARM. REMEMBER THAT, AUNT BETTY? TELL HIM SOMETHING ABOUT THAT. THAT'S W[H]ERE YOU WORKED SO LONG-- DOWN ON THAT WHITE OAKS FARM."

B.B.: "I CAN'T TALK."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?"

B.B.: "M-M-M."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "[ARE] YOU SICK?"

B.B.: "M-M-M."

S.S.: "[WOULD] YOU LIKE TO SIT SOME WHERE ELSE, MA'AM?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "[DO] YOU WANT TO GO OUTSIDE?"

S.S.: Stan Solamillo

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

B.B.: Betty Benjamin

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M.E.: Michael Evans

S.S.: “[DO] YOU WANT TO? . . . WE’LL TAKE A LITTLE BREAK.”

M.M.: “*I AM MC CLENDON [MAC] MOODY, [M.M.]. I WAS BORN MARCH 12, 1932. AND I WAS RAISED UP IN MANSFIELD--LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE. AND I WAS BORN AT HOME WITH A MIDWIFE. AND I GOT MY EDUCATION IN MANSFIELD [UP] TO THE EIGHTH GRADE. AND I HAD TO PURSUE THE REST OF IT IN FORT WORTH [AT] I. M. TERRELL [HIGH SCHOOL].*

“[I] FINISHED THERE, RAISED A FAMILY, AND I WORKED FROM [THE TIME I WAS] A KID. I DON’T REMEMBER MY FATHER. [I] NEVER S[AW] HIM. AND MY MOTHER, I [VAGUELY] REMEMBER SOME THINGS [] ABOUT HER. I DON’T REMEMBER HER. AND FROM WHEN I W[AS] ELEVEN YEAR[S] OLD, I LIVED IN A SIX- ROOM HOUSE BY MYSELF. I HAD ONE BROTHER AND TWO SISTERS. MY BROTHER [] WENT [IN]TO THE ARMY. MY COUSINS CAME FOR MY TWO SISTERS AND THEY WENT TO SCHOOL IN FORT WORTH. ONE OF MY AUNTIES GOT [TOOK IN] MY GRANDMOTHER. SOMEWHERE[] IN THE SHUFFLE., NO ONE ADOPTED ME. SO I LIVED IN MY PARENTS’ HOME FOR ABOUT [] SIX YEARS, BY MYSELF.

“FROM [A]BOUT ELEVEN YEAR[S] OLD, [I] COOK[ED] FOR MYSELF, AND WHATEVER [NEEDED] TO BE D[ONE], I DID IT BY MYSELF. I WOULD GO TO BED ABOUT SUNDOWN [BE]CAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF THE DARK. AND I []COOKED IN THREE DIFFERENT DOCTORS’ HOMES. THAT[] [WAS] HOW I LEARNED TO COOK. I’M A CHEF COOK BY TRADE. I LIKE THE TRADE NOW. I COOKED FOR *DR. NIFONG, RAYMOND THOMAS, AND DR. MC KNIGHT.* AND THEIR WIVES TAUGHT ME TO COOK, CLEAN HOUSE AND [DO] YARDS--JUST FOR MY FOOD.

“AND THEN I . . . WHEN I TURNED ABOUT FOURTEEN YEAR[S] OLD, ONE OF MY COUSINS. . . SAW THAT I WAS REALLY HAVING [A] CRISIS. [HE] ‘*CARRIED*’ [TOOK] ME TO FORT WORTH. I GOT A JOB FOR THE COMPANY I WORKED WITH, WORKED FOR NOW. [*WINN DIXIE*] . . . [I HAVE] BEEN WORKING FOR THEM [FOR] FORTY-EIGHT YEARS--ONE JOB. I NEVER HAD TO GET UP MONDAY MORNING[S] AND GO LOOK FOR A JOB [BE]CAUSE I [HA]VE ALWAYS HAD A JOB. AND OF COURSE, I DID OTHER LITTLE THINGS. I WORKED FOR *BLESSING-MC KINLEY FUNERAL HOME. [MC INNIS FUNERAL HOME]* I USED TO CLEAN IT UP.

“AND [OF] COURSE, [] [THERE] WAS MEANNESS GOING ON THEN. BUT BLACKS W[ERE] JUST AS MEAN TO THE WHITES AS [THE] WHITES WERE [TO] THEM--JUST DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEANNESS. WE ALL HAD OUR LITTLE TRICKS WE COULD PULL. AND AS I CLEANED UP [] THE FUNERAL HOME. ONCE I CAN REMEMBER VERY CLEARLY THAT THEY [*WHITE PEOPLE*] WOULD SCARE ME AT NIGHT WITH SHEETS AND WHAT EVER.

“AND AT THE TIME, I DIDN’T KNOW THERE. . . I THOUGHT THEY MIGHT BE SOME OF THE BODIES THAT W[ERE] LAYING THERE ON THE TABLES. SO THE GUY [WHO] OWNED THE FUNERAL HOME PUT A SHEET ON AND WAS GOING TO SCARE ME. AND I BROKE THAT UP. NOBODY EVER SCARED ME AGAIN. I BROKE THE BROOM ACROSS HIS BACK. AND I FOUND OUT RIGHT THEN [THAT] THERE W[ERE] N[O]T] ANY GHOSTS OR ‘*HAINTS*,’

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] [*SPIRITS*] LIKE THEY SAID, [BE]CAUSE HE HOLLERED LOUDER THAN I DID. [I] MADE HIM HOLLER. HE TOLD EVERYBODY NOT TO [] BOTHER ME.

"I CAN REMEMBER, OH WHEN I WAS JUST A KID, WE DIDN'T HAVE A FUNERAL HOME FOR BLACKS HERE. WE HAD TWO DIFFERENT, SEPARATE [] CEMETERIES. THERE WAS [] JUST A FENCE ROW RIGHT DOWN THE SIDE OF TH[EM]. I REMEMBER, [] THEY HAD A FUNERAL ONCE. AND [] [A] WHITE GUY, [FROM] *BLESSING'S* HAD TO TAKE CARE OF THE BODY. AND HE GOT [] A VAN. AND OVER HALF, WELL ABOUT HALF, OF THE CASKET WAS STICKING OUT IN THE RAIN, YOU KNOW. I FORG[O]T WHERE [] IT WAS, BUT I CAN REMEMBER FOR REAL BACK THEN. [THERE] W[ERE] MUDDY ROADS [AND THERE] W[ERE] N[O]T ANY STREETS--[JUST] MUDDY ROADS. AND THEY PUT THE [] BODY IN THE GRAVE AND JUST BARELY COVERED IT UP. THEN, THOSE THINGS [] [ARE] JUST AS BAD THERE NOW; AS [] [THEY] W[ERE] THEN.

"I CAN REMEMBER. . . I REMEMBER SOME OF THE QUESTIONS YOU W[ERE] ASKING ABOUT THE FOOD [] [WE ATE]. [] THE FOOD IS DIFFERENT NOW BECAUSE WE EAT BEEF NOW, CHICKEN--WHATEVER WE WANT TO. THEN, MOST OF THE MEAT YOU ATE WAS PORK, CHICKEN IF YOU RAISE[D] IT, TURKEY ON THE SPECIAL HOLIDAYS [LIKE] THANKSGIVING [AND] CHRISTMAS. WE DIDN'T EAT TURKEY EVERY DAY [] LIKE YOU CAN NOW."

S.S.: "UH-HUH."

M.M.: "GOING TO SCHOOL, I WALKED ABOUT THREE AND A HALF MILES ONE WAY [WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS] COLD OR HOT GETTING OUT. YOU WALKED THERE [] [FOR ALL] SEVEN GRADES [WHICH WERE HOUSED] IN ONE BUILDING. ONE TEACHER TAUGHT SEVEN GRADES. THEN EVENTUALLY WE GOT TWO TEACHERS WHO HAD TWO GRADES. RIGHT HERE WHERE WE ARE NOW. THIS WAS THE SCHOOL.

"I DON'T KNOW IF, (IN MANSFIELD), I CAN REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS GOING TO BE INTEGRATED. AND IT TOOK ABOUT FIVE OR SIX-HUNDRED WHITE GUYS TO KEEP THREE, THIRTEEN OR FOURTEEN-YEAR OLD KIDS FROM ENTERING INTO THE SCHOOL-- FIVE OR SIX-HUNDRED, YOU KNOW. IT SEEMED LIKE [THE] ODDS [. . .] [WERE] AWFUL, YOU KNOW. EVEN THOUGH THEN, THE WHITES THEY W[ERE] MEAN, BUT THERE W[ERE] SOME MEAN BLACKS [WHO WERE MEAN] TO THE WHITE[S] ALSO. I WAS ONE OF THEM."

S.S.: "GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES OF YOU BEING MEAN TO WHITE FOLKS."

M.M.: "I WOULD PLOW HIS [*THE WHITE MAN'S*] MULE ALL DAY AND I [] [WOULD] CATCH HIS MULE AFTER. . . HORSE. . . AFTER DARK. I [] [WOULD] RIDE HIM [*THE HORSE*] ALL NIGHT. AND THE HORSE WOULDN'T WORK THAT [NEXT] DAY. AND WE [] [WOULD] BOTH HAVE. . . JUST HAVE FUN--FUN WORKING. YOU KNOW? I [] [WOULD] RUN HIM ALL NIGHT.

"AND THE NEXT MORNING I WOULD GET UP [AND] BRIDLE HIM. HE'D SAY [*THE WHITE MAN*] '*THE WOLVES [ARE] RUNNING MY STOCK [AT] NIGHT [AND] I DON'T KNOW HOW*'. BUT THERE W[ERE] N[O]T [] [ANY] WOLVES--I WAS RIDIN[G] [] [THEM]. I [] [WOULD]

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] CATCH HIM OUT, [THE HORSE] YOU KNOW? HE [THE HORSE] KNEW ME AND I [] [WOULD] CALL HIM UP TO ME. I [] [WOULD] RIDE HIM ALL NIGHT, HOOK HIM UP THE NEXT MORNING, AND GO TO THE FIELD.

“AND ALL OF THE OTHERS WOULD TRADE [OFF] DIFFERENT [HORSES] [. . .] AND GET ANOTHER ONE. AND I [] [WOULD] RIDE HIM. AND HE [THE HORSE] JUST WOULDN'T WORK. AND SO, WE BOTH HAD FUN. THAT WAS MEAN, AND THEN, DIFFERENT OF US.

“WE HAD A SPECIAL PLACE SET [UP] IN TOWN ON THE CORNER. ALL THE BLACKS WERE RIGHT THERE. [WE WOULD] GO UP TO FRONT STREET. YOU [HAD] BETTER HAVE [A] SACK IN YOUR HANDS WHEN YOU C[A]ME OUT, C[A]ME BACK DOWN [OUT OF THE STORE]. [] YOU D[ID] N[O]T GO AND WALK THROUGH A STORE UNLESS YOU [MEANT TO] BUY SOMETHING. AND IF YOU B[OUGHT] A PAIR OF SHOES OR PANTS, [A] SHIRT [OR] WHATEVER, YOU [HAD] BETTER KNOW YOUR SIZE. BECAUSE YOU D[ID] N[O]T PUT THEM ON OR PULL THEM OFF AND HANG THEM UP AND GET YOURSELF ANOTHER PAIR TO TRY ON. YOU [HAD] BETTER KNOW YOUR SIZE, YOU KNOW?

“SO, THAT WAS MEAN TO ME, AND ME BEING MEAN TO THEM. WELL, HE [THE WHITE MAN] WOULD SEW HIS CLOTHES EVERY DAY BECAUSE I WOULD GO. AND WHEN I DID TRY THEM ON, I WOULD TAKE A RAZOR BLADE AND GO THROUGH THERE AND CUT TH[EM] DOWN, YOU KNOW? IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN [THAT] EVERYBODY [HAS BEEN] MEAN TO EVERYBODY. [THERE] [] NEVER [HAS] BEEN [ANY]BODY REALLY GOOD. HE[[] [WOULD] WONDER WHY HIS CLOTHES W[ERE] BEING SO CUT UP IN[TO] STRINGS. WELL, I [] [WOULD] HAVE MINE.

“I BOUGHT A COTTON SACK ONE DAY FROM A GUY [. . .]. I BOUGHT IT ON CREDIT. AND WHILE I WAS BUYING IT, THE WAGON CAME AND LEFT. AND I HAD THE SACK AND I WAS SITTING ON IT. THIS IS FUNNY. BUT HE CAME OUT AND ASK[ED] ME, IF [. . .] THAT CONCRETE [WAS] HARD ON ME, WHY [DID] I BUY HIS SACK? JUST MEAN. AND IF YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING ELSE, YOU ASK ME AND I'LL TELL YOU.”

M.B.: “MAC, I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE THAT KIND OF MAN BEFORE.”

M.M.: “[. . .] LIKE I SAID ABOUT THOSE KIDS GOING TO SCHOOL, [. . .] IT [SHOULD] N[O]T TAKE FIVE-HUNDRED PEOPLE TO KEEP THREE KIDS OUT OF A SCHOOL, BUT IT DID! AND AT THE TIME, MY OLDEST DAUGHTER WAS [. . .] ENTERING SCHOOL--BUT NOT THAT PARTICULAR SCHOOL.

“AND THEY [THE WHITES] WOULD JUST LA[Y] A CHAIN ACROSS THE HIGHWAY TO STOP ME. AND I ASKED MY DAUGHTER TO LAY DOWN ON THE FLOOR. AND I MADE [THEM]--MAYBE NOT FIVE-HUNDRED OF THEM--RUN [] [AWAY FROM] MY CAR. BUT I RAN [OFF] A BUNCH OF THEM. IT [] [WAS ONLY AS] FAR AS THE PAVEMENT, [BUT IT] WOULD [] [HELP] ME MAKE THEM LET ME THROUGH. THEY SCATTERED OUT. AND THEY REMEMBERED ME [] [FROM] THAT DAY. TILL TODAY.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "AND I DON'T KNOW IF YOU [] [WOULD] CALL HIM A RACIST, OR WHATEVER HE COULD BE. HE TOLD ME EVERY TIME HE'D SEE ME, (I WOULD BE TALKING TO SOME OF HIS WOMEN), WHY DIDN'T I RUN FOR CITY COUNCIL?"

S.S.: "WHO WAS THIS?"

M.M.: "FLOYD CHERRY AND THE MAYOR. THEN I THINK HIS NAME WAS SEETON. I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT THAT [IT] WAS A PRETTY GOOD IDEA, AND I BELIEVE[D] I [WOULD] TRY THAT. SO I DID. AND REALLY, I WON. [. . .] AND THE NIGHT THAT I WENT TO BE SWORN IN, SOMETHING HAPPENED AND THEY POSTPONED THE MEETING FOR THAT PARTICULAR NIGHT. [] I WAS THERE EVERY TIME IT OPENED UP [. . .] [BUT] THEY PUT OFF.

"I WAS IN [] SEVENTH PLACE FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS THERE. [. . .] MANSFIELD WAS SPLIT [INTO] WALNUT CREEK AND MANSFIELD. [THERE WERE] THREE PEOPLE [COUNCILMEN] FROM MANSFIELD--THE OLD PART OF MANSFIELD--[AND] THREE [COUNCILMEN] FROM WALNUT CREEK. AND I [] [WAS THE] SEVENTH--IN SEVENTH PLACE. [AND] WHATEVER ANSWER I WOULD GIVE, (YOU KNOW FOR QUESTIONS [OR] WHATEVER WAS PROPOSED), THAT WAS THE WAY IT WOULD FALL.

"AND I BROUGHT MANSFIELD AND THE OLD WALNUT CREEK BACK TOGETHER BECAUSE [. . .] I WOULD HAVE MORE CALLS. THREE WOULD WANT ME TO VOTE [IN] THEIR DIRECTION [AND] THREE [] [WOULD] WANT ME [TO VOTE THEIR WAY]. AND I [] [WOULD] VOTE MY OWN [WAY]. WHICH EVER [] [WAY] [. . .] [I THOUGHT] WOULD HURT THE OTHER ONE, [THAT WAS THE WAY] I [] [WOULD] VOTE.

"AND FROM THAT [TIME], I WAS ON THE CITY COUNCIL FOR FIFTEEN YEARS. [I WAS] MAYOR PRO-TEM FOR SIX [YEARS]. I RAN TWICE [AND] TWENTY-TWO TIMES I WAS WR[ITTEN] IN. AND THE REASON I'M NOT SERVING NOW IS [BE]CAUSE I QUIT. I AM ON THE SCHOOL BOARD NOW. AND [. . .] [THERE IS] NOT A PERSON IN MANSFIELD THAT DOESN'T KNOW ME.

"[BACK] THEN, YOU HAD TO CALL PEOPLE BY THEIR LAST NAME, MISTER OR MISSES. I USED TO, (LIKE I SA[ID]), WORK FOR THE DOCTORS' WIVES. I [] [WOULD] [] [DRIVE] THEIR CHILDREN IN THEIR NEW AUTOMOBILES. [] EVERY EVENING [AND] SUNDAY[S]. WHENEVER THEY WOULD WANT TO RIDE, I WOULD [] [DRIVE] THEM.

"BUT YET, I [] [WOULD] COOK FOR THEM. BUT YET, I WOULD HAVE TO GO DOWN AROUND [TO THE BACK OF THE HOUSE] AND COME IN [THROUGH] THE BACK DOOR[.] [I WOULD] GO ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE, UP STAIRS, WHEREVER, COOK [AND] TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN[]. BUT YET, I COULDN'T COME [IN] THROUGH THE FRONT. . . I THOUGHT THAT WAS A SLAP IN THE FACE. I NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT. WHAT WAS THE DEAL [ABOUT] []?"

S.S.: "DO YOU UNDERSTAND IT BETTER NOW?"

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M.M.: "NO, NOT REALLY. [I] NEVER DID UNDERSTAND IT. SO YOU MIGHT. . .MAYBE [YOU] CAN GET SOME LITERATURE ON IT AND EXPLAIN IT TO ME, [BE]CAUSE I NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT."

S.S.: "DO YOU THINK THERE IS AN EXPLANATION?"

M.M.: "I THOUGHT TH[ERE] WAS. I THOUGHT I HAD THE SENSE AND THOSE GUYS W[ERE] THE ONES THAT W[ERE], YOU KNOW, OFF BALANCE. [THEY] DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH SENSE, TO ME."

S.S.: "SIR, WHEN YOU LEFT TO JOIN THE ARMY, (I AM BAD WITH NAMES). WHEN YOU LEFT MANSFIELD, WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED HERE THAT MADE YOU WANT TO LEAVE? ANY SPECIFIC EVENT [. . .] LIKE THE LAST STRAW THAT BREAKS. . .

F.L.: "ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?"

S.S.: ". . .THE PROVERBIAL CAMEL'S BACK. AND YOU SAY, I'M DONE WITH THIS?"

F.L.: "WHEN I WENT TO THE ARMY?"

S.S.: "WHEN YOU LEFT MANSFIELD."

F.L.: "WHEN I LEFT MANSFIELD, IT WAS JUST BECAUSE. . .WELL, THE WAY THINGS WERE SITUATED AROUND HERE, YOU KNOW. JUST WHAT HE WAS SPEAKING ABOUT. I [. . .] [WAS ONLY] SIXTEEN WHEN I LEFT HERE, REALLY GOING OFF TO SCHOOL. SO, I SPENT ONE YEAR, COMPLETED IT AND PART OF ANOTHER SESSION.

"AND I DECIDED THAT I WASN'T GO[ING] [TO] GO TO SCHOOL ANY FURTHER BECAUSE [] [I] AND THE MATHEMATICS TEACHER [] HAD SOME DIFFERENCES. AND I JUST FELT LIKE IT WAS BEST TO GET AWAY FROM THIS AFTER I FOUND OUT WHAT OTHER PLACES WERE LIKE, YOU KNOW, GOT ACQUAINTED. AND I NEVER DID WANT TO COME BACK HERE TO LIVE ANYWAY AFTER I LOST MY FATHER."

S.S.: "SO, WHY DID YOU COME BACK TO MANSFIELD?"

F.L.: "I DON'T LIVE HERE."

S.S.: "OH, YOU DON'T? WHERE ARE YOU NOW?"

F.L.: "I'M IN FORT WORTH."

S.S.: "YOU'RE IN FORT WORTH? OKAY."

S.S.: "I AM CURIOUS ABOUT THIS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANSFIELD AND FORT WORTH. AND AGAIN, (PARDON THE QUESTIONS, BUT THEY ARE REAL NAIVE), BUT TELL ME HOW THIS RELATIONSHIP GETS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN YOUR COMMUNITY HERE IN MANSFIELD AND FORT WORTH?"

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F.L.: "WELL, I WENT TO FORT WORTH. I HAD AN OLDER BROTHER LIVING THERE AND I HAD ONE SISTER [] [WHO] WAS LIVIN[G] THERE. AND THEY W[ERE] DOING REAL [] [WELL] AND I WENT THERE. AND HE KEPT AFTER ME TO COME LIVE WITH HIM. I SAID 'I'LL STAY UNTIL I GET [] A JOB.' I MOVED [] [BY] MYSELF. SO, I DID. HE WAS LIVING IN AN APARTMENT.

"AND I GOT A JOB. WELL, WHAT I FIRST STARTED DOING WAS LANDSCAPING--CUTTING YARDS. I WAS PLANTING FLOWERS [AND] WORKING IN GREENHOUSES. I LIKED FLOWERS AND I [HAVE] D[ONE] THAT [] EVEN UP UNTIL NOW. I GO OUT AND STILL DO IT. BUT [] I WORKED AT THE FEED MILL. IT WAS [CALLED] 'UNIVERSAL' WHEN I FIRST STARTED THERE. AND I WORKED FOR FORTY YEARS. AND THEN RETIRED FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. SO, LIFE WASN'T TOO BAD WITH ME."

S.S.: "WHAT PART OF FORT WORTH DID YOU LIVE IN?"

F.L.: "SOUTHSIDE, LAKE COMO. FROM ONE TO THE OTHER. [I] STARTED ON THE SOUTHSIDE, LIVED IN LAKE COMO [A]BOUT TEN YEARS, AND [CAME] BACK TO THE SOUTH SIDE AT THE SAME PLACE."

S.S.: "WAS LIFE BETTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS IN FORT WORTH, THAN IT WAS HERE?"

F.L.: "I WOULDN'T SAY. . .MAYBE IN SOME AREAS."

S.S.: "WAS THERE A LARGER COMMUNITY THERE, OR. . .?"

F.L.: "FOR SURE."

S.S.: "THERE ARE SEVERAL COMMUNITIES BETWEEN HERE AND FORT WORTH. DO YOU ALL REMEMBER THE NAMES OF THOSE?"

M.M.: "KENNEDALE AND MANSFIELD. . ."

M.B.: "BISBEE. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH, [THERE WAS] BISBEE GOING TOWARDS FORT WORTH, [THEN] GOING TO[WARDS] ARLINGTON [] [THERE] WAS WATSONVILLE, [. .] JOHNSON STATION, [AND] THEN ARLINGTON. "

S.S.: "THESE WERE [. .] THE BLACK COMMUNITIES THAT WERE SET UP. THESE ARE THE ONES I'M INTERESTED IN. YOU HAVE THESE LITTLE . . .THERE WAS ONE THAT WAS WRITTEN ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO THAT WAS, (I GUESS ANOTHER COMMUNITY), THAT WAS LOCATED BETWEEN HERE AND FORT WORTH."

F.L.: "KENNEDALE?"

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S.S.: "I THINK THAT WAS IT. YEAH. WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO IS F[IND] OUT HOW MANY COMMUNITIES WERE LOCATED FROM, SAY, HERE TO FORT WORTH."

F.L.: "NOW FOREST HILL, THEY'VE GOT THE LARGEST COMMUNITY."

S.S.: "M-M-M"

M.M.: "KENNE DALE. I NEVER KNEW THEM TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE BLACK FAMILY THAT EVER LIVED THERE [] UNTIL LAST YEAR, OR [THE] YEAR BEFORE LAST. I NEVER KNEW [OF] A BLACK KID GOING TO SCHOOL THERE. IT'S STILL JUST LIKE IT WAS IN THE 1800'S.

"YOU KNOW, THEN FOREST HILL WAS JUST LIKE KENNE DALE AND MANSFIELD UNTIL TWO OR THREE BLACK PEOPLE[] BOUGHT HOMES THERE. AND THEN THE WHITES MOVED OUT. AND THEN THE GAS WENT UP. AND THEN THEY WANTED TO BUY TH[EM] BACK, BUT THEY DIDN'T GET TH[EM] BACK. SO THAT[] [WAS] HOW FOREST HILL BEC[A]ME PREDOMINATE[LY] BLACK--ALMOST."

F.L.: "AND THE TAXES WENT UP."

M.M.: "YEAH [IN] KENNE DALE. WELL TH[OSE] FOLKS [HAD A] SETTLEMENT THERE. THEY ARE. . . THOSE POOR GUYS [] WOULDN'T SELL, YOU KNOW. SO IT'S STILL ALMOST PREDOMINATELY WHITE. BUT I DON'T THINK [. . .] THERE[] [ARE] OVER TWO OR THREE [BLACK] FAMILIES [WHO] LIVE THERE NOW IN THE OLD PART OF KENNE DALE. [IN] BURLESON, THERE NEVER HA[S] [BEEN] ONE [BLACK FAMILY] [OR IN] RENDON, (THAT WAS A LITTLE [A]ROUND IN HERE). [THAT WAS] [BE]CAUSE BLACKS [] (MORE OR LESS) LIVED IN MANSFIELD.

"THEY LIVED ON FARMS--SHARECROPPERS AND JUST FARMERS[]. [THEY] WORKED BY DAY AND [NIGHT],. SAY FOR INSTANCE, LIKE MYSELF. I NEVER DID A WHOLE LOT OF FARMING [BE]CAUSE I WAS, LIKE I SA[ID], I WAS A KID. FROM ELEVEN YEAR[S] OLD TILL I WAS ABOUT SIXTEEN, I LIVED BY MYSELF.

"I NEVER REALLY REMEMBER GETTING DIPPED [] [OR] WHIPP[ED] BY MY PARENTS. I GOT[] MANY WHIPPINGS, BUT [. . .] [THEY] W[ERE] [GIVEN] BY OTHER KIDS AND MEN--WHITE GUY[S]. I NEVER GOT A WHIPPING BY MY PARENTS [NOR WAS] DISCIPLINED. I NEVER HAD ONE. I NEVER KNEW MY PARENTS. AND OF COURSE, MANSFIELD[] [HAS] BEEN GOOD. I'M NOT PUTTING MANSFIELD DOWN.

"I RAISED TEN CHILDREN OF MY OWN AND ADOPTED THREE, [AND] PUT TWO THROUGH COLLEGE. [I HAVE] BEEN ON MY JOB FOR FORTY-EIGHT YEARS [AT WINN DIXIE] AND OWNED PROPERTY IN MANSFIELD. I OWN PROPERTY RIGHT IN THE PART OF MANSFIELD THAT I COULDN'T WALK ON. I OWN PROPERTY THERE. SO, MANSFIELD[] [HAS] BEEN VERY GOOD TO ME."

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F.L.: "THERE W[ERE] THREE OR FOUR BLACK FAMILIES HERE THAT [. . .] MANSFIELD [REALLY] GREW FROM. AND TH[OSE] W[ERE] THE *MOODYS*, THE *BENNETTS*, THE *BRISCOES*."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE] "LAWSON."

F.L.: "LAWS. . . DIDN'T I SAY. . . I'M GO[ING] [TO] FORGET MYSELF. SORRY. . . ."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "YOU'VE DONE GREAT."

F.L.: "WHAT ABOUT THE *LEWIS*' , AND THE *PORTERS*, AND THE *MANNINGS*?"

F.L.: "NOW THOSE WERE . . ."

S.S.: "SEVEN FAMILIES."

F.L.: "U-HUH. THAT I KNEW OF [WHO] GREW UP AROUND [HERE]."

S.S.: "THEY ALL WERE OVER IN FORT WORTH?"

F.L.: "AND TO OBEY THEM LIKE I DID MY PARENTS. AND I'M GLAD ABOUT IT."

S.S.: "SO, THERE [] [ARE] FAMILIES STILL REPRESENTED BY RELATIVES HERE?"

F.L.: "YES, I'M SURE. AREN'T THEY?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE] "LEWIS?"

F.L.: "LEWIS?"

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: "MOODY, LAWSON AND BRISCOE."

F.L.: "MOODY?"

M.M.: "AND [] I WAS READING SOME OF THE LITERATURE ABOUT THE RELATIVES. THEY ARE [. . .] THE FAMILIES [] (MORE OR LESS) [WHO WERE] IN SOME WAY [] ARE CONNECTED RELATIVES--SOME WAY IN THERE. THERE USED TO NOT BE A LARGE SETTLEMENT OF BLACKS. IT WAS JUST THAT THEY LIVED ON DIFFERENT. . .

"[O]N THE FARM I WAS RAISED ON []--THE FARM I USED TO LIVE ON WHEN I GREW UP. WELL, THE GUY, HE WAS [. . .] MORE [OR] LESS . . . [HE] TREATED ME LIKE I WAS A SHARECROPPER. . . A SHARECROPPER. BUT I WASN'T! I, YOU KNOW, PAID HIM. I HAD PAID HIM RENT [] MORE [OR] LESS [BY] WORK[ING] FOR HIM [BY] WATERING HIS COWS [AND] FARM AREA.

"BUT EVERY SUNDAY MORNING HE WOULD FIND SOMETHING FOR ME TO DO. AND THAT WAS ONE OF THE BEST THINGS, I GUESS, [THAT] HAPPENED TO ME, (WHEN HE

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] TOLD ME [HE] NEEDED HIS HOUSE), BECAUSE I WOULD STILL LIVE THERE FOR FREE. YOU DON'T LIVE IN A HOUSE [ANY]WHERE [] FOR FREE. YOU KNOW, WALK OFF FROM IT. YOU STAY THERE. BUT HE TOLD ME HE NEEDED HIS HOUSE.

"THAT[] [WAS] WHEN I BOUGHT ONE. BUT AT THE TIME THAT I WAS LIVING THERE FREE, I WAS STASHING UP MONEY--MY MONEY. SO, THAT WAS [A] PRETTY DARK DAY FOR ME. BUT ANYWAY, I MADE IT. HE DIDN'T GIVE ME A LOT OF TIME TO MOVE, YOU KNOW. JUST LIKE, 'YOU GO NOW AND ALL YOU CAN'T TAKE, DON'T COME BACK FOR IT.' THAT WAS ABOUT THE MEANEST THING I GUESS THAT EVER REALLY HAPPENED TO ME."

S.S.: "U-M-M. . . I WANT TO GO BACK TO, SAY WITH . . . OKAY, WE'VE GOT SEVEN FAMILIES WHO WERE HERE, SAY AT THE BEGINNING. SO, THAT'S ESSENTIALLY HOW THE COMMUNITY GETS STARTED--BY THOSE SEVEN FAMILIES. AND ARE THEY HERE PRIOR TO *RECONSTRUCTION*? DID THEY COME AFTER, OR WAS IT A MIXTURE?"

F.L.: "[] [THERE] WAS A MIXTURE."

M.M.: "YEAH [. .] [THERE] WAS [. .] WAS A MIXTURE."

S.S.: "DOES ANYBODY KNOW WHO THE FIRST BLACK FAMILIES, (WHO [] BECAME FREED SLAVES), WERE HERE IN MANSFIELD?"

F.L.: "[. .] [THERE WERE] THE *MOODYS* AND THE *BRISCOES*. I THINK FROM WHAT MY GRANDFATHER USED TO SAY, I THINK IT WAS THE *MOODYS* AND WELL. . ."

M.M.: "THE *MOODYS* CAME FROM GALVESTON. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH GALVESTON? THERE [. .] W[ERE] [A] LOT OF *MOODYS* IN GALVESTON. THAT[] [WAS] WHERE THE *MOODYS* CAME FROM. THE NAME OF *MOODY* CAME FROM GALVESTON. I DON'T [KNOW] WHAT YEAR [IT WAS]. BUT EVEN THOUGH, THEY STILL HAVE *MOODYS* THERE NOW. AND THEY HAVE [. .] THE NAME OF *MOODY*. THEY HAVE SOME BIG . . . THEY EVEN HAVE A MUSEUM OF *MOODY'S* DOWN THERE. BUT THAT[] [WAS] WHERE THEY CAME FROM. THAT[] [WAS] WHERE THE FAMILY OF *MOODYS* CAME FROM.

"I THINK HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN FRENCH OR SOMETHING. TH[OSE] [WHO] CAME IN ON A SHIP W[ERE] NAMED MOODY. AND THERE WERE SLAVES. THE BLACKS GOT [] [THEIR] NAME[S]. . . I THINK THAT[] [WAS] THE WAY IT WAS BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW IF IT JUST WAS A MOODY [WHO] JUST POPPED UP. I THINK IT WAS A FRENCH NAME, LIKE I SA[ID]. AND THEN, THE SLAVES G[A]VE TH[EM] THEIR NAME[] WHICH WAS [] MOODY AND SOLD IT TO A MAN NAMED LAWSON. AND THEY SOLD IT []. I THINK ALL THOSE NAMES WERE (MORE OR LESS) WHITE GUYS' NAMES."

S.S.: "ALL RIGHT."

M.B.: "I COULDN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT THE *BRISCOES*. WE WENT TO SCHOOL TOGETHER AND I MARRIED *MILFORD*. AND *MILFORD'S* FAMILY WAS HERE, BUT I DON'T

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M.B.: [CONTINUED] KNOW, (YOU KNOW), HOW LONG THEY [] [WERE] [] HERE OR [ANY]THING. AND OF COURSE, *MILFORD* JUST PASSED ON IN [] [19]90, IN MARCH.

“SO, I [HA]VE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE. I WENT TO SCHOOL HERE AND GOT MARRIED. MY CHILDREN, SOME OF THEM MOVED [] OFF TO FORT WORTH, [TO] CALIFORNIA, AND AROUND. BUT I [HA]VE BEEN HERE EVER SINCE.”

S.S.: “YOU MENTION A LOT OF LOCATIONS FOR SCHOOL. I'M ASSUMING FROM THE LITERATURE THAT I [HA]VE LOOKED AT, THAT THE FIRST SCHOOL FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN WAS ESTABLISHED SOMETIME IN THE TWENTIES? AM I RIGHT, OR IS IT THE THIRTIES?”

M.M.: “I CAME IN THE THIRTIES, I THINK, [OR] MAYBE IN THE TWENTIES. . . .”

M.B.: “I'M SURE IT WAS THE TWENTIES, [BE]CAUSE WE C[A]ME HERE IN [19]27, AND WE WENT TO SCHOOL WHE[N] THEY GOT OVER HERE. BESIDE[S] [IT WAS] ACROSS FROM WHERE BROTHER MAC LIVED THEN. AND I WAS A CHILD, AND THAT WAS IN THE TWENTIES. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THE [SCHOOL] HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED, BUT IT WAS A LITTLE TWO-ROOM BLACK SCHOOL, BACK THERE.

S.S.: “AND IT MOVED LIKE. . . IN YOUR MEMORY IT'S MOVED THREE TIMES?”

M.B.: “AS I SAID, *MRS. THELMA JONES* WAS THE PRINCIPAL, MISS BEATRICE BRIDER WAS FROM FORT WORTH, AND *MRS. JONES* LIVED HERE. AND SHE WAS HER ASSISTANT. AND THOSE TWO WOMEN RAN THE SCHOOL HERE. THEN LATER, THEY BOUGHT A TWO-ROOM BUILDING AND PUT [IT] BETWEEN HERE AND *MOODYS* HOUSE--KIND [OF] ON THE HILL UP THERE.”

S.S.: “DID THEY MOVE IT?”

M.B.: “UH-HUH. THEY MOVED IT. BY THAT TIME, I WAS ABOUT OUT OF SCHOOL. AND MY CHILDREN WENT THERE. AND THEN, WHEN THEY GOT TO WHERE THEY COULDN'T GO THERE, THEY WENT TO [SCHOOL IN] FORT WORTH. SO, WHEN THIS SCHOOL C[A]ME IN[TO] EXISTENCE, MY GRANDCHILDREN WERE GOING TO [THIS] SCHOOL, NOT MY CHILDREN.”

S.S.: “YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING?”

F.L.: “OH [] WERE YOU SPEAKING ABOUT THE FIRST BLACK PUBLIC SCHOOL? IS THAT WHAT YOU WERE ASKING ABOUT?”

S.S.: “RIGHT. I WANTED TO FIND OUT WHEN THAT GETS ESTABLISHED HERE IN MANSFIELD.”

F.L.: “WELL, THAT HAD TO BE SOMEWHERE ABOUT NINETEEN AND FOUR, OR NINETEEN AND FIVE, SOMEWHERE IN THAT AREA. BECAUSE MY OLDEST SISTER. ALL [OF] MY WHOLE ENTIRE FAMILY, (WHICH [] [CONSISTED OF] TWELVE OF US), [] WENT TO. . .

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F.L.: [CONTINUED] YOU KNOW, MY BROTHER [WHO]'S NEXT TO ME IN AGE [] WAS THE LAST ONE [] [WHO] WENT OUT THERE. [. . .] [THAT WAS] BACK BEFORE WE MOVED UP HERE."

M.B.: "YEAH, THEY USED TO RIDE HORSEBACK BACK DOWN THERE."

F.L.: "BUT [] THE FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL WAS [STARTED] [A]ROUND [A]BOUT NINETEEN AND FOUR OR FIVE--SOMETHING LIKE THAT."

S.S.: "WHEN DID THEY START SENDING STUDENTS TO FORT WORTH?"

F.L.: "THAT WAS DURING THE *INTEGRATION* AND I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT."

M.B.: "NO. THEY WENT BEFORE *INTEGRATION* BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T GO [ANY] FURTHER THAN [THE] SEVENTH GRADE HERE. [THAT WAS] [BE]CAUSE MY *MILDRED, EDNA, WILLIAM*--ALL OF THEM--[] WERE BUSSED. AND THE *BOBOLINK FAMILY* AND US [. . .] DIDN'T HAVE [ANY] WAY OF GOING.

"AND THEN MANSFIELD SCHOOL, (FOR A WHILE), PAID FOR THEM TO RIDE THE BOWEN BUS TO *I. M. TERRELL*. THEY WENT TO THE BUS STATION AND WALKED TO *I. M. TERRELL*. AND LATER, THEY DECIDED TO GIVE THEM BUS DRIVERS FROM MANSFIELD. THAT [] [WAS] WHEN 'LAWYER' STRAUS AND J. DENMON C[A]ME IN. J. DENMON DROVE THE BUS [TO AND FRO] FOR THE CHILDREN HERE. 'LAWYER' STRAUS CARRIED [DROVE] THE FORT WORTH CHILDREN TO *I. M. TERRELL* AND STAYED ALL DAY AND BROUGHT TH[EM] BACK IN THE EVENING. THEN I [] [WOULD] MEET TH[EM]."

S.S.: "SO, UP TO 1950, YOU COULDN'T GET A SECONDARY EDUCATION?"

M.B.: "SO, I GUESS . . . MY CHILDREN . . ."

S.S.: "[. . .] COULD YOU GET A SECONDARY EDUCATION UP TO 1950?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "NO."

S.S.: "SO, IT ALL STOPPED AT SEVEN?"

M.B.: "THAT [] [WAS] [. . .] [AS FAR AS] IT WENT HERE."

S.S.: "AND THERE WAS[N'T] PROVISION FOR ANY TRANSPORTATION BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR YOU TO GET TO SCHOOL?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "NO, EVERYBODY WALKED."

S.S.: "OKAY. BUT IN FORT WORTH. . . IN FORT WORTH. . .?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "IN FORT WORTH, WE CAUGHT THE 'TRAILWAY.' [THE] *CONTINENTAL TRAILWAYS BUS*."

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S.S.: "RIGHT. HOW LONG WAS THAT SCHOOL IN EXISTENCE? THE HIGH SCHOOL *I. M. TERRELL*?"

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "OH GOSH, TH[E] LATE SIXTIES. THAT [WAS] [W]HEN THEY TOOK [] [IT] AND MADE [IT] A SCHOOL FOR UNWED MOTHERS."

[VOICE OFF CAMERA] "1968, THAT[] [WAS] THE LAST GROUP I KNOW THAT CAME OUT OF THERE."

S.S.: "SO, WHEN WAS IT STARTED?"

M.B.: "[BE]CAUSE LEONARD GRADUATED IN [19]68."

MILDRED BRISCOE DEARS: [OFF CAMERA] "THAT WAS THE LAST CLASS WASN'T IT?"

M.M.: "I THINK THE BLACKS ONLY [. . .] [STARTED GOING THERE] IN THE THIRTIES, I BELIEVE. . . ."

S.S.: "SO, IT WAS IN THE THIRTIES?"

M.M.: ". . . THEY GOT A[N] HISTORIC[] PLAQUE DOWN THERE. I THINK IT WAS 1930. BUT MANSFIELD NEVER HAD, AS FAR AS BLACKS [WERE CONCERNED] UP UNTIL 1960, [THEY] NEVER HAD [ANY] TRANSPORTATION FOR [BLACK] KIDS. I DON'T CARE HOW FAR YOU LIVED. YOU HAD TO WALK TO SCHOOL. AND NORMALLY WHEN KIDS WOULD BE WALKING, YOU[] [WOULD] WALK FROM THIS PARTICULAR PLACE TO TOWN, (WHICH WAS ABOUT TWO MILES DOWN), AND THEN THEY[] [WOULD] SCATTER TO VARIOUS PLACES.

"BUT WHEN THE SCHOOL BUSES CAME BY, WE [WOULD] HAVE TO GET OFF THE ROAD, BECAUSE THE WHITE KIDS ON THE SCHOOL BUS WOULD THROW WHATEVER THEY HAD--ROCKS, PENCILS--OUT AT THE KIDS, YOU KNOW. IT WAS DARK; AND OF COURSE YOU KNOW, WE HAD TO WALK. AND THEN, MOST OF THEM [] LIVED ON THEIR FARMS-- [ON] THEIR PARENTS' FARM[S]. AND THEY ACTED '*THAT-A-WAY*' WHEN [WE] WERE WALKING. [THEY WOULD] THROW PENCILS AND THINGS AT US AND THEN WHEN THEY [] [WOULD] GET HOME, IT WAS OKAY.

"BUT SOMEHOW OR ANOTHER, IT CHANGED. THAT[] [WAS] WHY THEY SEGREGATED US--BECAUSE THEY WERE SO MEAN. [SOMETIMES] [. . .] [THERE WERE] FIVE OR SIX OF THEM [TO] ONE OF YOU. THEY WOULD NEVER MEET YOU ONE ON ONE. AND I THINK IT'S (MORE OR LESS) '*THAT-A-WAY*' TODAY. IF [] [THERE WEREN'T] FIVE OR SIX OF THEM. . . WELL. . . ."

S.S.: "HOW DID THEY TREAT YOU IF YOU LIVED ON THEIR FARM?"

M.M.: "THE SAME WAY IF THEY GOT WITH THEIR GROUP."

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S.S.: "IF THEY GOT WITH A GROUP?"

M.M.: "THEY [WOULD] TREAT YOU, IF YOU LIVED ON THEIR FARM WHATEVER [WAY THEY WANTED]. [DURING THE] EVENING [] [IF] THEY GOT [] FIVE OR SIX KIDS [TOGETHER] WITH THEM, (AND THERE WAS [ONLY] ONE OF YOU), THEY WOULD FIGHT YOU OR DO WHATEVER. BUT [] IF YOU OUTFIGHT [THEM], (THEY NEVER COULD JUMP), WE [] [WOULD] JUMP FENCES, AND THEY [WOULD] HAVE TO CRAWL THROUGH [THEM]. AND WE [] [WOULD] GET AWAY. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?"

M.B.: "RIGHT AFTER OUR CHILDREN WERE OLD ENOUGH TO START SCHOOL, WE LIVED ON A FARM BACK OUT TOWARD ARLINGTON. SO WE BROUGHT [THEM] IN OUR CAR AND PICKED THEM UP. AND THEN SHORTLY AFTER THAT, WE BOUGHT A LITTLE OLD HOME DOWN THERE, AND THEN THEY COULD WALK TO SCHOOL UP HERE. AND THEN THEY COULD WALK TO MANSFIELD AND CATCH THE BUS. BUT THEY DIDN'T HAVE . . . WE DIDN'T LIVE WAY OUT ON THE FARM AT TH[AT] TIME THEY WERE SCHOOL AGE [. . .] [EXCEPT FOR] A LITTLE WHILE."

S.S.: "DID ANYBODY, DURING THAT PERIOD, EVER GO ON TO SECONDARY SCHOOL, OR LEAVE MANSFIELD [AND] GO ON TO ATTEND A BLACK COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY?"

M.M.: "OH, YES."

S.S.: "BUT YOU HAD TO SHIP YOUR CHILDREN, YOUR FAMILY, ELSEWHERE IN ORDER TO DO THAT?"

M.M.: "NOT REALLY. [] THE *WILSONS*, THEY'RE WELL KNOWN IN THIS COMMUNITY. AND I THINK [] [THERE] MIGHT HAVE BEEN TEN, TWELVE, OR MORE CHILDREN. AND I THINK EVERY ONE OF THEM WENT TO COLLEGE. YOU KNOW, COLLEGES WITH REAL NAMES, NOT JUST SMALL COLLEGES [BUT] BIG COLLEGES.

"SO, NO. THAT WAS, LIKE IN MY [] [CASE] IF I HAD GONE TO COLLEGE, I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANYWHERE [A PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOL TO GO TO]. I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD A SCHOLARSHIP OR ANYTHING. I WOULD HAVE HAD TO WORK MY WAY THROUGH AND LIVE SOMEWHERE. BUT I HAD A SON [. . .] [WHO WENT] TO *PURDUE*, YOU KNOW, IN LAFAYETTE. HE WENT THERE FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS. AND THE *WILSONS* WENT TO VARIOUS COLLEGES."

M.B.: "I HAD A SON [] [WHO WENT] TO *PEPPERDINE* [IN CALIFORNIA], BUT HE HAD TO FINISH AT *I. M. TERRELL* [HIGH SCHOOL] BEFORE HE [WENT] THERE. OUR OLDEST SON LIVED IN CALIFORNIA AND HE STAYED WITH HIM WHILE HE WENT THERE. WE DIDN'T HAVE [ANY] PROVISIONS MADE OTHER THAN WHAT WE HAD MADE OUT THERE. BUT HE HAD TO FINISH AT *I. M. TERRELL* FIRST, BEFORE HE COULD GO TO *PEPPERDINE* IN CALIFORNIA."

S.S.: "U-M. I'M GO[ING] [TO] GO BACK NOW, AND WE'RE STILL KIND[] [OF] INVESTIGATING. WE'RE STILL TRYING TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ROUGH ENVIRONMENT, (WHICH WE CAN TRACE TO *RECONSTRUCTION*), OF SMALL

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S.S.: [CONTINUED] INDEPENDENT BLACK COMMUNITIES BEING ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT TEXAS. AND WHAT. . . AND THIS IS KIND OF AN INTERESTING CASE BECAUSE WE'VE GOT SCATTERED AFRICAN AMERICAN HOMESTEADS.

"AND IT'S KIND [] [OF] DIFFERENT THAN, SAY [] IF YOU [] [WENT] TOWARD DALLAS. YOU FIND THESE REAL[LY] CONCENTRATED COMMUNITIES [] EVEN IN IRVING [AND] BEAR CREEK. AND THEN YOU GO, AND YOU STILL FIND COMMUNITIES LIKE LITTLE EGYPT, JOppy AND THOSE COMMUNITIES IN DALLAS. AND THEY'RE PRETTY COMPACT. AND IT'S KIND OF A DIFFERENT VIEW THAT WE GET THAN [] A SCATTERED POPULATION."

M.M.: "I THINK I KNOW WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM. LIKE WHY THE BLACK COMMUNITIES WERE BEING SO SCATTERED, THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN?"

S.S.: "YEAH, IT'S NOT A CONCENTRATED BECAUSE DURING THE 1870'S WE HAVE A LOT OF VIOLENCE BY EX-SLAVE OWNERS BEING PERPETRATED AGAINST THE POPULATION. SO, IN DALLAS SPECIFICALLY, THE ENCLAVES, (AS I CALL THEM), GET REAL CONDENSED."

M.M.: "WELL MANSFIELD, AS FAR [BACK] AS I CAN REMEMBER [], HAS BEEN A LOW-CLASS ENVIRONMENT OTHER THAN DALLAS. OTHERWISE, MANSFIELD WOULD HAVE GR[OWN]. MANSFIELD IS AS OLD AS FORT WORTH--OLDER THAN FORT WORTH--OLDER THAN DALLAS.

"BUT THEN, YOU KNOW, THE PEOPLE THAT [FIRST] OWNED THIS PROPERTY, THEY W[ERE] FARMERS. AND THEY [WERE] LIABLE TO OWN FOUR OR FIVE-HUNDRED ACRES. THAT TAKES [UP] A LOT OF TERRITORY. AND THEN, THE NEXT FARMER [WOULD HAVE] [OWNED] THAT MUCH [ACREAGE AS WELL]. THEN IF THEY COULD BUY A SLAVE, THEY [] [WOULD] HAVE ONE OR TWO. HE [THE FARMER] COULDN'T AFFORD FOUR OR FIVE-- [ONLY] ONE OR TWO. AND THEN, THAT'S WHY IT'S SO SCATTERED.

"AND THEN WHEN IT WAS [] . . . WHAT DO YOU CALL IT? I DON'T KNOW, SLAVES. WHEN THEY [THE FARMERS] HAD TO GET RID OF THE SLAVES, THEY SOLD THEM A PIECE OF PROPERTY. AND THEN SAY FOR INSTANCE, THE LEWIS,' THE WYATTS, THE LAWSONS, I THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE LARGEST [BLACK] PROPERTY OWNERS IN MANSFIELD [. . .] BECAUSE I THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE GOT[TEN] [ONE]-HUNDRED ACRES APIECE. YOU KNOW, EACH FAMILY HAD MORE, MAYBE OVER A HUNDRED ACRES. WE'RE ALMOST SITTING ON THE LEWIS' PROPERTY NOW. IF NOT, BECAUSE I THINK. . . LEWIS. . . I THINK HIS NAME WAS ED LEWIS, HE MIGHT HAVE HAD A HUNDRED ACRES OR MORE. AND THEN THE LAWSONS PROBABLY HAD A HUNDRED."

S.S.: "NOW, WAS THAT A PURCHASE?"

M.M.: "YEAH. THEY PURCHASED IT. IT WASN'T GIVE[N] TO [TH]EM. THE SLAVE OWNERS WOULD GIVE YOU AN ACRE--A COW AND A SOW, A PIG AND A PLOW. AND THAT [] [WAS] IT, [OR MAYBE EVEN] TWENTY-FOUR HENS AND A ROOSTER. THEN YOU [] [WOULD] LIVE LIKE YOU USE TO."

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M.B.: "EXCUSE ME FOR INTERRUPTING, BUT IF I MAY, I [] [WOULD] LIKE TO GIVE MANSFIELD A NAME--A GOOD NAME. [I] DON'T [WANT TO] MAKE IT [SOUND] ALL [] BAD. MANSFIELD FINALLY INTEGRATED THE SCHOOLS ON THEIR OWN WITHOUT ANY PROBLEM[S]. AND THIS MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT NINETEEN, SEVENTY-TWO [OR] THREE. I CAN'T REMEMBER THE [EXACT] YEAR[].

BUT WHY THEY D[ID] IT [WAS] BECAUSE THEY WERE GETTING GOVERNMENT COMMODITIES. AND I READ IN THE *FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM*, BEFORE THEY D[ID] IT, THAT IF THEY DID NOT INTEGRATE, (OPEN UP THE SCHOOLS AND LET THE CHILDREN GO IN), THEIR COMMODITIES WOULD BE CUT OFF. AND WITHOUT ANY PROBLEM ONE YEAR, LE[T] ME SEE, I CAN'T THINK OF WHAT YEAR [IT WAS] BUT IT WAS IN THE FALL.

"I HAD WORKED DOWN AT THE NURSING HOME WHILE SCHOOL WAS OUT THAT YEAR. AND A LADY WAS THERE FROM WICHITA FALLS. AND SHE SAID TO ME ONE DAY WHEN SHE [. . .] [FINISHED HER] LUNCH, ([] THEY WERE GOING IN[TO] THE DINING ROOM), SHE SAID, '*MAGGIE, WHEN YOU LEAVE [] TO GO HOME, COME BY MY ROOM.*'

"I SAID '*I WILL.*' SO WHEN I STARTED BY, I [. . .] [ALMOST] FORGOT. AND SHE WHISTLED [AT ME] AND I WENT INTO HER ROOM.

"SHE SAID '*I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.*' SHE SAID '*I READ [] IN [THE] WICHITA FALLS [PAPER ALL] ABOUT THE RACKET THAT WAS CREATED IN MANSFIELD OVER THREE CHILDREN WANTING TO GO INTO THE SCHOOL.*' SHE SA[ID] '*YOU TELL YOUR PEOPLE TO BE QUIET [AND] SAY THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH AMMUNITION. AND THEY WON'T SELL [TH]EM ENOUGH, BECAUSE THE WHITE FOLKS HAVE GOT IT ALL.*' SHE SA[ID] '*BUT EVERY TIME THEY GET A CHANCE, TELL [TH]EM [YOUR PEOPLE] TO HAMMER ON [] [IT] WITH A PRAYER.*' SHE SA[ID] '*CAN YOU DO THAT?*'

"I SA[ID] '*I SURE CAN.*'

"SHE SA[ID], '*WELL, I BELIEVE YOU C[AN] DO THAT TOO.*'

"I SAID '*I CAN HAMMER ON IT WITH PRAYER.*'

"SHE SA[ID], '*AND WHEN YOU KNOW ANYTHING, THE SCHOOLS WILL FLY [THE DOORS] WIDE OPEN [. . .]. AND THE CHILDREN WILL WALK IN, AND NOBODY WILL BE HURT.*' AND IT HAPPENED JUST LIKE SHE SAID.

"THAT FALL, THEY INTEGRATED THIS SCHOOL. SO FIRST, THEY STARTED [BY] INTEGRATING [THE] FIRST AND SECOND [GRADES]. THEN, THEY WERE GO[ING] [TO] [] [INTEGRATE THE] THIRD AND FOURTH. AND TH[AT] YEAR THEY WERE GO[ING] [TO] [] [INTEGRATE THE] THIRD AND FOURTH, THEY D[ID] THE WHOLE SCHOOL.

I WAS COOKING HERE. I LEFT FROM HERE AND WENT TO *ALICE PONDER['S]* AND COOKED THERE. AND [THE] MANSFIELD SCHOOLS WERE WIDE OPEN. BLACKS WENT

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M.B.: [CONTINUED] [] [TO] ALL OF THE[] HIGH SCHOOLS, [] ELEMENTARY [AND] THE MIDDLE SCHOOL[S]. AND THEN AFTER THAT, THE[] [BLACKS] HAD A CHANCE TO GRADUATE [FROM] THERE.

"I HAD A GRAND DAUGHTER [WHO] GRADUATED AT *I. M.* . . . [] AT *MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL* AND WENT TO WACO TO COLLEGE. SO, IT'S. . . MANSFIELD HAD A GOOD POINT ON THE LAST. GIVE [TH]EM, [. . .] WHAT [IS] DUE [TO] [TH]EM. WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS, THEY OPENED THE SCHOOLS. BUT TH[E] *STAR TELEGRAM* HAD TO STIR THEM UP. THEY W[ERE] N[O]T GO[ING] [TO] GET THE GOVERNMENT COMMODITIES UNLESS THEY, YOU KNOW, INTEGRATED THE SCHOOLS. SO, QUITE A FEW CHILDREN WENT TO [THE] *MANSFIELD* [SCHOOLS]. THEY'RE STILL GOING TO *MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL*, MIDDLE SCHOOL, WHATEVER."

S.S.: "OKAY. SO WE WILL GIVE MANSFIELD ITS DUE.."

M.B.: "YEAH., GIVE [TH]EM [] [THEIR] DUE. THE[N] I HAD A GRANDSON [] [WHO] FINISHED THERE. AND HE'S IN COLLEGE NOW [AFTER GRADUATING] FROM *MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL*. SO THERE ARE SOME GOOD POINTS ON THE LAST. [. . .] BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I'LL PUT IT LIKE THAT. BUT THEY DID OPEN UP AND [] [THERE HAVE] BEEN SOME GOOD THINGS [. . .] [THAT HAPPENED IN] MANSFIELD."

S.S.: "DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A BREAK?"

S.W.: "I DON'T HAVE MUCH HISTORY. . ."

S.S.: "WELL, WILL YOU TELL US YOUR NAME?"

S.W.: "*MY NAME IS SHIRLEY LARUE BARTON-WASHINGTON*, (S.W.). I AM THE GRAND DAUGHTER TO THE LATE *ED LEWIS*."

"I REMEMBER MY EARLY CHILDHOOD DAYS LIVING AND VISITING WITH MY GRANDFATHER. TO US, HE WAS KNOWN AS 'PAPA' ON THE FARM. AND WE CAN ALMOST STEP ON HIS FARM. THE OLD FARM THAT HE [*ED LEWIS*] BOUGHT SOMEWHERE [] [AROUND] THE LATE 1920'S. AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME, HE BOUGHT ABOUT A HUNDRED ACRES OF LAND. HE CAME TO MANSFIELD FROM LONGVIEW, TEXAS. AND WHEN HE CAME HERE, HE MARRIED HIS FIRST WIFE, *ELIZA NOLAN LEWIS*. SHE ALREADY LIVED HERE IN MANSFIELD.

"BUT HE MIGRATED HERE FROM LONGVIEW TO MANSFIELD. AND THE REASON WHY HE CAME TO MANSFIELD WAS BECAUSE, IN LONGVIEW, HE COULDN'T FIND VERY MUCH WORK--MAYBE A SHARECROPPING JOB. AND SOMEONE TOLD HIM THAT LIFE WOULD BE MUCH BETTER FOR HIM IN MANSFIELD. SO HE MOVED TO MANSFIELD. AND WHEN GOT TO MANSFIELD, HE STARTED TO WORK FOR DR. MC KNIGHT--THE LATE DR. MC KNIGHT. AND HIS FIRST JOB WAS SO FUNNY. HE WAS THE FIRST BLACK CHAUFFEUR IN MANSFIELD. HE DROVE [A] HORSE AND BUGGY FOR THE LATE DR. MC KNIGHT..

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S.W.: [CONTINUED] "MY GRANDMOTHER, *ELIZA LEWIS*, WORKED FOR THE WRIGHTS. WHEN YOU [] CAME INTO MANSFIELD THIS MORNING, YOU PROBABLY PASSED A BIG RED AND WHITE. . . KIND [] [OF] TWO STORY HOUSE ON [] [WEST] BROAD. WELL, WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, IT WAS A MUCH LARGER HOME. THE FAMILY THAT LIVES IN THAT HOUSE NOW, I THINK, TOOK OFF A STORY. BUT MY GRANDMOTHER USED TO WALK FROM RETTA ROAD. AT THAT TIME, THE STREETS WERE NOT NAMED. [. . .] [THE ADDRESSES WERE] LIKE '*ROUTE TWO, BOX 126.*' SHE WOULD WALK [EVERY] MORNING AND NIGHT TO THE *WRIGHT'S* HOME HERE ON [] [WEST] BROAD.

"MY GRANDFATHER ALSO RAISED ALL KINDS OF CROPS--COTTON, CORN, POTATOES, [AND] PEANUTS. THIS MAN GREW EVERYTHING. I THINK IF HE STUCK A STICK IN THE GROUND, IT WOULD GROW. THE FAMILY ATE FROM THE FARM. THEY DID NOT HAVE TO BUY VERY MUCH, PROBABLY SOME FLOUR.

"AND [] I CAN [VIVIDLY] REMEMBER THERE WAS A WELL IN THE FRONT YARD. AND PEOPLE WOULD COME TO THE HOUSE. AND THEY WOULD ALWAYS STOP FOR A DIPPER OF COOL WATER. AND [] MY GRANDFATHER WAS A VERY RELIGIOUS MAN. HE WOULD SIT ON THE FRONT PORCH AND READ THE BIBLE. AND HE WOULD SING SONGS. AND ONE OF HIS FAVORITE SONGS, THAT HE ALWAYS ENJOYED SINGING, WAS '*WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER.*'

"AND HE WAS JUST A VERY HARD-WORKING, DEDICATED FAMILY MAN. HE RAISED FOUR CHILDREN. [HE HAD] ONE SON, BENJAMIN LEWIS, WHO WAS A[N] ORGANIST IN WORLD WAR TWO, (THAT WAS DURING [*GENERAL GEORGE*] *PATTON'S* REIGN). AND HE PLAYED THE ORGAN AND HE PLAYED THE PIANO. AND WHILE HE WAS IN THE SERVICE, HE PLAYED THE ORGAN IN THE CHAPEL.

"HE HAD THREE DAUGHTERS. *HATTIE M. LEWIS* WAS MY MOTHER. SHE IS THE ONLY SURVIVING MEMBER OF THAT FAMILY BESIDES ME. HE HAD ANOTHER DAUGHTER BY THE NAME OF *RUBY LEWIS*. SHE MARRIED *KIRK HARRIS*. THERE WAS ANOTHER DAUGHTER, *BERNICE LEWIS DARKUS*. BERNICE MARRIED A FELLOW FROM BRENHAM, TEXAS. SHE IS DECEASED. HER HUSBAND IS DECEASED. RUBY IS DECEASED. HER HUSBAND, *KIRK HARRIS*, IS DECEASED. AND AS I '*FORESTATED,*' MY MOTHER IS THE ONLY SURVIVING PERSON FROM THAT IMMEDIATE FAMILY.

"MY MOTHER AND HER SISTERS AND BROTHERS ATTENDED PUBLIC SCHOOLS HERE IN MANSFIELD. I CAN REMEMBER THEM TALKING ABOUT HOW THEY ATTENDED SCHOOL DOWN BY THE '*BOTTOMS*'--THAT'S THE CREEK DOWN BY MR. MAC'S HOME. AND THEY WOULD WALK. AND THEY WOULD TELL ME HOW THEY WOULD FIX THEIR LUNCHES OF, MAYBE, '*FATBACK*', BISCUITS AND SYRUP. AND THEY WOULD CARRY IT IN A BUCKET, AND THAT WOULD BE LUNCH FOR THEM WHEN THEY WENT TO SCHOOL..

"AND I FOUND IT QUITE INTERESTING. TODAY IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY. NOW CHILDREN HAVE TO HAVE MONEY TO BUY LUNCHES. AND IF THEY CARR[IED] [A] LUNCH[], IT CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BE BISCUITS AND '*FATBACK.*' [*THE STRIP OF FAT FROM THE BACK OF A HOG CARCASS CURED BY DRYING AND SALTING*].

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S.W.: [CONTINUED] "AND MY MOTHER ATTENDED SCHOOL HERE UP UNTIL ABOUT THE SIXTH OR SEVENTH GRADE. AND I [HA]VE HEARD HER TELL STORIES ABOUT HOW SHE AND *SUSIE MOODY* WENT OFF TO HIGH SCHOOL IN WACO [AT] *H. J. MOORE HIGH SCHOOL*. AND THAT WAS LIKE KIND [] [OF] GOING TO COLLEGE--BUT IT WAS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU KNOW. YOU HA[D] TO PACK UP [TO] GET READY TO GO OFF TO HIGH SCHOOL. BUT THEY FELT [] [AS IF] THEY WERE GOING OFF TO COLLEGE. AND THEN SHE STAYED THERE AWHILE [FOR] A COUPLE OF YEARS. AND SHE WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL. AND THEN SHE MOVED TO HOUSTON AND SHE LIVED THERE [FOR] ABOUT TWO OR THREE YEARS. AND THEN SHE CAME BACK TO MANSFIELD AND STAYED ABOUT A YEAR. AND THEN, SHE MOVED TO FORT WORTH.

"ALL OF THE CHILDREN IN THE LEWIS FAMILY EVENTUALLY MOVED TO FORT WORTH. MY MOTHER MOVED BACK TO THE HOMESTEAD AROUND 1976. SHE IS STILL ON THE OLD ESTATE NOW. SHE'S STILL LIVING THERE. SHE IS SUFFERING FROM ALZHEIMER'S [DISEASE] NOW. SHE'S EIGHTY-ONE YEARS OLD. AND SHE DOES RECOGNIZE THAT SHE'S BACK ON THE FARM; BECAUSE EVERY NOW AND THEN, SHE'LL LOOK OUT THE REAR MIRROR AND SHE'LL SAY, 'OH WE'RE ON THE FARM, BECAUSE I SEE THE PECAN TREE' THAT JUST LIGHTS ME UP THEN WHEN SHE SA[Y]S, 'OH, I KNOW I'M BACK ON THE FARM.'

"NOW, I AM HER DAUGHTER. I AM THE FIRST IN THIS PARTICULAR FAMILY TO GO OFF TO COLLEGE AND SECURE A DEGREE. I WENT TO A PRIVATE INSTITUTION BY THE NAME OF *BISHOP COLLEGE*, WHICH WAS LOCATED IN MARSHALL, TEXAS. AT THE TIME THAT I WENT. . . I WENT OFF TO SCHOOL IN 1955 AND I COMPLETED MY STUDIES IN 1959. AFTER COMPLETING MY STUDIES [] [WITH] A BACHELORS OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, I WENT TO *PRAIRIE VIEW A & M*, AND THERE, I SECURED A SECOND DEGREE--MY MASTERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. I HAVE THIRTY-TWO YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN THE *PORT ARTHUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT*.

"[] [I] AND MY HUSBAND JOHN, (WHO WAS AN ADMINISTRATOR FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS IN THE *PORT ARTHUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT*), HAVE MOVED BACK TO THE HOMESTEAD. AND WE'RE HAPPY TO BE HERE. WE HAVE TWO DAUGHTERS. MY GRAND PARENTS NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO SEE THEIR GRAND DAUGHTERS. MY AUNTS AND UNCLES DID. I HAVE TWO GIRLS--THE OLDEST GIRL IS *LEOLA*. SHE'S THIRTY-SEVEN. THE YOUNGEST GIRL IS THIRTY-FOUR, HER NAME IS *LIBBY*. *LIBBY* IS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN THE *BEAUMONT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT*. MY OLDEST DAUGHTER WORKS IN INDUSTRY. SHE WORKS FOR *HUNTSMAN* IN BEAUMONT, TEXAS. SO, WE'RE GLAD. [. .] JOHN [AND I] ARE GLAD TO BACK ON THE FARM."

S.S.: "ONE QUESTION. . . WHY, DURING THE 1950'S, WHEN THERE WAS ONLY, SAY. . . WHEN THE REQUIRED EDUCATION WAS ONLY A BACHELOR'S DEGREE, (I FIND THIS INTERESTING), PEOPLE WHO GO TO COLLEGE FROM THE COMMUNITIES TEND TO GO AND SEEK HIGHER AND HIGHER DEGREES. [. .] WHAT COMPELLED PEOPLE, AT THAT TIME, TO SAY, GO FOR A MASTERS OR GO FOR A DOCTORATE AS OPPOSED TO JUST FINISHING UP?"

S.W.: "WELL MAYBE, I WOULD THINK IT WOULD BE ECONOMICS. THAT WOULD BE THE BIGGEST REASON WHY THEY WOULD GO TO COLLEGE TO SECURE A HIGHER DEGREE."

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S.S.: "AMEN. WE'LL [] [GET] BACK TO YOU."

S.S.: "NOW YOU CAN TELL US WHO YOU ARE, AND WHO YOU COME FROM?"

L.S.: "OKAY. I AM LILLY LAWSON SHEPPARD, (L.S.). I'M A LAWSON. I WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE IN MANSFIELD. I WAS BORN JUNE THE TWELFTH, 1931. MY DAD WAS WILBUR, AND MY MOTHER WAS LIL LAWSON. THEY HAD FIVE CHILDREN. MY DAD WAS THE FATHER OF FOURTEEN CHILDREN. AND I ENJOYED LIFE. I WOULDN'T GIVE [IT UP] FOR [] [ANYTHING]. HA, HA, HA. WE HAD A BEAUTIFUL LIFE. WE HAD EIGHT GIRLS AND SIX BOYS. WE HAD A FARM.

"AND HE [HER FATHER] DIDN'T HAVE [] [HIS OWN] FARM. HE RENTED FROM FARM TO FARM [IN] DIFFERENT PLACES. SOMETIME[S] HE WOULD RENT. SOMETIME[S] HE WOULD LEASE. AND LEASING, AS YOU WOULD CALL IT. . .SOMETIME[S] HE WOULD LEASE [] FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS. AND [THE] CROPS [WOULD] COME UP [GROW]. [] [AND] HE WOULD GATHER. [] ALL OF TH[EM]. WELL, JUST LIKE SOME OF THE REST OF [TH]EM HAVE ALREADY TOLD YOU, WE WOULDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY, [BE]CAUSE HE ALREADY OWED IT TO THE MAN HE'D BEEN LEASING FROM. THE MONEY WOULD GO TO THEM [THE LAND OWNERS].

"WELL ANYWAY, WE WORKED. AND HE [HER FATHER] HAD ENOUGH CHILDREN THAT HE [] [COULD] FARM COTTON, CORN [AND] PEAS. AND I WAS DOING ALL OF THAT. I WAS THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER [] [IN] THE FAMILY. WHEN THE REST OF THEM W[ERE] IN THE FIELD[S], I WAS TOO SMALL TO GO THE FIELD[S]. WELL, I HAD TO STAY HOME AND COOK FOR THE REST OF THEM AND HAVE FOOD READY WHEN THEY WOULD COME [HOME]. AND I ENJOYED IT BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW [] WHAT ELSE TO DO. BUT ANYWAY, [. .] I STAYED RIGHT [THERE] BESIDE DADDY AND MOTHER.

"AND I WAS TWENTY-TWO YEARS OLD WHEN I MARRIED. I HAVE SIX BOYS. THEY DON'T KNOW [ANY]THING [A]BOUT [] FARM[ING]. NOW MY OLDEST SON,[. .] HE KNOWS A LITTLE ABOUT FARMING [BE]CAUSE MY DADDY WAS STILL AROUND WHEN HE WAS BORN. AND HE, . . .VERY OFTEN, . . .HE ALWAYS WANT[ED] TO TALK ABOUT GOING DOWN AND GETTING ON THE TRACTOR WITH. . .EVERYBODY CALLED HIM 'PAPA.' IN THOSE DAYS, EVERYBODY WAS [CALLED] 'PAPA.' [IT] WASN'T 'DAD,' OR [ANY]THING LIKE THAT--THEY W[ERE] CALLED 'PAPA.'

"BUT WE HAD A GOOD LIFE, YOU KNOW, AS FAR AS I CONSIDER IT AS BEING. BUT I [HA]VE BEEN IN MANSFIELD ALL OF MY LIFE. AND I WENT TO SCHOOL HERE IN MANSFIELD. SOMETIME[S] WE WOULD MOVE AWAY TO FIND A BETTER FARM AND STUFF LIKE THAT. AND HE WOULD MOVE [US] DOWN BETWEEN MIDLOTHIAN AND MANSFIELD. BUT WE W[ERE] CLOSER TO [THE] MIDLOTHIAN SCHOOLS THAN WE W[ERE] TO MANSFIELD. SO, WE[] HAD TO GET UP MORNINGS AND WALK TO MIDLOTHIAN TO SCHOOL."

S.S. "HOW FAR WAS THAT?"

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L.S.: "IT WAS ABOUT NINE MILES. WE [] [WOULD] GET UP EVERY MORNING AND WALK."

S.S.: "SO, WHAT TIME DID YOU HAVE TO BE AT SCHOOL? BY EIGHT O'CLOCK?"

L.S.: "EIGHT O'CLOCK. WE [] [WOULD] HAVE TO GET UP AND LEAVE EARLY. AND DURING THAT TIME, SOMETIMES WE WOULD LEAVE EARLY AND WE WOULD GO DOWN [TO] THE HIGHWAY--WALKING AND TAK[ING] A CHANCE ON CATCHING A RIDE. A LOT OF TIMES, MR. RALSTON BENNETT, (DURING THOSE TIMES), W[OULD] [BE] DRIVING A CATTLE TRUCK. AND HE WOULD PICK US UP AND DROP US OFF--RIGHT IN THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN. HE [WAS] LIABLE TO HAVE BEEN GOING TO HOUSTON OR SOMEWHERE LIKE THAT. HE DROVE A TRUCK THAT [] HAUL[ED] CATTLE.

"SOME MORNINGS. . . WE [WOULD] N[O]T GET TO GO TO SCHOOL [ON] BEAUTIFUL DAYS--THE PRETTY DAYS. WE HAD TO WORK. MOST [] DAYS [THAT] WE GOT TO GO TO SCHOOL W[ERE] BAD DAYS. YOU SEE WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT? [. . .] [ON] THE PRETTY DAYS, WE W[ERE] IN THE FIELD[S] WORKING. WE HAD TO WORK."

S.S.: "SO, HOW MUCH SCHOOLING DID YOU GET PER YEAR?"

L.S.: "I FINALLY STUMBLED [] THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL, [THROUGH THE] TWELFTH GRADE. BUT WE W[ERE] HERE AND THERE AND HERE AND THERE. AND I WAS OLD[ER] WHEN I [] [GOT] OUT OF SCHOOL, BUT I [] MADE IT. THANK GOD, I MADE IT. I WAS JUST DETERMINED THAT I WAS GO[ING] [TO] MAKE IT BECAUSE EVERY TIME WE WOULD [] CHANGE SCHOOL[S] WELL, THAT WAS A DROP BACK. SOMETIME[S] THEY WOULD PUT YOU BACK [A GRADE] BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, YOU W[ERE] N[O]T ACQUAINTED WITH THE SCHOOL. THEY MIGHT PUT YOU BACK. I [HA]VE HEARD A LOT OF KIDS SAY, 'I CAN'T BELIEVE I WENT TO SCHOOL WITH YOU.' I SAID, 'YOU DID. I WAS A LOT OLDER THAN YOU.' BUT I JUST STAYED IN SCHOOL. I WAS AN OLD PERSON IN SCHOOL, BUT I STAYED IN SCHOOL UNTIL I [] [GOT] OUT [OF] TWELFTH GRADE.

"AND WE LEFT MIDLOTHIAN AND MOVED BACK CLOSER TO MANSFIELD. AT ALVIN [] CASTEEN'S [CHASTEEN'S] FARM, (I THINK MAC MIGHT REMEMBER HIS PLACE), MY DADDY FARMED FOR HIM. DURING THAT TIME, I ENROLLED IN I. M. TERRELL, THAT [] [WAS] WHERE I FINISHED--AT I. M. TERRELL. WELL, THEN THE BUS WAS THE RO. . . WELL, FOR A WHILE WE W[ERE] CATCHING RIDES UP THERE. AND WE STAYED AT ALVIN CASTEEN'S [CHASTEEN'S] [FARM FOR] A FEW YEARS.

"AND THEN BY THAT TIME, MOSTLY ALL THE KIDS W[ERE] GONE. I WAS THE LAST ONE [] [WHO] LEFT HOME. AND MY DADDY [. . .] BOUGHT THE FARM RIGHT STRAIGHT ACROSS FROM HERE. THAT [] [WAS] WHEN I [. . .] [STARTED] BUSSING TO I. M. TERRELL HIGH SCHOOL. I C[A]ME OUT OF [FINISHED] I. M. TERRELL HIGH SCHOOL.

"[] I'M [STILL] IN MANSFIELD. WHEN WE FIRST MOVED OVER [A]CROSS THE STREET HERE IN MANSFIELD, I HAD TO GET UP EVERY MORNING BEFORE DAY[BREAK] AND WALK DOWN TO THE RED LIGHT. [] THE BUSES [. . .] [RAN] FROM ENNIS TO FORT WORTH. AND THEN WE [. . .] [CAUGHT] THE TRAILWAY[S] [BUS]. BUT AFTER THEN, THEY START[ED] TO. . . THERE W[ERE] ENOUGH KIDS BY THEN. . . WELL, THERE W[ERE]

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] ENOUGH KIDS FOR THEM TO RUN A BUS FROM MANSFIELD TO FORT WORTH.

S.S.: "WHO PAID FOR THE BUS DRIVER?"

L.S.: "A-H-H. . . WE HAD TO PAY. WE WOULD BUY CARDS. THEY HAD LITTLE CARDS [] [THAT] YOU B[OUGHT]. AND WHEN YOU [] [WOULD] GET ON THE BUS, THEY [] [WOULD] PUNCH IT--LIKE WE W[ERE] GOING TO SCHOOL. [THE] SAME THING [HAPPENED] WHEN WE [] G[O]T TO FORT WORTH. IF WE [] CA[U]GHT THE [BUS] FROM THE BUS STATION TO THE SCHOOL, THE CITY BUS TO THE SCHOOL. WE HAD A LITTLE OL[D] SCHOOL CARD. THEY [] [WOULD] PUNCH IT [IN ORDER] FOR US TO RIDE THE BUS."

S.S.: "WAS THERE EVER A [] TIME [WHEN] SOMEBODY COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY A SCHOOL CARD?"

L.S.: "WE HAD TO BUY IT OURSELVES. . . MY MOTHER AND DADDY. . ."

S.S.: "RIGHT. BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF. . . I MEAN YOU WOULDN'T GET TO GO TO SCHOOL."

L.S.: "WE WOULDN'T GET TO GO TO SCHOOL IF WE DIDN'T HAVE IT. MY MAMMA WAS WORKING FOR DIFFERENT WOMEN, YOU KNOW--IN THEIR KITCHENS. [BE]CAUSE SHE WALKED TO LILLIAN AND WORKED FOR THE BALLS AWHILE--COOKIN[G] AND CLEANIN[G] HOUSES. THEN [. .] [AT] LAST, WELL SHE RETIRED TWENTY YEARS AGO. SHE H[AS] N[O]T BEEN RETIRED TWENTY YEARS.

"SHE WORKED FOR *DR. PRITCHARD*, COOKIN[G] [] HERE IN MANSFIELD. AND DURING THAT TIME, SHE [] WORK[ED] [TO] HELP [] PUSH ME, TO [HELP] GET THIS OLD GAL OUT OF SCHOOL. BUT I WAS GLAD I MADE IT. SO, I WAS TWENTY-TWO YEARS OLD FINALLY WHEN I GOT MARRIED. [] I WAS [STILL] IN MANSFIELD.

"AS I MENTIONED ABOUT THE GRIFFINS HERE IN MANSFIELD, WELL, THEY LIVED [FURTHER] [] UP THE STREET [] ON THE SAME ROAD. AND I WAS STILL AT HOME WITH MY MOTHER AND THEM. AND I REMEMBER HE [*JOHN HOWARD GRIFFIN*] MARRIED [] [*CLYDE 'HOLLINGS' [HOLLAND'S]*] DAUGHTER. AND WHEN HE MARRIED HER, *CLYDE 'HOLLINGS' [HOLLANDS]* ONLY HAD ONE DAUGHTER. DO YOU REMEMBER HER NAME UNCLE MAC?

M.M.: "PAT, . . . '*PAT HOLLINGS.*' [*ELIZABETH ANN HOLLAND*]"

L.S.: "AND HE MARRIED HER. AND THEN, (I DON'T KNOW IF HE WAS REALLY BLIND OR NOT), I THINK HE WAS [JUST] PLAYING BLIND. BUT ANYWAY, SHE WOULD DO ALL THE DRIVING. SHE DID ALL THE DRIVING. WHAT REALLY MAKES ME THINK THAT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN PRETENDING THAT HE WAS BLIND, IS [BECAUSE] HE [] [HAD] TAKEN THAT MEDICINE [] [THAT] TURNED HI[S] [SKIN] BLACK. AND HE WAS GOIN[G] FROM PLACE [] TO PLACE [], PRETENDING THAT HE WAS BLACK AND SEEING HOW [] THE BLACK FOLKS [WERE] TREATED."

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S.S.: "WHY DID HE WANT TO WRITE THE BOOK? [*BLACK LIKE ME*]"

L.S.: "WELL, HE WANTED TO WRITE THE BOOK TO REALLY KNOW HOW THE PEOPLE IN MANSFIELD, (WELL, I DON'T SAY [JUST] MANSFIELD), HOW THE PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH W[ERE] TREATED. [BE]CAUSE HE WENT [TO] MORE PLACES THAN MANSFIELD. THAT'S WHY I SAID. . . RIGHT? DID YOU READ. . . I HAVEN'T READ THE BOOK. IS THAT RIGHT?"

M.M.: "THE MAN CAME FROM RAGS TO RICHES WITH THAT BOOK--WHEN HE WROTE THAT BOOK."

L.S.: "UH, HUH. FROM THAT BOOK. . . HE GOT RICH [] [FROM] THAT BOOK."

M.M.: "WHEN HE WROTE THAT BOOK, [] [THERE] WAS A HELL OF A GAIN, YOU KNOW? IT WAS GOOD TO KNOW ABOUT BLACKS IN THE SOUTH. BACK THEN, JUST LIKE TODAY, IF YOU [CAN] WRITE A BOOK AND CAN SELL IT, [YOU] MAKE YOUR[]SELF PROUD. SO I HEARD LATER ON THAT [THE] DYE THAT HE INJECTED INTO HIS BODY [*TO MAKE HIS SKIN BLACK*], DID HAVE SOME EFFECT ON HIS EYES. HE WORE REAL THICK BLACK GLASSES. AND EVENTUALLY, HE SW[E]LLE[D] UP AND GOT REAL[LY] SICK [AND] DIED."

L.S.: "AND HIS SKIN DID TURN DARK. HIS SKIN REALLY [] TURNED DARKER THAN MINE. IT REALLY DID. IT WORKED. AND HE GOT ALONG, I MEAN HE WAS TREATED JUST LIKE I GUESS I WOULD BE TREATED IF I W[ENT] [. . .] [TO] SOME OF THOSE PLACES. [BE]CAUSE HE WENT IN PLACES AND WAS THROWN OUT, YOU KNOW, ON ACCOUNT OF HIS COLOR. . . I'M SURE YOU KNOW. YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT IT. AND THEN, WHILE WE ARE HERE, I DON'T KNOW [I]F SISTER SHIRLEY, REMEMBER[S]? BUT I KNOW UNCLE MAC REMEMBER[S]. WE BLACKS FOLKS BACK IN THOSE DAYS, DURING SISTER THELMA['S] . . . THAT'S WHY I WANT[ED] TO SEE SISTER THELMA'S PROGRAM."

"THE BLACK FOLKS DIDN'T HAVE [] [A] FUNERAL HOME IN MANSFIELD. AND THEY STILL DON'T HAVE [] [A] FUNERAL HOME IN MANSFIELD. AND WE USED *ERNIE BLESSING'S*. *BLESSING['S]* IS STILL CARRYING HIS NAME, [CARRYING] ON HIS NAME. BUT HE WOULD [] . . . THE BLACK FOLKS WOULD USE HIM. BUT HE WOULDN'T USE HIS GOOD HEARSE FOR [THE] BLACK FOLKS. HE WOULD ALWAYS USE A VAN, AND HALF OF THE CASKET WOULD BE HANGIN[G] IN THE VAN AND HALF OF IT OUT."

"DURING *REP[RESENTATIVE] CARSON'S* TIME, (HE'S THE ONE [WHO] PUT THE BLACK FOLKS WISE TO THAT). HE SA[ID] 'YOU CAN STOP THAT COMING UP THAT STREET WITH YOUR CASKET HANGIN[G] OUT.' AND THAT[] [WAS] WHEN THEY [. . .] [STARTED] USING THE BLACK FUNERAL HOMES IN FORT WORTH."

S.S.: "WHAT YEAR [WA]S TH[AT]?"

L.S.: "A-H-H-H. . . NOW THE YEARS DON'T DO [ANY]THING FOR ME, BUT I KNOW THAT [IT] HAPPENED. I [] [WAS] [T]HERE . . ."

M.M.: "IT WAS . . . [IN] THE EARLY FORTIES."

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L.S.: "I AM SIXTY-FOUR YEARS OLD. . .EARLY FORTIES. . .?"

S.S.: "IN AN EARLIER INTERVIEW WE DID WITH YOU, YOU MADE THE STATEMENT THAT NO MANSFIELD FUNERAL HOME WOULD TAKE A MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY."

M.M.: "NO THEY WOULDN'T. LIKE IF YOU EXPIRED TODAY, TOMORROW, THEY [] [WOULD] HAVE TH[] FUNERAL. AND THEY WOULD USE. . .A. . .LIKE I SA[]ID, HIS OLD VAN--A WORK VAN. AND HE'D PUT JUST ENOUGH OF THE CASKET, (IT [] [WOULD] BE SO SHORT), [INTO THE VAN AND] HALF OF IT WOULD BE [HANGING] OUT."

L.S.: "U-M-M. . .MORE WOULD BE OUT THAN WOULD BE IN. . ."

M.M.: "AND THE GRAVE WOULD [] BE SHALLOW, JUST BARELY BE COVERED UP, YOU KNOW. HE WOULDN'T GO TO A [] EXTREME. HE WOULDN'T EMBALM OR ANYTHING. [BE]CAUSE LATER. . .(I WAS A KID THEN IN THE FORTIES), BUT I HEARD LATER THAT HE WOULDN'T DO EMBALMIN []G. HE [] [WOULD] JUST PUT YOU IN A BOX [TO] GET THROUGH WITH IT BEFORE YOUR BODY START []ED] DETERIORATING."

S.S.: "WAS THERE A, . . .I'M GO []ING] [TO] GO BACK SINCE WE'RE ON THIS TOPIC, U-M-M . . . [WA]S THERE A HIGH MORTALITY RATE FOR CHILDREN IN YOUR COMMUNITY, SAY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY?"

M.M.: "OKAY. U-H-H. . ."

S.S.: "[BE]CAUSE I MEAN [] IF I GO [. .] TO *GRAPEVINE'S CEMETERY*. . . [IN THE] TWENTIES [AND] THIRTIES SPECIFIC []ALLY], OR TEENS, TWENTIES AND THIRTIES. . . [THERE ARE] JUST AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF CHILDREN'S' TOMBSTONES. I HAVEN'T BEEN TO YOUR CEMETERY TO LOOK."

M.M.: "THERE IS A. . ."

S.S.: "AND I WAS JUST WONDERING WHETHER THAT'S A PHENOMENON. . ."

M.M.: "[THERE ARE] JUST A FEW KIDS' GRAVES IN OUR CEMETERY NOW. IT USED TO BE [A] LONG TIME AGO, WE DIDN'T. WE JUST HAD THE ONE CEMETERY IN MANSFIELD. AND THAT WOULD BE RIGHT NEXT TO THE WHITE []S], WITH JUST A FENCE RUNNING THROUGH IT [TO SEPARATE THE BLACK SECTION FROM THE WHITE]. AND [] [THERE ARE] NOT VERY MANY CHILDREN IN THERE. AND THEN OF COURSE, NOW THEY HAVE SEVERAL MORE [THAT] THEY USE [LOCATED] ON [LOOP] 287 [IN] CEDAR HILL. THEN ON [F.M.] 1187, [FARM TO MARKET ROAD], [IN] SKYVIEW, THEY HAVE A. . . I THINK IT'S [CALLED] 'BABYLAND.' BOTH OF THOSE CEMETERIES [] [ARE] CALL []ED] 'BABYLAND.' THEY HAVE A LOT OF MARKERS THERE--LOTS OF MARKERS."

S.S.: "THEN AS FAR AS THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY, THAT WAS NOT. . ."

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M.M.: "IN THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY, IT [WAS] N[O]T. THAT WAS A RARE OCCASION--TO GO TO A BABY[*'S*] FUNERAL--VERY RARE."

S.S.: "H-M-M, [] AS FAR AS MEDICINE, WHAT HAPPENED WHEN PEOPLE GOT SICK IN THE COMMUNITY?"

M.M.: "MOST OF THE TIME, THEY USED HOME REMEDIES. BACK THEN [. . .] [THEY WERE CALLED] '*SLOAN'S LINIMENT*' [AND] '*WATKIN'S*.' THEY WOULD HAVE A . . . IF YOU HAD A COLD OR SOMETHING THEY HAD '*HOREHOUND TEA*.' [A CONFECTION MADE FROM A BITTER MINT PLANT WITH HOARY DOWNY LEAVES]" "

L.S.: " '*COW CHIP TEA*,' [TEA MADE FROM DRIED COW EXCREMENT]. . . YOU EVER HEARD OF THAT?"

M.M.: "YEAH, '*COW CHIP TEA*' [AND] '*HOG'S TOENAILS*.' YOU KNOW? [HAVE] YOU EVER HEARD OF TOENAILS OFF A HOG?"

S.S.: "NO-O-O."

L.S.: " '*HOG HOOF TEA*' . . ."

M.M.: "YOU [WOULD] BOIL THE HOG HOO[VES] AND THEN [] [YOU WOULD] TAKE THE '*PIZZLE*' . . . [A KIND OF ANIMAL GREASE]. DO YOU KNOW WHAT '*PIZZLE*' IS [THE PENIS OF AN ANIMAL] . . .?"

S.S.: "[DO] YOU REMEMBER ALL THOSE. . .?"

S.W.: "I [HA]VE TAKEN SOME. . ."

L.S.: ". . . THE '*GREASE*,' AND RUB [] [IT] [. . .] [ON] THE CHEST."

M.M.: "THEY [WOULD] TAKE A MALE HOG'S TESTICLES OR HIS PENIS AND SAVE IT, AND RENDER THE GREASE OUT OF IT. AND PUT IT IN SOME KIND OF CONTAINER. AND THEN THEY [] [WOULD] TAKE [IT]--LIKE WHEN EVERYBODY [] [WENT] TO THE SAME SCHOOL AND [CAUGHT] WHOOPING COUGH, MEASLES [OR] CHICKEN POX. . ."

YOU [] [WOULD] HAVE A LITTLE TOBACCO SACK--USED TO BE *BUGLER* AND *BULL DURHAM* TOBACCO SACK--THAT PULL[ED] TIGHT. THEY [] [WOULD] PUT '*ASAFETIDA GARLIC*,' [A BAD SMELLING GUM RESIN OBTAINED FROM ASIATIC PLANTS IN THE PARSLEY FAMILY] [INTO THE SACK AND] TIE IT AROUND YOUR NECK.

THEY WOULD [TAKE] SOME KIND OF . . . THEY WOULD TAKE GARLIC BEADS AN[D] PUT [THOSE] AROUND YOUR NECK. AND THEY WOULD ALSO HAVE [] SARSAPARILLA ROOTS, [A TROPICAL AMERICAN SMILAX PLANT USED AS A FLAVORING, WITH THE PREDOMINANT FLAVOR FROM BIRCH OIL AND SASSAFRAS], [THAT] THEY WOULD STRAIN AND PUT [IT] AROUND THERE, (THAT WAS FOR CUTTIN[G] TEETH), AND BLACK [] PEPPER, SAGE AND CINNAMON. [] [THEY WERE] JUST HOME REMEDIES. AND YOU []

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] [WOULD] SLEEP AND DEPEND ON THE LORD. THEY[] DEPENDED ON THE LORD MORE THEN, THAN THEY[] DO NOW."

L.S.: "SOMETIMES THE DOCTOR[] WOULD COME OUT. BUT YOU[] [WOULD] HAVE TO BE AWFUL, AWFUL-LOW-SICK BEFORE THEY WOULD MAKE HO[US]E CALLS. IN OTHER WORDS. . . ."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "BUT THAT DIDN'T LAST LONG."

S.S.: "WHY?"

L.S.: "WELL, I ASSUME [IT WAS] [BE]CAUSE IT GOT SO DANGEROUS. AND THEN ANOTHER THING I SAID--[] [THERE] WAS [THE] MONEY, TOO. LIKE I COULD CALL YOU TONIGHT [] [IF] SOMEBODY WAS SICK, AND MAYBE I WOULDN'T HAVE MONEY TO PAY YOU. AND THEY [WILL] NOT GO [AND] SERVE YOU ANYMORE. THEY W[ILL NOT] COME OUT IF YOU SAY 'WELL, I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY.' . . . PEOPLE DON'T HAVE FEELINGS LIKE THAT [ANYMORE]. AND YOU KNOW, NOW IF YOU CALL THEM, THEY'RE NOT GO[ING] [TO] COME. AND YOU KNOW WHY."

S.S.: "YEAH. THEY'LL ASK YOU IF YOU HAVE YOUR INSURANCE CARD. IT'S THE SAME THING [. . .] [THAT WOULD] HAPPEN[] IF YOU WERE A SHARECROPPER. AS YOU MENTIONED, YOUR FAMILY LIVED FROM FARM TO FARM ON OCCASION; OR D[ID] A TWO OR THREE LEASE AT ONE, THEN MOVE ON TO A BETTER ONE. WHAT HAPPENED IF HE HAD A BAD YEAR OR CONSECUTIVE SEASONS THAT WERE BAD, AND YOU DIDN'T GET A GOOD RETURN; OR YOU WEREN'T EVEN BREAKING EVEN? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?"

L.S.: "WELL, SOMETIMES, HE WOULD [. . .] TELL MY DAD [THAT] HE HAD TO MOVE."

S.S.: "SO, HE BLAMED [THE] SHARECROPPERS FOR A BAD SEASON?"

L.S.: "UH-HUH. . . MAYBE A BAD SEASON, SOMETHING LIKE THAT."

S.S.: "I [HA]VE SEEN THE PERIPHERY. IT'LL RAIN TWENTY FEET FROM YOU, AND YOU[] [WILL] BE BONE DRY. . . ."

L.S.: "AND WE NEED A GOOD RAIN OVER HERE. THAT'S RIGHT. I REMEMBER ONE DAY, WE [] WENT TO ANOTHER FARM. [THERE] W[ERE] ENOUGH OF US TO PICK THREE OR FOUR BARRELS OF COTTON A DAY. AND [] THIS MAN WANTED ALL HIS COTTON OPEN[ED] BEFORE I. . . [DO] YOU KNOW ABOUT COTTON?"

S.S.: "A LITTLE BIT."

L.S.: "THE BOB. . . WELL, HE WANTED ALL [OF] HIS [COTTON] OPEN[ED] BEFORE YOU START[ED]--BEFORE YOU STARTED TO GATHER IT. SO, WE [WENT] ON TO ANOTHER

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M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe

L.L.S.: Lillie Lawson Sheppard

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L. S. [CONTINUED] MAN[‘S] [FARM], AND WE WERE GOIN[G] [TO] STRIP HIS COTTON FIRST. AND THEN WHEN HIS [] [THE OTHER GUY’S] WAS READY, WE WERE GO[ING] [TO GO] [] BACK TO HIM, (THE MAN’S FARM THAT WE LIVED ON). BUT HE GOT THE DEVIL IN HIM AND HE DIDN’T LIKE IT. AND HE C[A]ME TO US THAT NIGHT, (I’LL NEVER FORGET). HE C[A]ME TO MY DADDY AND WAS MAD [] [AT] HIM AND SA[ID], ‘I WANT YOU TO BE OUT OF MY HOUSE TOMORROW.’ [HE] D[ID] N[O]T GIVE YOU [ANY] ACCOUNT [REASON] OR [ANY]THING.

“AND AS THE LORD WOULD HAVE IT, MY DADDY C[A]ME BACK IN[TO] THE HOUSE AND SAID, ‘HE SAID WE HA[VE] TO MOVE.’ AND HE SAID, ‘WHERE AM I GOING WITH ALL OF THESE CHILDREN?’ [DO] YOU SEE WHAT I’M SAYING?

“AND AS THE LORD WOULD HAVE IT. THAT NIGHT BEFORE MY DADDY WENT TO BED [] [THERE] WAS ANOTHER GUY WITH A FARM, (I’LL BET IT WASN’T TWO MILES FROM US), [WHO] C[A]ME THERE AND BL[EW] HIS HORN. AND [HE] CALLED MY DADDY OUT THERE [OUTSIDE]. AND HE SAID, ‘I’VE GOT A LOT OF COTTON I NEED TO GATHER IN, AND I NEED TO GET IT IN BEFORE THE WEATHER GETS BAD.’

“AND HE SA[ID] ‘WELL, I DON’T KNOW WHEN WE’LL GET TO IT.’ [HE] SA[ID] [] ‘MISTER, (WHOEVER IT WAS WE W[ERE] LIVIN[G] WITH), TOLD US WE HA[VE] TO MOVE.’ AND HE SAID, ‘AND I’M GOIN[G] [TO] HAVE TO GO AND FIND A PLACE TO CARRY MY FAMILY.’

“AND HE SAID, ‘I [HAVE] GOT A PLACE FOR YOU.’

“WE MOVED THE NEXT DAY, FROM ONE MAN[‘S] [PLACE] TO THE OTHER. THAT’S HOW THE LORD SENT HIM THERE. YOU SEE WHAT I’M SAYIN[G]? THAT’S WHAT WE GO THROUGH. . . WENT THROUGH.

“SO, WE LE[FT] ONE FARM AND [] [WENT] TO THE OTHER ONE. SO NOW, WHAT HE LACK[ED] PAYING HIM. . . I DON’T KNOW IF HE WOULD GO BACK AND [GET] PA[ID] OR NOT. HE WOULDN’T. . . YOU KNOW, HE DIDN’T ‘RUN’ ([TELL US ABOUT] ALL HIS BUSINESS) DOWN TO US, BUT I [] [DID] KNOW SOME OF IT. AND ON THE LAST [AT THE END] BEFORE HE GOT THROUGH FARMING, HE WAS FARMING RIGHT [O]N THE EDGE OF MANSFIELD--JUST WHERE THE PRISONERS ARE RIGHT NOW.

“MY DADDY USED TO FARM ALL OF THAT LAND. AND HE HAD COTTON PICKERS COMING OUT [] BY TRUCK LOADS, COMING OUT OF FORT WORTH. [. .] I WOULD STAY AT THE WAGON AND KEEP [COUNT OF] THE WEIGHTS [BE]CAUSE YOU HAD TO DO THAT IF YOU WANTED TO BREAK EVEN. [BE]CAUSE THEY [WOULD] COME [AND] SAY [THAT] THEY HAD FIFTY POUNDS [OF COTTON], [] [BUT THEY] MIGHT [] [ONLY] HAVE [] TEN. AND YOU HAD TO WEIGH [IT] FOR [TH]EM. AND THEN YOU HAD TO CHECK THE COTTON [TO MAKE SURE THEY HAD] WHAT THEY SA[ID] THEY HAD. THE[RE] [WERE] LIABLE TO BE BRICKS IN THE COTTON SACK AND ALL OF THAT KIND OF STUFF TO MAKE IT HEAVY. DIRT AND . . .

“ALL OF THAT, I [HA]VE GONE THROUGH ALL OF THAT. BUT I [] [WOULD] RATHER HA[VE] BEEN OUT PICKING THE COTTON THAN STANDING UP ARGUING WITH [TH]EM.

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L. S. [CONTINUED] AND SEEING [THEM] CHECK[] YOU OUT, THE SACK, [AND] WHAT[] [WAS] IN IT. I WENT THROUGH ALL OF THAT. HIS NAME WAS MR. HENRY HAWKS. [IT WAS] MR. HENRY HAWK'S FARM--RIGHT OVER IN THE EDGE OF MANSFIELD. JUST WHERE, RIGHT OVER IN THERE."

S.S.: "SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?"

L.S.: "HE DIED. MR. HENRY HAWKS DIED. SO, THAT[] [WAS] WHEN MY DADDY HAD TO RETIRE THEN, AFTER SO LONG A TIME. SO, HE [HAS] BEEN DEAD FOR TWENTY YEARS. HE HAD TO. . . ALL OF [THEM] HAD TO 'COME ON IN.' [DIE OR PASS AWAY].

"SO THAT[] [WAS] THE WAY WE. . . ALL THE BOYS HAD GONE IN[TO] [THE] SERVICE IN DIFFERENT PLACES. AND SO HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY HELP ANYWAY. [] [AND] [] HE DIDN'T HAVE [VERY MUCH] HELP [. . .] WHEN HE HAD TO [] PUT[] ME ON [] [THE] TRACTOR. [. . .] WE WEREN'T TOO FAR FROM THE [COTTON] GIN. AND I [] [WOULD] HAVE TO HOOK [UP] FROM ONE WAGON, CARRY THE COTTON TO THE GIN, GO BACK AND GET THE OTHER. THEY W[ERE] [] PICKIN[G] COTTON. JUST THAT FAST. I [] [WOULD] GET BACK AND HAVE ANOTHER WAGON FULL. [I WOULD] UNHOOK [] IT, TAKE IT BACK, AND GO BACK AND GET [AN] EMPTY WAGON[]. AND ALL THAT. . ."

S.S.: "WERE THE COTTON PICKING CREWS [] SEGREGATED [IN MANSFIELD]?"

L.S.: "NO, THEY W[ERE] N[O]T. THEY JUST HAD THEY OWN, LIKE NOW. [. . .] LIKE IF BROTHER MAC'S FAMILY HAD A PLACE WHERE THEY, YOU KNOW, W[ERE] RAISING COTTON, THEY WOULD GET THROUGH WITH THEIRS FIRST. AND IF THEY GOT THROUGH BEFORE WE DID, THEY[] [WOULD] COME OVER AND HELP US. THEY W[ERE] N[O]T SEGREGATED AT ALL. YOU KNOW?"

S.S.: "I KNOW, BUT I MEAN DID WHITE AND BLACK PICKERS WORK TOGETHER OR NOT?"

L.S.: "WELL, THEY WORKED TOGETHER. BUT YOU DIDN'T SEE TOO MANY WHITE PEOPLE."

S.S.: "YOU DIDN'T?"

L.S.: "NO. THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE THE[IR] [OWN] FARMS AND COTTON AND STUFF."

S.S.: "THEY CONTEND. . . SEE, UP IN GRAPEVINE, [TEXAS] THEY SA[ID] THAT THEIRS WERE MIXED."

L.S.: "YEAH?"

S.S.: "YEAH. THEY SAID [. . .] THAT BLACK AND WHITE PICKERS WORKED SIDE BY SIDE. SO. . . ."

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L.S.: "IF WE HAD ANY [COTTON] TO PICK, THEY WOULD, YOU KNOW, [. . .] DO WHAT WE HAD TO."

S.S.: "SO, AS FAR AS SHARECROPPERS, PER SE, WERE THERE MANY WHITE SHARECROPPERS HERE THEN, OR [WERE THEY] PREDOMINATELY BLACK?"

L.S.: "WELL, [. . .] IT WOULD [. . .] BE THEIR [OWN] PLACE, BUT THE BLACKS WOULD BE WORKING THE FARM. [. . .] THEY WOULDN'T OWN IT [THEMSELVES]."

M.M.: "THERE WERE A FEW WHITE SHARECROPPERS. I DON'T KNOW IF THEY WENT THROUGH THE [SAME] CHANGES TH[AT] BLACK SHARECROPPERS WENT THROUGH. BUT ALL THE WHITES THAT FARMED DIDN'T [NECESSARILY] OWN ANY FARMS. [] [THERE] W[ERE] A LOT OF WHITES THEN, AND THERE[] [ARE] A LOT OF WHITES NOW, [WHO] RENT AND LEASE THOSE FARMS. BUT I DON'T THINK THEY WENT THROUGH THE [SAME] CHANGES [] [AS] BLACK FOLKS.

"AND IT SEEMS LIKE [] [IT WAS THE SAME] AS FAR AS BACK THEN, [AS IT IS NOW]. AND IT WAS [] [SIMILAR TO WHAT] [] IT IS NOW, YOU KNOW. YOU WORK TOGETHER ALL WEEK PICKING COTTON [OR] WHATEVER--IN GROCERY STORES, MARKETS--EVERYTHING FROM MONDAY TO SATURDAY EVENING. THEN [ON] SATURDAY EVENING, YOU'RE SEGREGATED. SUNDAY MORNING[S] YOU [] [WENT] TO YOUR [OWN] CHURCH[ES]--BLACKS [] [WENT] TO THEIRS. IT WAS THAT-A-WAY THEN, AND IT'S THAT-A-WAY NOW. I NEVER [] UNDERSTOOD THAT. IT'S THE SAME NOW, AS IT WAS BACK THEN. YOU WORK SIDE BY SIDE, EVEN [YOUR] KIDS [WOULD] GO TO SCHOOL [TOGETHER]. AND IT [] [SEEMED] BACKWARDS, TO ME, FROM INTEGRATING THE SCHOOLS. [IT] SEEM[ED] LIKE THE CHURCHES SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED FIRST. [. . .] I DON'T KNOW."

S.S.: "U-M-M-M. I WANT TO GO BACK TO GRIFFIN AND UH. . ."

M.M.: "I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT T. M. MOODY."

S.S.: "OKAY."

M.M.: "T. M. MOODY. . . THAT WAS JUST A LITTLE BEFORE GRIFFIN WROTE HIS BOOK. AND IT WAS BEFORE [THE] SCHOOL[S] W[ERE] INTEGRATED. AND THERE W[ERE] SEVERAL WHITE GUYS, ([WHO] CALL[ED] [UP] T. M. MOODY). [] [THEY] LIVED RIGHT WEST OF US, HERE AT THE END OF THIS PIECE OF PROPERTY. THEY THREATENED TO COME OUT AND KILL HIM [T. M. MOODY].

"THEY HUNG A[N] [] [EFFIGY] ON MAIN STREET OF T. M. MOODY. AND THEY CALLED HIM THAT EVENING AND SA[ID] THEY [WERE] COMING OUT TO KILL HIM. AND THEY W[ERE], REALLY. [] [THERE] W[ERE] ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE OR THIRTY OR MORE, THAT [] G[OT] TOGETHER TO COME OUT AND 'RAID' HIM. (I GUESS THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL IT). AT NIGHT, AFTER DARK--NOT DAYTIME.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "BUT [] [THERE] WERE SEVERAL OF T. M.'S FRIENDS [WHO] GOT TOGETHER AND W[ERE] WITH HIM HERE. *THEY [THE WHITE GUYS] NEVER DID SHOW UP. IT WAS GOOD [THAT] THEY DIDN'T, BUT THEY DIDN'T SHOW [UP]. AND BEFORE T. M. EXPIRED, HE WAS WELL THOUGHT OF, EVERYBODY RESPECTED HIM. BUT AT ONE TIME, EVER[Y]BODY WAS GOIN[G] [TO] TRY TO KILL [H]IM AND EVER[Y]BODY, ALL THE BLACKS [WHO] GOT WITH T. M. [MOODY] SA[ID] 'WELL, IT'S JUST GOIN[G] [TO] BE A SHOWDOWN.'* THEN, SURE ENOUGH. . .AND HE RECOGNIZED THE MAN'S VOICE THAT WAS ON THE TELEPHONE. AND HE TOLD HIM [] . . ."

S.S.: "WHO WAS IT.?"

M.M.: "UH. . .PERRY. HE TOLD HIM, '*MISTER PERRY, YOU COME ON. . .ANYTIME YOU GET READY. IN CASE YOU DON'T GET A CHANCE TO COME OUT TONIGHT, YOU CAN COME TOMORROW NIGHT OR WHENEVER. I WILL BE HERE AT HOME. YOU [ARE] WELCOME ANYTIME YOU WANT TO COME TO MY HOUSE.'*"

S.S.: "THAT WAS OVER. . .HE WAS TRYING TO ATTEND. . .GET HIS CHILD TO ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL HERE?"

M.M.: "NO. [. . . } HE NEVER HAD A CHILD. [. . .] HE WAS JUST PUSHING TO HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS FOR THE BLACKS. JUST. . .YOU KNOW, WE[] [WOULD] GET THE BOOKS, BUT [] [THERE WERE] LIABLE TO [BE] TWO KIDS STUDYING ONE BOOK. [] [THERE] W[ERE], SOME OF THE PAGES, W[ERE] TORN OUT, YOU KNOW. YOU[] [WOULD] READ UP TO A CERTAIN THING, THEN [] [THERE WAS] LIABLE TO BE A PAGE MISSING."

L.S.: "HAND-ME-DOWN BOOKS."

M.M.: "YEAH, YOU KNOW. [THEY WOULD] COME FROM [THE] WHITE LIBRARIES AND [THEY WOULD] BRING [TH]EM OUT HERE. AND YOU NEVER COULD [. . .] REALLY HAVE ALL YOUR ACADEMICS OR ANYTHING. YOU COULDN'T GET YOUR LESSON[S] [DONE] [BE]CAUSE THE BOOKS W[ERE] WRITTEN IN, AND PICTURES [WERE] DR[AWN] IN THEM. AND YOU JUST COULDN'T READ [TH]EM. AND YOU COULDN'T COME UP TO DATE WITH YOUR EDUCATION. AND THAT[] [WAS] WHAT HE WAS FIGHTING AGAINST."

"AND HE WENT AND MENTIONED IT IN THE SCHOOL BOARD [MEETING]. [] [THERE] W[ERE] SIX OR SEVEN OF [TH]EM ON THE SCHOOL BOARD. AND THEY TOLD THEIR FRIENDS AND BLEW IT UP *BIG [OUT OF PROPORTION]!* AND THAT[] [WAS] WHEN ALL THOSE GUYS GOT TOGETHER AND SAID '*WELL, WE'LL STOP HIM FROM STIRRIN' UP TROUBLE. WE'LL HANG HIM!*' AND THEY WERE GOIN[G] [TO] COME [] [AND] HANG [H]IM OR KILL [H]IM [*T. M. MOODY*]. DO WHATEVER. SCARE [H]IM. BUT THEY DIDN'T DO [] EITHER ONE."

"AND THEN, THAT[] [WAS] WHEN GRIFFIN COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WAS RIGHT UNDER HIS NOSE. WHITES. . .HIS FRIENDS. . .W[ERE] ACTING THAT-A-WAY. AND HE INJECTED SOME DYE INTO HIS VEINS AND IT TURNED HIM BLACK FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS, I THINK. AND HE WENT TO LOUISIANA AND HE *LIKE TO [ALMOST] GOT HUNG.*"

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S.S.: "HOW DID HIS FRIENDS. . ."

M.M.: "TREATED HIM. . .?"

S.S.: "TREAT HIM, AFTER THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN?"

M.M.: "LIKE THEY[] [WOULD] [TREAT] ME [] [BE]CAUSE THEY DIDN'T KNOW HIM. THEY DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS *HOWARD GRIFFIN* UNTIL, LIKE HIS SKIN GOT PINK AGAIN. AND THEN, THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. HE[] HAD WRITTEN THE BOOK [BY] THEN."

S.S.: "RIGHT. BUT AFTER [] THE BOOK WAS OUT, HOW DID THEY FEEL?"

M.M.: "HE W[AS] N[O]T TOO POPULAR UNTIL HE [WAS] DECEASED. HIS IN-LAWS STILL LIVE HERE--RIGHT DOWN THE ROAD THERE ABOUT A MILE. RIGHT DOWN RETTA. . . UH, BROAD [STREET]."

L.S.: "UH-HUH. STRAIGHT ON OUT BROAD. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH, THEY STILL LIVE HERE. BUT HE W[AS] N[O]T TOO POPULAR, WHICH, YOU KNOW. HE DIDN'T REALLY CARE THEN, BECAUSE HE WAS A RICH MAN THEN. HA, HA, HA. HE DIDN'T NEED [TH]EM. I IMAGINE *MRS. BERRY* [] WOULD HAVE A LOT TO TELL YOU IF SHE COULD REMEMBER."

S.W.: "I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE SOMETHING. . ."

S.S.: "OKAY."

S.W.: ". . . ABOUT THE FIRST BLACK TEACHER, AND PERHAPS THE FIRST BLACK PRINCIPAL. THIS WAS A LADY. THE LATE, *MRS. THELMA LOUISE JONES* WAS THE DAUGHTER OF THE LATE *WILLIE AND MAGGIE DAVIS-JONES*. SHE WAS A NATIVE OF MANSFIELD. SHE GREW UP IN MANSFIELD. SHE BELONGED TO THIS CHURCH, RIGHT HERE. SHE SERVED AS AN EDUCATOR IN THIS COMMUNITY FOR HALF A CENTURY-- FORTY-NINE YEARS! THAT'S A RECORD!

"*MRS. THELMA JONES* ATTENDED FORT WORTH'S *I. M. TERRELL HIGH SCHOOL*. FROM THERE SHE ENTERED [WENT TO] *BISHOP COLLEGE* IN MARSHALL, TEXAS. AND [SHE] EARNED HER MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION FROM THE *UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO*. *MRS. THELMA JONES* WAS MY. . .

"I SHALL NEVER FORGET HER. SHE WAS A VERY WELL-GROOMED LADY. SHE WAS A VERY FRIENDLY LADY. SHE ALWAYS HAD TIME FOR EVERYONE. SHE WAS VERY APPROACHABLE. AND I ADMIRER HER BECAUSE SHE TALKED WITH ME SEVERAL TIMES WHEN I WOULD COME TO VISIT MY GRANDPARENTS. AND SHE WOULD ALWAYS SAY, '*SHIRLEY, YOU NEED TO BE THINKING ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL ONE DAY, GOING OFF TO COLLEGE.*' SHE WOULD ALWAYS TRY TO INSPIRE THE CHILDREN IN THIS COMMUNITY. SHE WAS A TRAILBLAZER, AND I FEEL SO INDEBTED TO HER. I SHALL NEVER FORGET *THELMA LOUISE JONES.*"

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S.S.: "WE'LL NEED TO HAVE YOUR NAME, AND PLACE AND DATE OF YOUR BIRTH. AND HOW LONG YOU'VE LIVED HERE IN MANSFIELD."

M.E.B.: "*MARY ELIZA BURR--MY NAME IS MARY E BURR.* (M.E.B.). THE 'E' STANDS FOR ELIZA. I WAS BORN APRIL THE TWENTY-FIRST, NINETEEN AND THIRTY, IN ELLIS COUNTY, AT HOME. AT THAT TIME, *DR. NIFONG* CAME OUT. HE AND MISSES. *ADA COTTON* C[A]ME TO MY PARENTS HOUSE. AND I GUESS WITH THE HELP OF THE GOOD MASTER, HERE I AM. AND I HAVE. . . [] [THERE] W[ERE] NINE OF US, AND I WAS THE ONLY GIRL. AND ONE BROTHER LEFT LIVING [*DIED*]. NOW WE HA[VE] ONE BROTHER, AND HE IS SEVENTY-THREE YEARS OLD. AND I STAY [*LIVE*] IN A HOUSE WITH HIM NOW. [. .] [HE AND I] STAY [*LIVE*] IN FORT WORTH AT THE SAME HOME.

"BUT ALL OF US W[ERE] REARED UP [*RAISED*] IN ELLIS COUNTY ON THE *BOBBIT* FARM. AND FROM THE *BOBBIT* FARM, WE WENT TO THE *DAVIS* FARM. AND WE STAYED [*LIVED*] OUT THERE UNTIL NINETEEN, SIXTY-THREE OR FIVE--SOME WHERE ALONG IN THERE. THEN WE MOVED TO FORT WORTH. AFTER ALL THE FARMING AND EVERYTHING WENT BAD, WE DIDN'T HAVE [A] FARM [TO WORK ON]. SO, WE MOVED OVER THERE TO FORT WORTH. MY MOTHER, SHE PASSED AWAY IN NINETEEN AND NINETY. AND MY DADDY, HE PASSED AWAY IN NINETEEN FORTY-ONE. DON'T HAVE TOO MUCH TO SAY."

S.S.: "YOU HAVE A LOT TO SAY."

M.E.B.: "I WENT TO SCHOOL IN ELLIS COUNTY AT *BOOKER T. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL.*"

S.S.: "OH, YOU DID?"

M.E.B.: "BUT IT WAS A LITTLE BUILDING THEN. I DIDN'T GO TO [] COLLEGE OR [ANY]THING."

S.S.: "OKAY, [] YOU TALKED ABOUT LIVING IN MIDLOTHIAN?"

M.E.B.: "YES, THAT[] [WAS] WHERE I WENT TO SCHOOL []."

S.S.: "[DO] YOU WANT TO TELL US ABOUT IT?"

M.E.B.: "AS SISTER LAWSON SHEPPARD SAID, '*WE[] [WOULD] START OUT WALKING AND SOMEBODY[] [WOULD] COME BY AND PICK US UP.*' A LOT OF TIMES IF MY BROTHER, [. .] IF IT WAS RAINING, HE[] [WOULD] TAKE US TO SCHOOL. AND THEN, IF IT WASN'T THAT. . . THEN IF WE GOT A LITTLE OLD CAR OR SOMETHING, WE[] [WOULD] SHARE RIDES WITH ONE ANOTHER. WE HAD IT HARD. BUT EVERYBODY WAS NICE. I DIDN'T HAVE [ANY] PROBLEMS [BE]CAUSE, I GUESS, [BE]CAUSE I WAS A GIRL. [. .] [BECAUSE I WAS A GIRL], I DIDN'T GET OUT LIKE THE BOYS [DID]. I STAYED AROUND THE HOUSE."

S.S.: "WHAT DID [. .] YOUR PARENTS [DO] [?] WERE [THEY] FARMERS?"

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M.E.B.: "YES, SIR."

S.S.: "[] W[ERE] THE CROPS [. .] THAT THEY GREW SIMILAR TO WHAT W[ERE] BEING GROWN HERE?"

M.E.B.: "YEAH. THERE WAS COTTON, CORN [AND A] HAY-LIKE [GRASS] THAT [WE] PULLED[--]JOHNSON GRASS [AND] 'KOOK-A-BURRS.' [COCKLEBUR] IF IT WAS TOO WET, YOU[] [WOULD] GET IN THERE WITH [] HOES. [WE] WENT OUT IN[TO] THE FIELD AND PULL[ED] THE WEEDS AND GRASS UP."

S.S.: "[] DURING GINNING SEASON, WERE THERE [ANY] JOBS AVAILABLE AT THE LOCAL GINS IN EITHER MIDLOTHIAN OR MANSFIELD?"

M.E.B.: "MY BROTHER WORKED AT THE GIN. MY BROTHER [] WORKED AT THE [COTTON] GIN A WHOLE LOT."

S.S.: "UH-HUH. DID YOU SEE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIFE IN MIDLOTHIAN AND LIFE HERE?"

M.E.B.: "WELL, BACK IN TH[OSE] DAYS, YOU DIDN'T SEE MUCH. YOU W[ERE] [LIVING WAY] OUT DOWN THERE. AND WHEN YOU G[O]T THROUGH WORKING DOWN THERE, WELL, YOU[] [WOULD] COME [IN]TO TOWN [AND] GET YOU[RSELF] A LITTLE. . .SOME FOOD, IF YOU HAD TO HAVE SOMETHING. THEN [YOU WOULD] GO RIGHT ON BACK OUT."

S.S.: "BUT IN RETROSPECT, I'M SAYING, WAS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE?"

M.E.B.: ". . .[BE]CAUSE WE DIDN'T GET TO GO TO CHURCH [] [VERY] MUCH, COMING UP HERE TO MANSFIELD TO CHURCH."

S.S.: "SO THIS, UH. . ."

M.E.B.: "THIS IS MOSTLY MY HOME TOO."

S.S.: "OKAY, WHERE IS THE NEAREST BLACK COMMUNITY CHURCH? [TO] FORT WORTH, FROM HERE?"

M.E.B.: "RIGHT HERE MANSFIELD."

S.S.: "OKAY. SO, THERE[] [ARE] NOT MANY OTHER COMMUNITIES?"

M.E.B.: "THERE[] [ARE] PLENTY OF THEM UP THERE. BUT I C[A]ME DOWN HERE. I [HAVE] BEEN HERE FOR SEVERAL, LONG, LONG, YEARS. I THINK I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD WHEN I WAS BAPTIZED."

S.S.: "[. .] SO, WHEN FARMING KIND[] [OF], (SPECIFICALLY, COTTON AS A MAJOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT), [. .] STARTS TO WANE, WHERE THERE [ANY] JOBS IN FORT

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WORTH AND DALLAS THAT PEOPLE WENT TO? DID 'Y'ALL [YOU ALL] START COMMUTING TO THE CITIES?"

M.E.B.: "[. . .] WHEN WE MOVED UP THERE, [] [THERE] W[ERE] N[O]T [] [VERY] M[ANY] PEOPLE [WHO] WOULD COME OUT, AS I SA[ID]. AND [] MY BROTHER AND THEM [HAD TO] TILL [] COTTON AND CORN--[CROPS] LIKE THAT. THEY [] [WOULD] COME OUT. SOMETIME[S] [AND] THEY [] [WOULD] ASK HIM IF THERE WAS ANYTHING TOM [COULD GIVE THEM TO] DO OUT THERE. AND IF HE [] S[AW] IT WAS GO[ING] [TO] BE 'COMING UP A CLOUD' [BEGIN TO STORM] OR SOMETHIN[G] [OR] OTHER, THEY [] [WOULD] COME [] OUT AND, YOU KNOW, HELP [] PICK COTTON. THEN THEY [] [WOULD] GO ON BACK [HOME]. MY MOTHER [] D[ID] IRONING, [] SEWING, [] COOKING, AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF FOR THE PEOPLE WE STAYED [LIVED] WITH."

S.S.: "ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE. . . YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU WERE WORKING IN THE FIELDS A LOT. HAT'S THE PERCENTAGE, DO YOU THINK, OF WOMEN WHO WORKED ALONG SIDE THE MEN IN THE FIELD; VERSUS THOSE WHO WORKED IN HOUSES FOR [] THE DOCTORS AND PERSON'S LIKE THAT IN TOWN? WERE THERE [] MORE PEOPLE WORKING IN THE FIELDS THAN [THERE] WERE DOMESTICS OR MAIDS.?"

L.S.: "[] WELL, DURING. . . LIKE IN THE FALL [. . .] (YOU KNOW, LIKE MY MAMMA), [MOST] WOULD GO TO THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE AND WORK. AND WHEN SHE [WOULD] GET OFF FROM THERE, SHE WOULD COME [] [BACK] TO THE FIELD AND HELP. SHE WAS WORKING JUST LIKE YOU ALWAYS HEAR THE WORD, 'A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE?' IT WASN'T, IT STILL IS NOT. LIKE WHEN SHE WOULD GET OFF FROM [WORK] OVER THERE. SHE [WOULD] STILL WORK FOR [TH]EM. BUT SHE DIDN'T, (BACK IN THOSE DAY'S), SHE WOULDN'T GO TO THEIR HOUSE EVERY DAY.

"BUT AFTER SHE, THEY, RETIRED FROM FARMING, SHE WORKED [] AT THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE. AND THEN, SOMETIMES SHE WOULD WORK AT THE CLINIC. THAT [] [WAS] AFTER THEY RETIRED FROM THE FARM.

"BUT NOW, WHEN THEY WERE FARMING, SHE DIDN'T GO TO THE[IR] HOUSE [] EVERYDAY. LIKE MONDAY MIGHT BE WASH DAY OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND THEN SHE MIGHT GO BACK, MAYBE [ON] THURSDAY OR FRIDAY, AND DO THE IRONING FOR THE FAMILY FOR THE [] WEEKEND. BUT [] SHE WOULD HELP IN THE FIELD, TOO,- JUST LIKE THE MEN WOULD."

S.S.: "LIKE WE WOULD. HA, HA. [] WOULD YOU LIKE TO, SAY ANY. . . I GUESS THE QUESTION, (I KIND [] [OF] WANTED TO RETURN TO ABOUT GRIFFIN), WAS HOW MUCH INTERACTION DID HE HAVE WITH THIS COMMUNITY HERE, AND WITH THIS CHURCH?"

L.S.: "OH HE HAD. . . I DON'T REMEMBER HIM EVER VISITING THE CHURCH. DO YOU UNCLE MAC?"

M.M.: "NOT EVER. HE NEVER VISITED THE CHURCH."

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L.S.: "I DON'T EVER REMEMBER HIM VISITING THE CHURCH, BUT I KNOW HE WAS, YOU KNOW, AROUND, OF COURSE. NOW BEFORE HE. . . I REMEMBER BEFORE HE EVEN C[A]ME TO MANSFIELD TO THE 'HOLLYS' [HOLLANDS]. THE 'HOLLYS' [HOLLANDS] W[ERE] [A] FAMILY. . . W[ERE] NICE, FRIENDLY PEOPLE TO M[E]--[TO] THE BLACK FOLK[S]. THEY LIVED ON UP. . . THEY W[ERE] PRETTY WELL-TO-DO. BUT THEY WERE VERY FRIENDLY PEOPLE TO THE DARK FOLK[S]. THEY ALWAYS LIVED UP THAT WAY. AND I REMEMBER. SOMETIMES WE WOULD BE WALKING. THEY WOULD STOP AND PICK US UP.

"AND THEN WE WOULD HAVE OTHER LABORERS BACK UP THIS WAY. THEY MIGHT STOP. [OR] [] COME BY. AND [THE WHITE] KIDS [WERE] LIABLE TO THROW A STICK OR SOMETHING OUT AT YOU. [THEY WERE] JUST MEDDLING. WE [] [WOULD] KNOW WHAT IT WAS. . . [IT] WAS JUST MEDDLING. [THEY] HADN'T BEEN RAISED, TAUGHT, RIGHT. YOU MIGHT FIND THAT NOW, [IT IS] JUST LIKE KIDS."

S.S.: "UH, HOW LONG DID YOU SAY YOU'VE LIVED HERE IN MANSFIELD, *MRS. BURR*?"

M.E.B.: "I THINK IT [] [WAS IN] NINETEEN, FIFTY-FIVE [WHEN] WE MOVED TO FORT WORTH. AND THEN [WE HAVE] BEEN COMING TO AND FRO."

S.S.: "YOU'VE BEEN COMING TO AND FRO. UH, I'M KIND OF GO[ING] [TO]. . . WE'RE GO[ING] [TO] JUMP INTO THAT PERIOD, DURING THE FIFTIES WHEN THINGS START[ED] GETTING HEATED UP. [] BEFORE I DO, THE CHURCH HERE IS REALLY STRONG AND IT SEEMS TO HAVE SOME FAIRLY STRONG LEADERSHIP. AND UH, OBVIOUSLY, WELL MAYBE I BETTER BACK UP A LITTLE BIT.

"THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF 'SEPARATE BUT EQUAL' IS BASED ON *PLECY VS. FERGUSON* WHICH IS A CASE [THAT WAS] HEARD IN 1896 OR 1897. UH, DID THINGS EVER. . . DID THAT OR DID EVEN DEALING WITH *JIM CROW LAWS*. . . WAS THAT JUST A LEGAL KIND OF CODIFICATION OF WHAT ACTUALLY ALREADY EXISTED IN TRADITION? AND MAYBE, (THIS IS A QUESTION), [. . .] [THEY] W[ERE] ALREADY HERE. SO SOMEBODY JUST CODIFIED IT AND SAID IT WAS LEGAL TO TREAT PEOPLE THAT WAY?"

M.M.: "RIGHT. . . TREAT BLACKS THAT WAY. IT WAS ALREADY HERE."

S.S.: "OKAY. SO ROUGHLY, AN ATTITUDE BORN OUT OF LIFE BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR WAS CONTINUED--VIRTUALLY UNCHANGED, THEN CODIFIED. BASED UPON THAT, HOW DOES A SMALL COMMUNITY. . . WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF A SMALL COMMUNITY LIKE MANSFIELD MOVING FORWARD IN THE STATE OF TEXAS TOWARD *DESEGREGATION*? HOW DOES IT HAPPEN [THAT] MANSFIELD, TEXAS COMES TO THE FOREFRONT?"

L.S.: "I DON'T KNOW. BUT I KNOW IT HA[S] [] CHANGED[.] AND I SAID UH, WHAT I'M THINKING, IS [THAT THERE ARE] NEW PEOPLE COMING TO MANSFIELD, LIKE HIM OVER THERE, [*GESTURING TOWARD FELIX WONG*], HE'S NEW. AND I [HA]VE BEEN HERE. AND YOU KNOW, WE'VE GOT NEW PEOPLE *OF OUR OWN* [BLACKS] COMING [HERE]. AND IT

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] MAKES A DIFFERENCE. AND THINGS HAVE REALLY [] CHANGED SINCE THE *SEGREGATION*."

S.S.: "BUT [. .] HOW DID IT HAP[PEN]? HOW DID IT INITIALLY. . . I GUESS, WHAT'S THE SPARK THAT INITIALLY MAKES PEOPLE IN MANSFIELD DECIDE THAT WE WANT OUR KIDS GOING TO *MANSFIELD HIGH* AND NOT *I. M. TERRELL*?"

L.S.: "WELL, IT'S CLOSER. . . AND EVEN BETTER."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "[BE]CAUSE IT[] [HAS] A LOT[] [OF] KIDS. WE [] [HAVE] A GOOD SCHOOL DOWN HERE. WE [HAVE] GOT GOOD SCHOOLS--GOOD SCHOOLS. *MANSFIELD CARR[IES]* THE NAME OF [HAS A REPUTATION FOR HAVING] GOOD SCHOOLS."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "AND WE HAVE PEOPLE ALL AROUND [WHO] LIKE THIS SCHOOL. AND THEY [] OFTEN TALK ABOUT IT. THEY LIKE THE SETUP AT THE SCHOOL AND ALL OF THAT. BUT NOW [IT] SEEM[S] LIKE TO ME, THE CHANGES [] [ARE] GETTING. YOU KNOW, JUST LIKE THE DOPE IS NOW.

"THE DOPE IS GETTING TO THE LITTLE TOWNS JUST LIKE IT [H]AS IN THE BIG TOWNS NOW. AND [IT] USED TO [BE THAT THE] LITTLE TOWNS DIDN'T KNOW [ANY]THING ABOUT DRUGS AND ALL THAT KIND OF MESS. AND SO, I SA[ID], YOU KNOW. AND *THEY* [*THE DRUGS*] [ARE] MOVIN[G] IN DOWN HERE. AND A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT TO LEARN HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE. THAT HELPS A LOT. [. .] YOU KNOW [IT IS] NOT [ALWAYS] THE OTHER *COLOR* [WHO HAVE THE PROBLEM]), [IT IS] US TOO. I DON'T BLAME [] [THE] OTHER SIDE ALL THE TIME. [] [THERE ARE] A LOT OF US TOO. IT MEANS A LOT. IT MEANS MUCH. AND THERE HAS BEEN [. .] CHANGE.

"AND NOW THAT ARLINGTON IS ALMOST. . . I ALMOST CALL[ED] ARLINGTON, MANSFIELD. I CAN[] HARDLY TELL THE DIFFERENCE. THEY LOOK [A]LIKE, TO ME [] THEY [ARE] JUST ALMOST IN THERE RIGHT TOGETHER. AND IT REALLY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE. AND I CONSIDER [THAT] MANSFIELD HAS A GOOD SCHOOL--[A] MUCH BETTER SCHOOL THAN I HEAR [] SOME OF THEM [HAVE] IN FORT WORTH. DID I ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?"

S.S.: "KIND[] [OF] THE LATTER, ON PART, OR THE MORE RECENT PART. NO, WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO IS, SAY WHAT HAPPENED IN THE YEAR 1955 THAT BROUGHT YOUR COMMUNITY OUT IN FAVOR, IN A VERY PUBLIC SENSE, IN FAVOR OF *DESEGREGATION*?"

L.S.: "WELL, SISTER BRISCOE TOLD YOU ABOUT THAT. YEAH."

M.M.: "COULD I ANSWER THAT.?"

S.S.: "WHY DON'T WE BRING IN ANOTHER CHAIR.?"

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L.S.: "[BE]CAUSE SEE, HE WORKED ON THAT SCHOOL BOARD."

S.S.: "OH, THAT'S RIGHT."

L.S.: "SEE WHAT I'M SAYIN[G]?"

S.S.: "THE QUESTION IS, WHY DID MANSFIELD OR THE COMMUNITY HERE DECIDE TO COME TO THE FOREFRONT ON THE ISSUE OF *DESEGREGATION* IN 1955?"

M.M.: "[] *T. M. MOODY, JOHN F. LAWSON, [] BUCK WILSON, WILBUR LAWSON*--SEVERAL OF THE DEACONS OF THE CHURCH DECIDED [THAT IF] WE [HAVE TO] PAY TAXES IN MANSFIELD, (SCHOOL TAXES, PROPERTY TAXES, COUNTY TAXES), AND WE STILL HA[D] TO PAY [A] TRANSPORTATION TAX OR MONEY TO GO TO FORT WORTH), WHY [SHOULD] WE HAVE TO PAY DOUBLE FOR AN EDUCATION WHEN WE COULD GO RIGHT ACROSS THE STREET?"

"AND THAT [] [WAS] WHY WE STARTED PUSHING IT--FOR OUR KIDS TO GO [TO THE] MANSFIELD SCHOOL[S]. BECAUSE WE DIDN'T WANT TO PAY TAXES HERE, IF THE KIDS COULDN'T GO AND GET. . . SCHOOL TAXES. . . WE SHOULDN'T PAY SCHOOL TAXES. THAT [] [WAS] WHY WE PUSHED IT. SO THAT [] [WAS] WHY THEY GOT SO AGGRAVATED WITH T. M. MOODY. BECAUSE HE WAS PUSHIN[G] IT SO HARD FOR THE KIDS TO GO [TO] SCHOOL HERE OR [TO] INTEGRATE THE SCHOOLS. BUT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTEGRATING THE CHURCHES [FIRST], AND THEN THE SCHOOLS. DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?"

S.S.: "GREAT. WHEN WAS THERE A CON. . . I GUESS IN THE EARLY DAYS, IN THOSE EARLY DAYS OF. . . LIKE I'M GO[ING] [TO] STRADDLE TWO AREAS HERE. ONE IS VOTING RIGHTS. AND HAD THIS COME UP PRIOR TO THIS, AND HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE TO THE *NAACP* [IN ORDER] TO BRING THEIR ATTORNEY DAVIS?"

M.M.: "OKAY, [. .] TO VOTE. . . YOU COULDN'T VOTE. I CAN REMEMBER WHEN YOU COULDN'T VOTE. BLACKS COULDN'T VOTE. AND THEN WHEN THEY COULD VOTE, [] [THEY WOULD] HAVE TO PAY A DOLLAR, SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS FOR [] [THEIR] POLL TAX [IN ORDER] TO VOTE. AND THEN, *CLIFFORD DAVIS [THE NAACP LAWYER]* . . . IS THAT THE DAVIS YOU'RE SPEAKING OF--THE LAWYER?. *CLIFFORD DAVIS []* WAS BROUGHT INTO IT THEN, ALONG WITH THE OTHER ATTORNEYS, AND EVEN THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY. [] [IN ORDER] TO LET BLACK PEOPLE VOTE[,] YOU COULDN'T VOTE IF YOU [] [WOULD] HAVE TO GO AND FILL [OUT] AN APPLICATION TO VOTE. THEY [] [WOULD] HAVE. . ."

S.S.: "YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT BEING ASKED QUESTIONS THAT YOU COULDN'T ANSWER?"

M.M.: "AH, WE COULDN'T VOTE. BLACKS COULDN'T VOTE BACK IN THOSE DAY'S. AND THEN [] IT GOT [TO] WHERE *CLIFTON DAVIS* AND SOME OF THE DIST[RICT] ATTORNEYS,

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] [THE] LIEUTENANT 'GENERAL' [GOVERNOR], AND THE GOVERNOR GOT IT [TO] WHERE BLACKS COULD VOTE IN THIS STATE.

"THEN THEY HAD A QUESTION[NAIRE]. YOU[] [WOULD] HAVE TO FILL OUT A QUESTION[NAIRE]. AND IF YOU COULDN'T FILL OUT THE QUESTION[NAIRE], YOU WEREN'T LEGAL ENOUGH TO VOTE. YOU HAD TO PASS [. . .] YOU[R] TEST, [] QUESTION[NAIRE], LIKE YOU WOULD [HAVE TO] IF [] IT W[ERE] [APPLYING FOR] A DRIV[ER'S] LICENSE. AND THEN YOU[] [WOULD] HAVE TO PAY A DOLLAR, SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS IF YOU COULD PASS IT. AND NINE TIMES OUT OF TEN, YOU DIDN'T HAVE A DOLLAR, SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS TO PAY [IN ORDER] TO GET YOU IN OFFICE OR GET YOU OUT OF OFFICE. IT [] WOULDN'T BE WORTH THAT MUCH TO YOU.

"AND SAY FOR INSTANCE, THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE TWO DIFFERENT QUESTIONNAIRES. THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE ONE FOR JUST. . . [A] SIMPLE FOR YOU [WHITES] TO FILL IT OUT. AND THEN THEY WOULD HAVE ANOTHER ONE FOR ME [BLACKS]. [THERE WOULD BE QUESTIONS] LIKE 'WHICH WAY IS IT TO CALCUTTA [OR] NEW MEXICO?' 'WH[O] [IS] THE GOVERNOR?' I THINK IT WAS GOVERNOR LEO DANIELS WAS THE GOVERNOR THEN. 'WHAT'S THE GOVERNOR'S WIFE'S NAME?' AND 'WHAT WAS HER MAIDEN NAME?' WELL, WHO CARED ABOUT HER MAIDEN NAME? YOU KNOW?

"THEN WE COULDN'T FILL IT OUT. THEN WE FLUNKED THE TEST AND [WE] COULDN'T VOTE. THEN [WHEN] WE GOT CLIFTON DAVIS AND SEVERAL MORE ATTORNEYS TO GET TOGETHER. AND THEY [] [MADE] IT LEGAL WE WOULD NOT HAVE TO HAVE A QUESTION[NAIRE]--[WE] JUST PA[ID] A DOLLAR SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS AND [WE COULD] VOTE. AND THEN AFTER TH[AT] [] YOU JUST [] [PAID A] POLL TAX [OR] [YOU] D[ID] N[O]T VOTE. [NOW] YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY."

S.S.: "THAT'S STRANGE RATIONALE, [A] STRANGE USE AND MISUSE OF DEMOCRACY."

M.M.: "HA, HA, HA. . . *JIM CROW*."

S.S.: "UH [I] FORGET TO RETURN TO A QUESTION ABOUT *JIM CROW*. [] I MADE THE INFERENCE THAT *JIM CROW* [] ESSENTIALLY LEGALIZE[D] [] [TRADITIONS] THAT HA[D] EXISTED PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR AND AFTER THE CIVIL [WAR] IN THE SOUTH. AND I ASKED WHETHER YOU AGREED WITH THAT?"

M.M.: "NO. I REALLY DIDN'T AGREE. THE *JIM CROW LAWS* W[ERE] HERE BEFORE, ABOUT THE TIME THE BLACKS GOT HERE. AND THEY JUST (MORE OR LESS) EXERCISED [] [THE LAWS] ON THE BLACKS[,] (MORE OR LESS)[,] THAN ANY OTHER NATIONALITY. THE BLACKS HA[VE] ALWAYS SUFFERED FROM, OR HAVE BEEN THE GUINEA PIG[S] FOR, WHATEVER LAWS OR TECHNIQUES YOU HAD. YOU [THE WHITES] [WOULD] TRY IT OUT ON THE BLACKS BACK THEN. NOW THEY DON'T GO FOR IT AS MUCH AS THEY[] [DID] THEN. BACK THEN, THEY DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. THEY EITHER. . ."

S.S.: "BUT THE TRADITIONS WERE ALL IN PLACE. ALL [THE] *JIM CROW [LAWS]* DID WAS MAKE IT LAW. . . AND MAKE IT LEGAL?"

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M.M.: "MAKE IT LAW, MAKE IT LEGAL, AND YOU KNOW. . . AND SOME OF THE PEOPLE, THEY [. . .] WENT [TO] EXTREMES TO PUSH IT, TO ENFORCE IT.

"THE SPEED LIMIT WAS RIGHT FOR YOU [WHITES], BUT THE SPEED LIMIT FOR ME [BLACKS], WELL . . . [WE WERE TOLD], 'YOUR CAR IS NOT SAFE TO DRIVE AT FIFTY-FIVE MILES AN HOUR. SO, YOU [HAVE TO] DRIVE THIRTY-FIVE.' YOU KNOW? IF YOU G[O]T CAUGHT GOING FORTY-FIVE IN A FIFTY-FIVE MILE ZONE, YOU [WERE] SUBJECT TO GET A TICKET. TH[OSE] [WERE] SOME OF THE JIM [CROW] LAWS I WENT THROUGH."

S.S.: "UH, HUH."

M.M.: "[BE]CAUSE, [DO] YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY? WELL, 'YOU LOOK AT YOUR CAR HERE. IT'S NOT ADEQUATE ENOUGH TO GO THAT FAST,' YOU KNOW? THAT[] [WAS] JUST THE WAY SOME OF THE JIM CROW LAWS WORKED THEN."

S.S.: "HOW [] OFTEN WAS THIS? SAY [WHEN] YOU [] [WERE] STOPPED?"

M.M.: "JUST ABOUT AS OFTEN AS YOU [] [WOULD] [] COME THROUGH THE TOWN. . . [] DOWN MAIN STREET. JUST AS REGULAR[LY] AS YOU C[A]ME THROUGH MAIN STREET YOU [] [WOULD] GET STOPPED. IF YOU [WOULD] GO ON [] SECOND [OR] THIRD STREET, OR 'BACK STREET,' ([AS] THEY WOULD CALL IT), OR GO AROUND TOWN, YOU WOULDN'T GET STOPPED, (UNLESS YOU [. . .] [WENT] TOO FAR OVER IN[TO] THE WHITE SETTLEMENT). [] YOU DIDN'T UNLESS YOU HAD SOME BUSINESS DRIVING A CAR IN[TO] THE WHITE SETTLEMENT. YOU DIDN'T HAVE [ANY] BUSINESS THERE. YOU [] [WOULD] [GET] STOP[PE]D THERE THEN. SO YOU DIDN'T HAVE, REALLY, BUT TWO STREETS TO [] TO [USE TO] COME THROUGH TOWN."

S.S.: "AND WHAT STREETS WERE THOSE.?"

M.M.: "THAT WOULD BE [THE] BACK STREET GOING, AND [THE] SIDE STREET COMING BACK. AND YOU [] [WOULD] GET THROUGH [] [TOWN] AS QUICK[LY] AND AS EAS[ILY] AND QUIET[LY] AS YOU COULD. YOU DIDN'T. . . AND IF YOU WENT DOWN FRONT STREET WALKING OR DRIVING, (WHEN YOU CAME BACK), YOU [] [HAD] BETTER HAVE A SACK IN YOUR HAND WITH SOMETHING IN IT THAT YOU HAD BOUGHT.

"YOU [BLACKS] JUST DIDN'T WALK DOWN FRONT STREET AND STAND AROUND ON FRONT STREET--STOP AND STAND [AROUND]. HERE IN MANSFIELD, THAT'S WHERE I WAS RAISED. I DON'T KNOW [ANY]THING ABOUT THE OTHER TOWNS. AND IF YOU, SAY FOR INSTANCE, IF YOU [] [WENT] TO A COKE BOX [MACHINE], YOU [] [HAD] BETTER BUY YOU[RSELF] A FRUIT DRINK. YOU COULDN'T BUY YOU[RSELF] A COCA COLA OR [A] DR PEPPER. YOU [BLACKS] HA[D] TO BUY 'GRAPETTE,' ORANGE [OR] STRAWBERRY [SODA]."

S.S.: "WHY?"

M.M.: "[BE]CAUSE YOU WERE BLACK. YOU D[ID] N[O]T DRINK COKES. 'YOU [BLACKS] DON'T DRINK [FROM] THE SAME FOUNTAIN DRINK THAT I [WHITES] DRINK, OR MY FAMILY DRINK[S] [FROM]. AND WHEN YOU [BLACKS] MEET MY WIFE OR DAUGHTER COMING

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] *DOWN THE STREET, YOU PULL YOUR HAT OFF AND GET [] [INTO] THE STREET. YOU DON'T WALK ON THE SAME SIDEWALK [THAT] MY WIFE [] AND DAUGHTER WALK ON,' (IN MANSFIELD HERE.) 'I [THE WHITES] CAN MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER OR I CAN DATE YOUR DAUGHTER, BUT DON'T YOU LOOK AT MINE. DON'T LOOK AT THEM.' [YOU HAD BETTER] NOT--LET ALONE DATE [TH]EM. 'YOU DON'T LOOK AT [TH]EM. IF YOU DO, WE[] [WILL] FIND YOU IN A DITCH SOMEWHERE.'*

"THAT WAS THEN, AND SOMETIMES, IT'S THAT-A-WAY NOW. TH[OSE] W[ERE] THE *JIM CROW LAWS* THAT I KNEW ABOUT."

L.S.: "I REMEMBER WHEN [] MANSFIELD ONLY HAD. . . I DON'T KNOW IF HE CALL[ED] HI[M]SELF A POLICE[MAN], A CONSTABLE[,] OR WHAT. HE DIDN'T HAVE [] [A] CAR, BUT IF HE[] S[AW] BLACKS COM[ING] ALONG, HE WOULD SEE YOU MAYBE TWO BLOCKS AWAY. HE WAS WALKING HIMSELF. HIS NAME WAS BUD PIERCE. AND HE[] [WOULD] [. .] HAVE A[N] OLD GUN ON. AND HIS CLOTHES [WERE] BARELY HANGING ON HIM [*HIS CLOTHES BARELY COVERED HIM*].

"AND HE WOULD HOLLER, '*HEY! HEY! WHATCHA' DOIN' DOWN THERE?*' AND HE[] [WOULD] HOLLER AT YOU AND TELL YOU TO WAIT FOR HIM TO GET DOWN THERE TO YOU, TO QUESTION YOU. HE MIGHT WANT TO ASK YOU, '*WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' DOWN THERE? WHAT YOU DOIN' HERE?*' AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF. I REMEMBER THOSE DAYS.

"AND IF THAT WASN'T *JIM CROW*, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WOULD CALL IT. AND HE WOULDN'T EVER WANT YOU, OR SEE YOU. . . NO BLACK FACE ON FRONT [STREET]. AND IF [. .] [THERE WAS] A NEW [*BLACK*] FACE IN MANSFIELD, WELL, IT WOULD JUST BE. . . HE WOULD JUST RIDE [TH]EM DOWN. JUST [BE]CAUSE THEY W[ERE] A NEW [*BLACK*] FACE."

S.S.: "SO, HOW LONG WAS HE IN POWER []?"

L.S.: "UNTIL HE DIED. . . UNTIL HE DIED."

M.M.: "FIVE OR SIX YEARS OR SO?"

L.S.: "NO, LONGER THAN THAT. . ."

MM.: "HE DIED FROM OVEREATING."

S.S.: "HA, HA."

M.M.: "I [] PURCHASED A TRUCK STOP ON MAIN STREET. I BOUGHT IT OUTRIGHT [BE]CAUSE YOU COULDN'T BUY IT ON CREDIT. THEY WOULDN'T LOAN YOU THAT KIND OF MONEY. I BOUGHT IT OUTRIGHT--[IT WAS] RIGHT ON MAIN STREET. THEN THE CITY HAD A SQUAD CAR []. AND WHAT THE POLICEMEN. . . THEY HAD TWO POLICEMEN THEN. AND WHAT THEY WOULD DO. . . [AT] LUNCH TIME OR WHATEVER TIME, BUT MOST OF THE TIME [IT WAS AT] LUNCH TIME). . . ."

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "THEY WOULD COME AND PUT THEIR CAR ON MY GREASE RACK, AND THEY WOULD RAISE YOUR CAR UP OFF THE GROUND AND WALK UP UNDER IT [TO] CHANGE THE OIL. THEY[] [WOULD] PUT THEIR CAR ON THE GREASE RACK AND TAKE THE KEYS [WITH THEM]. [IF] THEY WOULD HAVE YOU DO SOMETHING TO IT, THERE WOULDN'T BE [ANY] MONEY [PAID TO YOU]. THEY[] [WOULD] TAKE THE KEYS AND THEY[] [WOULD] BE GONE FOR AN HOUR, (HOUR AND A HALF), AND TIE UP YOUR WASH RACK AND GREASE RACK. OR THEY[] [WOULD] LEAVE IT PARKED TO BE FILLED UP WITH GAS IN MY SERVICE STATION. AND THEY WOULD GO SOMEWHERE WITH THE KEYS, AND YOU COULDN'T MOVE IT.

"AND THAT WAS IN SEVENTY. . . I OWNED IT FROM SEVENTY-NINE, (NO FROM SIXTY-NINE UNTIL SEVENTY-FOUR). SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN IN SEVENTY. SO ONE DAY HE DID LEAVE HIS KEYS. AND I HAD [. . .] [A DUPLICATE SET] MADE FOR [ME] [FOR] HIS CAR-- THE POLICE CAR. AND THAT WAS A NO-NO. YOU KNOW, HE'D LEAVE HIS CAR SITTING IN MY DRIVEWAY OR ON MY GREASE RACK. HE'D COME BACK AND HE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW I WAS MOVING HIS CAR.

"[HE WOULD ASK], 'WHY WOULD YOU MOVE MY CAR?'

"[I WOULD SAY], 'WHY WOULD YOU LEAVE IT ON MY LOT?'

"[HE SAID], 'WELL, YOU COME [] WITH ME THEN, AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT. . .'

"[ONE DAY] A GUY WAS MAKING A 'U'-TURN AND RAN INTO ME. I GOT THE TICKET. . . JUST BECAUSE I WAS ON FRONT STREET. I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN THERE.

"[HE SAID TO ME], 'IF YOU HADN'T OF BEEN THERE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOT HIT.'

"IT TORE UP MY CAR.

"BUT HE NEVER DID. . . HE EXPIRED NOT KNOWING HOW I C[OULD] MOVE HIS CAR WITH THE GEARS LOCKED [] IN PARK. HA, HA, HA. HE WASN'T SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW I HAD A KEY FOR IT. AND THAT WAS [. . .] A FUN TIME TO ME. YOU KNOW? HE[] [WOULD] LEAVE HIS CAR AND I [] [WOULD] DRIVE IT OFF.

"AND THEN. . . HE HAD. . . I HAD GOTTEN A LETTER A COUPLE OF TIMES THAT [SAID], 'TOMORROW IF YOU OPEN UP, THE DOOR WILL BLOW UP IN YOUR FACE,' OR SOMETHING [LIKE THAT] OR 'YOU'LL HAVE A TRAGEDY HERE IF YOU OPEN YOUR BUSINESS TOMORROW.' [THEY WERE] JUST CRANK JOKES. AND THEN ONE MORNING, MY HELPERS, (I HAD THREE GUYS WORKING FOR ME), OPENED THE DOOR AND WENT IN[SIDE] [] AND THERE W[ERE] SOME RATTLESNAKES."

S.S.: "AND THIS WAS IN THE SEVENTIES? "

M.M.: "YEAH IT WAS IN SEVENTY-TWO. BECAUSE I SOLD IT THEN. IT WAS SEVENTY-TWO. THOSE SNAKES. . . [IN] OTHER WORDS, SOME OF THE CUSTOMERS HAD BEEN IN

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] THE GREASE RACK, (WASH-RACK AREA), AND HAD THOSE SNAKES [PUT THERE]. THEY STILL DO HAVE RATTLESNAKE HUNTS. [THEY WOULD] ROUND [TH]EM UP, YOU KNOW. AND THEY PUT A COUPLE OF THEM. . .THEY W[ERE] SMALL, BUT THEY STILL W[ERE] RATTLERS. [THOSE WERE] JUST THINGS [DONE] TO HUMILIATE YOU."

S.S.: "WHEN YOU, AS A YOUNGER MAN, WOULD GO TO [THE] STORES IN MANSFIELD, WERE THERE STORES THAT WOULD NOT SELL TO YOU, OBVIOUSLY? WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES, IF YOU CAN REMEMBER THEM.?"

M.M.: ". . .THE PEOPLE THAT OWNED THE STORES?"

S.S.: "YEA-H-H."

M.M.: "AH-H. . .LET ME SEE. THERE WERE[] [] [ONLY] ABOUT THREE STORES IN MANSFIELD--SID GIBSON['S], [GIBSON GROCERY MARKET], TROY AND HAROLD SELLS, [HAROLD SELLS MERCHANDISE], AND WYNN AND 'CABNEY['S]. [CABANISS] THEY[] [WOULD] SELL YOU BEANS, PIG KNUCKLES OR FEET, OR SOME KIND OF PORK. BUT WHEN YOU G[O]T READY TO BUY BEEF, THEY[] [WOULD] SAY 'WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH THAT KIND OF MEAT?' 'YOU GET THIS. . .THIS IS A GOOD CUT.'

"AND THEN WHEN YOU GO[T] TO THE REGISTER TO PAY FOR IT, (AND I [WOULD] HAVE A BASKET FULL). AND YOUR WIFE [AN ANGLO WOMAN] WOULD BE THERE, AND SHE[] [WOULD] BE [STANDING] BEHIND ME. . .[THE CLERK WOULD SAY], 'CAN I HELP YOU MISSES SO-AND-SO? [] SHE'S IN A HURRY--YOU STAND RIGHT HERE.' AND YOU KNOW, YOU[] [WOULD] HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL YOUR WIFE [THE ANGLO WOMAN] PAID FOR HER THINGS. THEN YOU [WOULD] PAY FOR YOURS.

"AND THEN THEY WOULD. . .THEY HAD A[N] ONION SACK, OR A CABBAGE SACK, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THEY WOULD PUT YOUR GROCERIES IN THAT. THEY WOULDN'T PUT [] [THEM] IN [A] PAPER SACK. THEY DIDN'T HAVE PLASTIC BAGS. THEN. AND THEY WOULDN'T PUT [] [THEM IN] A PAPER SACK. AND IF YOU WOULD ASK FOR A PAPER SACK [THEY WOULD SAY], 'WELL, THIS IS A LOT MORE STRONGER. YOU CAN THROW THIS ON YOUR BACK AND WALK OUT OF HERE WITH IT.' THEY [] DID [TREATED] ME THAT-A-WAY. AND THEY WOULDN'T HAND IT TO YOU. THEY[] [WOULD] . . .YOU KNOW.

"AND IF [. . .] THEY[] [WERE] GIVING YOU CHANGE BACK. . .IF YOU G[A]VE [TH]EM A DOLLAR, AND YOU HAD TWENTY-FIVE, THIRTY CENTS CHANGE [COMING BACK]. AND YOU HAD YOUR HAND OUT TO GET IT, THEY WOULDN'T PUT IT IN YOUR HAND. THEY[] [WOULD] LET IT FALL. BUT YOU HAD TO BUY IT BECAUSE [YOU] COULDN'T WALK TO FORT WORTH TO GET IT OR [ANY]WHERE [ELSE].

"KENNEDALE WAS EVEN WORSE. [IT] STILL IS. . .FOREST HILL. . .[WE] COULDN'T WALK THERE AND GET IT, YOU KNOW, JUST WHAT EVER YOU WANTED. YOU NEED FOOD. AND TH[OSE] W[ERE] SOME OF THE LAWS. THE JIM CROW LAWS THAT CITIZENS WENT

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] TO EXTREMES TO PUSH, YOU KNOW. THAT WASN'T [A] LAW. THAT WAS JUST A LAW THEY MADE TO HELP THEMSEL[VES]."

S.S.: "JUST MEANNESS. . ."

M.M.: "THAT WAS THEIR LAW. AND WHEN YOU R[O]DE THE BUS, YOU WOULD BE THE LAST ONE ON. BUT YOU HAD TO SQUEEZE THROUGH THE WHITES TO GET TO THE BACK. AND THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO TOUCH THEM. IF YOU HAD TO GO TO THE BACK, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST ONE ON, YOU KNOW, [] [BECAUSE] THEY DIDN'T WANT TO GET TOUCHED.

"BUT THAT WAS THE WAY IT WAS [ON] TRAINS. YOU [WOULD] BE IN THE ARMY AND YOU[] [WOULD] BE COMING OUT OF, [. . .] SAY FROM [THE] WEST--CALIFORNIA, [] ARIZONA, [OR] MEXICO. YOU[] [WOULD] RIDE TOGETHER JUST MIXED UP TOGETHER. BUT WHEN YOU[] [WOULD] GET TO EL PASO, IF YOU WERE COMING FROM OUT WEST, (COMING DOWN [ROUTE] TWENTY TO GET TO EL PASO), THEY WOULD STOP [THE TRAIN]. AND YOU WOULD HAD TO GET [OUT AND MOVE] IN YOUR PART [OF THE TRAIN] WHERE IT SAID, 'COLORED.' THEY HAD A 'COLORED' FOUNTAIN AND 'WHITE.' 'COLORED' REST ROOMS AND 'WHITE.' IT DIDN'T SAY *WHAT* COLOR, YOU JUST PRESUMED IT MEANT *YOU*. 'COLORED!' YOU KNOW, YOU[] [WERE] 'COLORED.' SOME COLOR, YOU KNOW. THAT'S THE WAY THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE [IT WRITTEN] ON THE [DOOR]. IT [WAS] WRITTEN DOWN. 'COLORED.' AND THEY JUST PRESUMED THAT YOU KNEW IT WAS FOR YOU.

"AND THEN THERE WAS A TIME [WHEN] YOU[] [WOULD] GO INTO STORES. AND THEY WOULDN'T HAVE. . . SOME OF THE COMPANIES WOULDN'T HAVE REST ROOMS THAT HAD 'COLORED' [WRITTEN] ON IT, OR [SEPARATE] FOUNTAINS FOR [THE] COLORED. AND IF YOU[] [WOULD] BE IN THAT STORE. AND YOU HAD TO USE THE RESTROOM, WELL THERE WAS NOTHING. . . YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO. SO I WAS ALWAYS THE TYPE THAT MADE SOME NOISE.

"I WENT TO *PENNEY'S*. YOU EVER [HEARD] OF *J. C. PENNEY'S*? IN THE BASEMENT, THEY HAD A HOUSEWARES [DEPARTMENT]. AND [THEY WOULD SAY], 'NOPE,' THEY DIDN'T HAVE A RESTROOM [AND] 'NAW, YOU CAN'T USE [IT], YOU CAN'T USE THAT RESTROOM.' THEY HAD THOSE BIG TUMBLER TEA GLASSES, FOR TEN CENTS, I CAN REMEMBER AND I BOUGHT ONE. AND TOLD THAT GUY TO 'STAND HERE AND I'M GOIN[G] USE THAT GLASS, IF YOU DON'T HAVE A RESTROOM.' HE SAID 'YOU GO ON RIGHT IN THERE AND YOU CAN GO.' SOMETIME[S] YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE A LITTLE NOISE."

L.S.: "DEMAND THINGS. . ."

M.M.: "YOU [HAVE] JUST GOT[] [TO] D[E]MAND. OTHERWISE, THEY[] [WOULD] JUST PUSH YOU BACK. I JUST TOLD HIM. HE SAID 'WHAT ARE YOU GO[ING] [TO] DO WITH THAT GLASS?'

I JUST TOLD HIM, 'YOU DON'T HAVE TO SACK IT, I'M JUST GOIN[G] [TO] SET IT BACK UP HERE.'

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“[HE SAID] ‘*BUT IT’S WORTH A DIME.*’

“[I SAID] ‘*I’M JUST GOIN[G] [TO] USE IT RIGHT HERE AND SET IT DOWN.*’

“[HE SAID] ‘*OH NO! YOU CAN COME [AND] GO ON IN THERE. I’LL STAY HERE AT THE DOOR.*’

“SEE THAT? TO ME, THAT [WAS] MEAN. A BIG THING. BUT TO SOME OF THEM, THE[RE] [WERE] AREAS THAT [SOME] SAW IT WAS COMING TO [TH]EM. BUT IT WASN’T COMING TO ME. IT WAS SOMETHING YOU HA[D] TO DO. AND IF YOU [] PURCHASED MERCHANDISE IN THERE, THEY SHOULD HAVE [HAD] FACILITIES FOR YOU.

“AND THAT WAS IN THE SEVENTIES. . . THAT W[AS] N[O]T BACK IN THE FIFTIES THAT WAS UP IN THE SEVENTIES.”

S.S.: “AND WHERE WAS THAT?”

M.M.: “EXCUSE ME?”

S.S.: “WHERE WAS. . .”

M.M.: “DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH. I THINK IT WAS *PENNEY’S*, A FIVE AND TEN CENT STORE? IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ‘*WOOLSWORTH.*’ ”

S.S.: “*WOOLSWORTH?*”

M.M.: “YEAH. ‘*WOOLSWORTH*’ FIVE AND TEN CENT STORE. I THINK IT MIGHT BE STILL DOWN THERE. I DON’T KNOW.”

S.S.: “YEAH. THE SIGN IS. . .”

M.M.: “YEAH. THAT WAS RIGHT NEXT DOOR.”

S.S.: “THAT[] [WAS] BARELY TWENTY YEARS AGO.”

M.M.: “[] [THERE ARE] STILL SOME OF THOSE LAWS. . .”

L.S.: “YOU STILL RUN INTO SOME OF [TH]EM.”

M.M.: “YEAH. YOU RUN INTO SOME NOW. . .”

S.S.: “WHAT HAPPENED HERE DURING *PROHIBITION?*”

M.M.: “DURING. . . WHAT’S THAT. . .?”

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S.S.: "PROHIBITION. . . LIKE UP IN NORTHEASTERN TARRANT COUNTY. [] THERE'S SOME INDICATION THAT THERE [. .] WAS LOT OF BOOTLEGGING GOING ON."

M.M.: "AW, YEAH. THERE W[AS [SOME BOOTLEGGING] THERE. AND THERE WAS SOME BOOTLEGGING GOING ON HERE, ALSO. [] [THERE] W[ERE] SEVERAL WHISKEY STILLS [FOR] BOOTLEGGING. AND THEN, THEY WOULD GO TO FORT WORTH OR WHERE EVER YOU B[OUGHT] [] [WHISKEY] IN BOTTLES. IT WAS ALREADY. . . IT WAS SEALED WHISKEY--BRAND WHISKEY, KENTUCKY WHISKEY, BOURBON--WHATEVER. AND THEY [] [WOULD] BRING IT BACK AND THEY [] [WOULD] BOOTLEG [IT]. THEY [] [WOULD] SELL IT, YOU KNOW--RESELL IT. THEY [] [WOULD] BUY IT IN LITTLE PINTS AND THEN RESELL IT. BUT THEN THERE WERE SOME OF THE GUYS HERE THAT MADE IT [WHISKEY] OUT OF CORN. [THEY] CALLED IT 'CORN WHISKEY.' AND 'GRAPE WINE.' THEY MADE WINE. AND MADE [] BEER OUT OF SWEET . . . 'OSH' POTATOES.

S.S.: 'WHAT IS AN 'OSH' POTATO?'

M.M.: "THAT [] [WAS] 'CHOCK'. . . 'CHOCK.' "

L.S.: " 'IRISH' POTATOES. . . 'WHITE' POTATOES."

M.M.: "THEY [] [WOULD] TAKE 'OSH' POTATOES. 'IRISH POTATOES,' YOU KNOW. WHAT YOU MAKE FRENCH FRIES OUT OF? IS THAT, 'IRISH' OR WHAT KIND OF POTATO?"

L.S.: "IDAHO . . ."

M.M.: "IDAHO POTATOES. WELL, OKAY. I WASN'T DISCRIMINATING. 'OSH' POTATO. I WASN'T DISCRIMINATING. 'IRISH.' BUT THAT [] [WAS] WHAT I [HA]VE HEARD. IDAHO POTATOES. THEY WOULD TAKE THE HULLS [OF CORN] AND YOU C[OULD] MAKE BEER OUT OF THAT. YOU CAN TAKE CORN. . . UH YELLOW. . . WHITE CORN, AND YOU CAN MAKE WHISKEY JUST LIKE WATER."

S.S.: "H-M-M-M. . ."

M.M.: "[] [THERE] WAS A LOT OF BOOTLEGGING GOING ON."

L.S.: "I REMEMBER BACK IN MY DADDY'S LIFETIME. HE USED TO SAY WHEN WE WERE SMALL, (THEN THEY DIDN'T HAVE CARS AND THINGS. THEY HAD WAGONS), AND THEY WOULD GO TO FORT WORTH. IT WOULD TAKE [TH]EM A DAY TO GO WHERE THEY WERE GOING. AND THEY WOULD GET THE WHISKEY AND STUFF. [] THEY WOULD GO AND [] IT [] [WOULD] TAKE [TH]EM A DAY TO COME BACK."

S.S.: "UH-HUH. . ."

L.S.: "BUT THEY WOULD ALWAYS GET A SUPPLY AND BRING IT BACK AND BOOTLEG IT."

S.S.: "H-U-M-P-H. . ."

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L.S.: "BUT THEY [] BET[TER] NOT GET CAUGHT WITH IT. BUT [] I REMEMBER ALL OF THAT STUFF. BUT [] THEY WOULD GO THERE. AND [THEY WERE JUST] TRYIN[G] TO MAKE A LIVIN[G], YOU KNOW, ALONG WITH WHATEVER ELSE THEY HAD [TO DO]. [OF] COURSE THEY RAISED. . . YOU KNOW. . . WE DIDN'T [] JEVER HAVE TO BUY [ANY] MEAT OR [ANY]THING LIKE THAT. SO WE DIDN'T HAVE TO ARGUE ABOUT [ANY] MEATS. [BE]CAUSE HE ALWAYS S[AW] TO IT [THAT] WE [] [HAD] CHICKENS, COWS. . . JUST WHATEVER KIND OF MEAT YOU [] [COULD] NAME, WE HAD IT. BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE [A] GOOD WAY [] [TO] KEEP IT. BUT BACK IN THOSE DAYS, WE HAD A SMOKEHOUSE, IF YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF A SMOKEHOUSE."

S.S.: "OH YEAH. . ."

L.S.: "WE HAD SMOKEHOUSES. AND WE WOULD HANG THOSE HAMS. AND LIKE WHEN CHRISTMAS C[A]ME UP, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO BUY [ANY] HAM."

M.M.: "[WE] USE[D] A SALT BOX, TOO."

L.S.: "ALL OF THE PLACES. . . UH, HUH. [WE WOULD] SALT IT DOWN. SOME OF IT [WOULD] BE HANGIN[G] THERE. YOU COULD GO OUT THERE AND CUT [OFF] A PIECE [] AND JUST EAT IT RIGHT THERE. IT [WOULD] BE [] CURED OUT. BUT YOU CAN'T DO THAT NOW-A-DAYS. IT WON'T CURE OUT. LIKE YOU HEAR. . . YOU DON'T HEAR OF IT [ANY] MORE.

"AND MY MOTHER. . . PEOPLE WOULD COME OUT [] [FROM] FORT WORTH AND ALL. THEY WOULD [. .] COME THERE [BE]CAUSE THERE W[ERE] N[O]T [ANY] TELEPHONE[S] THEN. AT LEAST WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A TELEPHONE WAS. IF WE USED THE TELEPHONE, WE HAD TO GO TO THE BOSS PEOPLE'S HOUSE AND USE THE[IR] TELEPHONE AND CALL. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A TELEPHONE WAS [WHEN WE WERE] COMING [GROWING] UP. THAT'S WHY TELEPHONES AND TV'S AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF [] DO[ESN'T] BOTHER ME. [BE]CAUSE I DIDN'T GROW UP WITH [] [THEM]. SO, WHY [A]M [I] GOIN[G] [TO] ACT [LIKE] A FOOL OVER [] [THEM] NOW."

S.S.: "HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE? . . . THROUGH THE MAIL?"

L.S.: "THROUGH THE MAIL. [IT'S THE WAY] WE USED TO GET CLOTHES. MY MAMMA WOULD MAIL, SHE 'MIGHT WOULD' [] ORDER A[N] OLD SPEG. . . I DON'T KNOW IF 'Y'ALL 'S' [YOUR] OLD COMPANY [WAS] NAMED SPIEGEL. WE ALWAYS HAD A CATALOG. WE [] [WOULD] GET IT EVERY MONTH.

"AND WHEN THEY [] [WOULD] GET THROUGH WITH THE CATALOG, IT [WOULD] GO TO THE outhouse. THAT WAS THE TOILET TISSUE. AND SHE WOULD ORDER LIKE SO MANY BLOCKS OF. . . THEY HAD THOSE BIG BUNDLES OF 'OUTING.' SHE D[ID] HER OWN SEWING. [IT WAS THE] SAME THING [A]BOUT DRESSES AND EVERYTHING LIKE THAT. SHE MADE [TH]EM. THAT [] [WAS] HOW WE WOULD SHOP."

S.S.: "H-M-M-M. . ."

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L.S.: "THROUGH THAT, AND LETTERS. [THERE] WOULDN'T BE [ANY] TELEPHONE[S]. [ANY] PHONE CALLING AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF. [THERE WAS] NO ELECTRICITY. LAMP BURNING [WAS DONE WITH] KEROSENE. YOU [WOULD] [] [USE] KEROSENE, NOT [] GAS."

M.M.: "...WOOD STOVES?"

L.S.: "WOOD STOVES. . . ALL OF THAT KIND OF STUFF."

S.S.: "WHEN DID, UH 'Y'ALL'[YOU] GET ELECTRICITY AND OTHER UTILITIES LIKE GAS, [] WATER, AND SEWER?"

M.M.: "ME. WHEN I GOT [ELECTRICITY, IT WAS] [] WHEN I BOUGHT MY OWN PLACE. WHEN I LIVED ON THE WHITE GUY'S PLACE, HIS HOUSE NEVER DID HAVE IT. IT[] [WOULD] USUALLY BE JUST UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH [WHERE IT] DIDN'T RUN TO THE RENT HOUSE. AND THEN ONE OF THE GUY'S PLACE['S] I LIVED ON, HE HAD A. . . HE DIDN'T HAVE ELECTRICITY, HE HAD SOMETHING THEY CALLED A 'CHARGER.' WIND WOULD CHARGE IT [AND IT] WOULD MAKE HIS LIGHTS [WORK]. AND IT WOULD KEEP."

S.S.: "THAT'S A TURBINE."

M.M.: "YEAH. IT COULD CHARGE UP AND IT [WOULD] MAKE LIGHT. IT WASN'T AS BRIGHT AS ELECTRIC LIGHT, BUT IT WAS BRIGHT. AND IF THE WOOD WAS DAMP. YOU DIDN'T EAT RIGHT AWAY, YOU[] [WOULD] HAVE TO WAIT TILL THAT WOOD [WAS] DRY. YOU HA[D] TO BRING IT IN FROM OUTDOORS. . . AND STINGING SCORPIONS WOULD BE IN THAT WOOD. YOU[] [WOULD] PUT IT IN THERE, AND WHEN THE HOUSE GET WARM, THOSE STINGING SCORPIONS WOULD COME OUT OF THAT WOOD, OUT OF THE BARK. AND THEY WOULD BITE YOU--BIG TIME! STING YOU! [. . .] BUT IF YOU [ARE] DOWN, AND YOU [HAVE] NEVER BEEN UP, YOU DON'T []EVER KNOW YOU [ARE] DOWN. YOU KNOW, IF YOU['VE] NEVER BEEN UP, YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE DOWN."

L.S.: "[] [IT] H[AS] N[O]T BEEN TOO AWFUL[LY] LONG [SINCE WE] GOT WATER IN THE CITY."

M.M.: "HOW'D YOU GET KEROSENE?"

L.S.: "...AND WE STILL DON'T HAVE GAS. . . IN THE CITY."

S.S.: "YOU STILL DON'T HAVE GAS?"

L.S.: "WE DON'T HAVE GAS IN THE CITY."

M.M.: "KEROSENE. . . YOU. . ."

L.S.: "WE['VE] GOT BUTANE, YOU KNOW. EACH INDIVIDUAL HA[S] [BUTANE] AT THEIR OWN HOUSE. BUT THE GAS DO[ES] N[O]T COME FROM THE CITY. ELECTRICITY COMES

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L.S.: [CONTINUED] FROM [THEM]. WE [HAVE] GOT THAT. NOW WE'VE HAD THAT ELECTRICITY LONGER THAN WE HAVE HAD ANYTHING."

S.S.: "WHEN DID 'Y'ALL'[YOU] GET ELECTRICITY?"

M.M.: "OH, ELECTRICITY HA[S] BEEN OUT FOR [. . .] ON THIS SIDE OF TOWN FOR QUITE AWHILE. BUT WATER, THEY HAD [] ABOUT A TWO AND A HALF INCH PIPE THAT. . ."

L.S.: "I WAS THE ONE [] [WHO] STARTED [UP] THE WRITING [] FOR THAT . . . AFTER I GOT GROWN."

M.M.: ". . . THAT SERVED EVER[Y]ONE OUT HERE. AND AT THE PEAK OF THE DAY OR AT PRIME TIME IN THE EVENING, YOU [HARDLY] [. . .] HAVE A STREAM OF WATER, JUST A TRICKLE. IT WAS, YOU KNOW, AT NIGHT WHEN EVER[Y]BODY [] [WENT] TO BED. [. . .] YOU KNOW [DURING THE NIGHT] WATER WOULD SHOOT FIVE OR SIX F[EE]T OUT YOUR HYDRANT.

"THEN I GOT ON THE CITY COUNCIL ABOUT FIFTEEN YEAR[S] AGO. AND THEN [] WHAT THEY HAD HERE. . . YOU HAD YOUR GARBAGE, TRASH. AN[D] YOU [] [WOULD] HAVE TO BURN IT. THE CITY PASSED AN ORDINANCE THAT [STATED] YOU COULDN'T BURN THE TRASH, BUT [THERE] WASN'T [ANY]WHERE TO DO IT. AND THEN THEY GOT US A TRASH WAGON, (GARBAGE WAGON), SUPPOSEDLY, TO COME PICK IT UP.

"AND THEN, WE GOT SEWAGE. I WAS ON THE COUNCIL. AND I GUESS [] [DUE TO] MY PRESENCE BEING THERE [], (TH[ERE] [WAS ONLY] ONE BLACK GUY ON THERE), WE WENT TO AUSTIN AND GOT A GRANT, (OR THE CITY PLANNERS AND ALL GOT [] A GRANT [FOR US]), FOR SEWAGE. NOW WE HAVE SEWAGE [AND] WATER. WE HAVE [ALL] THE CITY FACILITIES EXCEPT GAS.

"AND THEN I FOUND OUT WHY WE COULDN'T GET NATURAL GAS. BECAUSE, [] *LONE STAR [GAS COMPANY]*, I THINK, [WOULD INSTALL GAS LINES IF THEY WERE WITHIN] A HUNDRED F[EE]T [IN] EITHER DIRECTION FROM YOUR HOUSE. THAT THEY WOULD PIPE, (IF YOUR HOUSE WAS THERE), THEY [] [WOULD] PIPE TO THIS HOUSE [IF IT WERE WITHIN] A HUNDRED FEET. BUT IF IT [] [WAS] TWO-HUNDRED FEET [FROM THE LINE], YOU [] [WOULD] HAVE TO PAY [FOR INSTALLATION]."

S.S.: "FOR THAT EXTRA HUNDRED. . ."

M.M.: "THAT EXTRA HUNDRED OR [] MORE [WAS MORE] LIKE[LY] THIS FAR OUT. IT [] [WAS] MORE OR LESS LIKE [] THREE OR FOUR-HUNDRED YARDS OR FARTHER. SOME HOUSES ARE FARTHER THAN THREE OR FOUR-HUNDRED YARDS. NOW YOU NEEDN'T HOLD MY FEET SO FAR. BUT I THINK IT'S THAT-A-WAY NOW. IF YOU GET GAS, YOU HAVE TO PAY [THE] EXTRA MILES [OR] WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET IT HERE. THEY'LL GIVE YOU A[N] EXTRA HUNDRED FEET. I THINK I'M RIGHT, OR IT USED TO BE THAT-A-WAY. [] BUT RIGHT DOWN THE STREET COMING OUT THIS-A-WAY, IT'S WIDE, UNTIL
M.M.: [CONTINUED] YOU GET OUT RIGHT [] [ON] THE WEST SIDE OF TOWN IT'S LIKE [] [A] FUNNEL. IT'S WIDE, [. . .] THEN IT COMES OUT. YOU'LL SEE WHEN YOU GO BACK."

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S.S.: "UH HUH."

M.M.: "IT'S A GOOD STREET, BUT I MEAN, [YOU] STILL [. . .] [SHOULDN'T] BE WALKING AT NIGHT. WHEN YOU'RE WALKING [DURING THE DAY] AND THE SUN IS IN THE WEST, [WHETHER] YOU'RE DRIVING [] [OR] YOU'RE WALKING, YOU [] [CAN'T] SEE [ANY]BODY WALKING. [THE SUN IS SO BLINDING THAT] YOU'LL RUN OVER SOMEBODY."

S.S.: "CAN'T SEE?"

M.M.: "YOU KNOW, BUT LIKE I SA[ID], IT'S LIKE A FUNNEL. BUT BROAD STREET IS 'FLXIN' [IS GOING] TO GO EAST TO [LOOP] 360. AND I THINK [] [THERE] MIGHT BE THREE OR FOUR LANES GOING [IN] THERE."

L.S.: "THAT'S GOING EAST OR GOING WEST?"

M.M.: "THAT'S GOING EAST, NOT COMING WEST. YEAH, GOING EAST. AND IT'LL BE CEMENT. COMING HERE [THE ROADS ARE MADE OF] [] CHIPS AND TAR, AND CHIPS OR GRAVEL."

L.S.: "AND THE GAS STOP[S] RIGHT [] [NEAR] ME, RIGHT UP THE HILL."

M.M.: "SO, THE LAST WHITE GUY, THAT'S THE LAST HOUSE. [THAT'S WHERE] THE GAS STOP[S]. AND THEN THEY CHANGED THE RULES."

L.S.: "BUT IT'S CITY LIMITS. . . INSIDE THE CITY LIMITS."

S.S.: "OKAY, UH-H. . ."

M.M.: "YOU KNOW, [] [THERE IS] A PARK. [] [THERE ARE] TWO PARK'S ON THIS SIDE OF TOWN NAMED AFTER ME."

S.S.: "UH HUH. . ."

M.M.: "BUT THEY W[ERE]. . . THEY CAME FIRST . . . [AND TOLD US THAT THEY WOULD] PUT [] A GOOD PARK HERE [FOR US]-- [A] GOOD-LOOKING PARK. PUT YOU SOME CEMENT [I]N ONE. PUT YOU SOME LIGHTS [I]N ONE. ONE WOULD HAVE A BASKETBALL GOAL.' AND THEN, (WHEN THEY PUT THE FIRST ONE IN), THEY HAD THE BASKETBALL GOAL AND THE PICNIC AREAS.

"AND THEN THEY [. . .] [WENT TO] THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN. THEY PUT IN A 'MIDNIGHT PARK' [THAT COST] A MILLION OR MORE DOLLARS. AND THEN, THEY C[A]ME AND PUT [IN] ANOTHER MC CLENDON PARK. AND THEN, RIGHT UNDER YOU[R] NOSE, AT ALLMON PARK, THEY. . . (THAT'S HALF A CENT SALES TAX). BUT I MEAN, THAT STILL [IS] BESIDE[] THE POINT.

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] "THEY PUT [IT TO] YOU [LIKE] THIS, 'SHUT UP! YOU GOT THAT! YOU GOT SOMETHING, NOW YOU SHUT UP! AND WE'LL DO WHAT WE WANT THERE.' YOU KNOW? THAT. . . SOMETIMES. . . IT JUST GRIPES YOU. BUT [] WHAT CAN YOU DO? PLAY IN YOUR OWN YARD. BECAUSE EVER[Y]BODY OUT THIS WAY OWN[S] THE[IR] OWN PROPERTY, SO THEY CAN PLAY IN THEIR OWN YARD[S]. THEY DON'T HAVE TO PLAY IN [ANY] PARK. AND THEN TOO, I'M TOO OLD TO SHOOT A BASKETBALL ANYWAY. HA, HA, HA.

"TH[OSE] [ARE] JUST SOME OF THE LAWS THAT[] [ARE] STILL ENFORCED. YOU KNOW SOMETIMES THE CITY, THE CITIES AND [THE] CITY GOVERNMENTS, THEY STILL SORT[] [OF] LEAN BACK TOWARDS THE FIFTIES. THEY DON'T WANT TO COME ON UP [TO TODAY'S STANDARDS]."

S.S.: "WHO'S EVER IN POWER. . ."

M.M.: "YEAH. YOU KNOW IF YOU GET, SAY. . . YOU'RE IN POWER AND YOU WEREN'T RAISED THAT-A-WAY, YOU MORE OR LESS GO STRAIGHT DOWN THE LINE. BUT IF YOU WERE IN POWER AND YOU WERE RAISED THAT-A-WAY, WELL, YOU SORT[] [OF] BEAR THE WAY YOU W[ERE] RAISED[.] YOU KNOW[?] IF YOU WEREN'T RAISED WHERE EVER[Y]BODY GET[S] TO [BE] EQUAL[], THEN YOU DON'T PUSH IT. AND I CAN DIG IT."

S.S.: "TODAY, IN SOME OF OUR DISCUSSIONS, SPECIFICALLY [WHEN] TALKING ABOUT SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR BLACK FARMERS. UH, ARE WE TALKING . . . IS THIS A GENERAL PATTERN FOR BOTH SHARECROPPING, FARMERS, AND PEOPLE WHO OWN THEIR OWN FARM? WHERE THEY ARE MAKING SURE THAT THEY RAISE CHICKENS, YOU (KNOW. . . AND LIVE STOCK TO SUPPLY THEIR MEAT DIETARY NEEDS IN ADDITION TO BOTH VEGETABLE AND FRUIT?"

M.M.: "WHAT IS THAT? WAY BACK IN FIFTY, THE SHARECROPPERS AND. . ."

S.S.: "YEAH. I WANT TO TAKE IT BACK TO [THE] TEEN'S, TWENTIES, THIRTIES--BEFORE FARMING KIND[] [OF] DIES."

M.M.: "OKAY, YEAH, THE SHARECROPPERS, BACK THEN, MORE OR LESS, YOU GREW EVER[Y]THING THAT SUPPLIED YOUR FAMILY'S NEEDS, EXCEPT [FOR] CLOTHES [AND] FLOUR. [TO GET] MEAL, YOU CHOP[PE]D YOUR CORN AND GR[OU]ND IT. YOUR MEAT-- YOU RAISED YOUR PIG AND YOU KILLED IT. YOUR CHICKENS, YOU HAD TO HAVE TH[EM]. THAT[] [WAS] WHEN YOU [] [WE]RE SPLURGING, WHEN YOU [] [ATE] YOUR CHICKEN. AND BIG-TIME SPLURGING [WAS] WHEN YOU [] [ATE] ONE OF YOUR TURKEYS.

"BUT YOUR BEEF, YOU D[ID] N[O]T PUT [] BEEF IN SALT OR SMOKE IT. BEEF [WAS] SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN FRESH. YOU KNOW, FRESH, RED BEEF. THAT[] [WAS] WHY (BACK THEN), I DON'T THINK THEY KILLED BEEF. SOME FOLKS OWNED THEIR [OWN] BEEF[--]LIKE HER FATHER. HE OWNED HIS OWN BEEF. BUT YOU DIDN'T SMOKE BEEF, OR IF YOU DID, IF YOU SMOKE[D] IT, IT WOULD[] [HAVE] BEEN [FOR BEEF] JERKY. YOU

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] D[ID] N[O]T HAVE [ANY], YOU KNOW T-BONE STEAK [USED] AS JERKY. SO THAT[] [WAS] WHY THEY DIDN'T KILL BEEF.

"THEY KILLED PORK; SMOKED IT AND PUT IT IN SALT. [YOU ATE] CHICKEN, WHEN YOU WERE SPLURGING AND HAVING A GUEST OVER AND [WOULD] HAVE FRIED CHICKEN, OR CHICKEN AND DRESSING. THEN TURKEYS [WERE USED ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS] LIKE THIS TIME OF THE YEAR [DECEMBER]. HAM, YOU COULD HAVE IT ANYTIME [BE]CAUSE IT[] [WAS] YOURS. YEAH, THEY REQUIRED YOU. . .

"AND THEN LIKE YOUR CLOTHES. YOU G[O]T A BIG OL[D] CATALOG, LIKE SHE WAS SAYING--*SPIEGELS, WARDS, [OR] SEARS*. AND WHEN YOU ORDERED YOUR CLOTHES, YOU KNEW YOUR SIZE. YOU [WOULD] TAKE YOUR SIZE AND THEY HAD A PIECE OF MATERIAL IN THERE THAT YOU COULD FEEL. THAT MATERIAL. . . [WAS USED TO] SEE WHAT YOU W[ERE] [GOING TO LOOK LIKE IN A] SUIT, DRESS [OR] PANT. [YOU COULD SEE WHAT YOU] W[ERE] GO[ING] [TO] LOOK LIKE [FROM A] LITTLE OL[D] PIECE OF MATERIAL [THAT WAS] GLUED IN THERE. AND YOU ORDERED [TH]EM. [IN] TWO [OR] THREE WEEKS[,] [OR] A MONTH THEY WOULD RETURN [THEM BY MAIL]. AND HOPEFULLY, YOU MET THE MAILMAN BEFORE [THE] RAIN GOT ON IT [THE PACKAGE]. [SOMETIMES IT WOULD] GET [] WET [BE]CAUSE [] [IT WOULD BE] HANGING OUT[SIDE] THERE [WHILE] YOU [WERE] IN THE FIELD[S]. AND IT[] [WOULD] BE RAINED ON AND [] [THE RAIN WOULD] RUIN IT."

S.S.: "[. . .] WERE THESE ITEMS [] PRODUCED STRICTLY FOR THE 'BLACK' MARKET?"

M.M.: "NOT NECESSARILY, [BE]CAUSE. . ."

S.S.: "WERE THEY AWARE? I MEAN OBVIOUSLY AWARE THAT THEY WERE GETTING A LARGE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION [FROM THE BLACK COMMUNITY]."

M.M.: "YEAH, THEY KNEW THAT MORE OR LESS. THEY[] [WOULD] GET QUITE A FEW BLACKS. BUT [THAT] REMIND[S] ME NOW[,] BACK THEN, THERE W[ERE] A LOT OF POOR WHITE FOLKS, A LOT OF [TH]EM. AND [] [THERE] W[ERE] MORE POOR WHITE FOLKS THEN, THAN [] [THERE] WERE NEGROES. BECAUSE [] [THERE] W[ERE] MORE WHITES. AND THEY LIVED POORER THAN THE NEGRO. BECAUSE YOU COULD JUST TELL WHEN YOU S[AW] A POOR WHITE GUY, [] [THERE WAS A] LOOK[] ABOUT HIM. YOU COULD SEE HIM DOWN HE ROAD AND [YOU WOULD] SAY, 'AW, MAN, THAT GUY'S POOR. LET'S HELP HIM.' [] [THERE WAS] JUST SOMETHING [] ABOUT IT.

"BUT NO. . . IT [CATALOG ORDERING] WASN'T [STRICTLY] JUST FOR [] BLACKS. IT WAS FOR EVER[Y]BODY. BUT THAT[] [WAS] THE WAY I, AND THE PEOPLE I KNEW, ORDERED THEIR CLOTHES. THAT THEY WANTED [TO] [BE]CAUSE YOU JUST DIDN'T GO IN THIS ONE DRY GOODS STORE IN MANSFIELD, '*MANDELSTEP'S AND MEDWELL'S [MANDELSTAMN'S]*, AND TRY ON [THEIR CLOTHES]. [] [MISTER.] *MEDWELL*[] WAS FROM JERUSALEM. HE WAS A JEW."

S.S.: "JERUSALEM? . . . WHERE? HE WAS JEWISH?"

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M.M.: "YEAH HE WAS A JEW. AND HE HAD A[N] ACCENT. AND HE WOULD TELL YOU 'NAW, DON'T PUT THAT [COAT] ON,' HE [] [WOULDN'T] WANT YOU TO PUT THAT [COAT] ON. HE WOULD TAKE HIS COAT AND PUT IT ON YOUR BACK--YOU KNOW, PRESS IT UP AGAINST YOUR BACK. AND IF HE DID PUT IT ON YOU, AND IT WAS TOO LARGE. AND [IF] THAT[] [WAS] WHAT HE WANTED YOU TO HAVE, HE WOULD TIGHTEN IT UP AT THE BACK, AND LET YOU LOOK IN THE MIRROR [] [AT] THE FRONT. AND TELL YOU 'THAT IS...'"

L.S.: "'THAT FIT YOU GOOD,' HE SAYS AS HE'S HOLDING IT IN THE BACK."

M.M.: "YEAH. IT'S ALL WRINKLED UP, FOLDED UP IN THE BACK. AND YOU[] [WOULD] BUY IT. [HE WOULD TELL YOU] 'DON'T BRING IT BACK EITHER. WHEN YOU BUY IT, IT'S YOURS.'"

L.S.: "HA, HA, HA. THAT'S TRUE... 'YOU CAN'T COME BACK.'"

M.M.: "'DON'T COME BACK.' I MEAN IF YOU W[ERE] WEAK ENOUGH TO LET HIM, YOU KNOW, FOLD THAT IN THE BACK, (AND HE'D HUG YOU AND HOLD IT IN THE BACK IN THERE). AND HE'D HAVE IT FITTING JUST LIKE THIS SHIRT [FITS] ON ME. AND YOU[] [WOULD] THINK YOU HAD YOU A [GOOD]-FITTING SUIT, BUT IT WOULD BE TOO LARGE [WHEN] YOU TR[IED] THE COAT ON."

"BUT THE PANTS... YOU JUST DIDN'T SLIP OUT[] [OF] YOUR PANTS AND GET IN THEM [] UNLESS YOU [WERE GOING TO] BUY [TH]EM. THAT WAS A NO-NO. SHOES... YOU KNOW, THAT[] [WAS] JUST [] [THE SAME AS] NOW. [LIKE WHEN] BUYING A PAIR OF SOCKS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY ON A PAIR OF SOCKS, YOU KNOW. YOU JUST PRESUME THAT'S [THE SIZE] YOU [ARE] GOIN[G] [TO] WEAR. AND YOU JUST TAKE [TH]EM OUT WITH YOU."

L.S.: "YOU KN[E]W YOUR SIZE..."

M.M.: "YEAH. [] THAT[] [WAS] THE WAY YOU DID YOUR CLOTHES BACK THEN. YOU JUST TAKE... SHOES [WERE THE] SAME WAY. YOU DIDN'T PUT YOUR F[EE]T IN ANOTHER PAIR OF SHOES. AND [IF] YOU ASK[ED] WHY, HE [WOULD] SAY, 'WELL, I MIGHT WANT TO BUY THAT PAIR OF SHOES AND TRY [] [THEM] ON, AND I DON'T WANT MY F[EE]T IN THERE WHERE YOU HAD YOUR F[EE]T IN THERE.' YOU KNOW--JUST THAT BLUNT! AND WELL, IF YOU DIDN'T BUY [] [THEM] FROM HIM AND [] [WENT] NEXT DOOR [] [TO] BUY [] [THEM], IT[] [WOULD] BE THE SAME WAY. SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO AHEAD AND ACCEPT IT FROM HIM."

S.S.: "GOING BACK TO THE ONE DAY TRIP TO FORT WORTH, WERE THERE MANY PEOPLE WHO WOULD GO TO FORT WORTH? WOULD THEY SHOP FOR THEIR FRIENDS? SAY IF YOU WERE A FARMER, ON WHAT OCCASION [] [WOULD] YOU GO TO FORT WORTH?"

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M.M.: "WELL NOW, MORE OR LESS, I DON'T REALLY KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT THAT. [BE]CAUSE, LIKE I SA[ID], I WAS A KID AND I DIDN'T GET TO GO TO FORT WORTH ANY WAY."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "WELL, MOST OF THE TIME, (LIKE WHEN MY DAD AND THEM WOULD GO), IT WOULD BE LIKE A 'WAGON PULL'. [WAGON TRAIN]."

S.S.: "RIGHT."

L.S.: "THEY[] [WOULD] GO AND THEY[] [WOULD] SHOP FOR THEMSELVES, EACH ONE. AND THEY [. . .] KN[E]W THEY [WERE] GOIN[G] [TO] BE GONE FOR A DAY OR SO [BE]CAUSE THAT [. . .] WAS A LONG WAY[]. AND IT WOULD TAKE [TH]EM A DAY TO GO, AND TAKE [TH]EM A DAY TO COME BACK. AND THEY[] [WOULD] DO THEIR SHOPPING, (YOU KNOW), LIKE [AT] NIGHT[], I GUESS, WHEN THEY GET THERE.

"[BACK] THEN, YOU COULD JUST STOP ANYWHERE AND STAY [ON THE ROAD]. IT WASN'T LIKE IT IS NOW. YOU COULD JUST, YOU KNOW, LAY ANYWHERE. LIKE I KNOW YOU'VE SEEN THESE WAGONS AND THINGS. THE[] 'WAGON TRAILS' [TRAINS] AND THINGS. AND THEY STOP[PED] WHEREVER THEY G[O]T TIRED. AND THEY[] [WOULD] CARRY THEIR OWN WATER. THEY[] [WOULD] CARRY THEIR OWN FOOD--STUFF LIKE THAT. IT[] [WOULD BE] JUST [] THE SAME AS [IF] [] THEY W[ERE] GOING ON A VACATION. AND YEAH, [] [THERE] WOULD BE FRIENDS WITH [TH]EM. SOMETIMES [. . .] MORE THAN ONE WAGON WOULD GO.

"AND IT WAS FUN TO THEM [BE]CAUSE THAT[] [WAS] ALL THEY KNEW BACK IN THOSE DAYS. AND THEN YOU KNOW, WHEN MY DADDY WOULD TELL ME ABOUT IT, (TELL US ABOUT IT). NOW I TOLD YOU [. . .] [WE WERE] A BIG FAMILY [. . .]"

S.S.: "WAS THERE AN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT IN FORT WORTH? SOMETHING LIKE 'DEEP ELLUM.' [THE HISTORIC DISTRICT IN DALLAS FORMERLY KNOWN FOR ITS 'BLACK' BLUES, JAZZ MUSIC AND CLUBS]--OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?"

M.M.: "YEAH, THEY HAD A LOT OF ENTERTAINMENT."

L.S.: "PLENTY. . ."

M.M.: "THEY [. . .] WOULD HAVE DANCES IN RESIDENCE[S], YOU KNOW. IN SOMEONE'S HOME, OR THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE NIGHTCLUBS. . ."

L.S.: ". . . MOSTLY PARTIES."

M.M.: "THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE LADIES OF THE NIGHT. THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE *RINGLING BROTHERS-BARNUM AND BAILEY [CIRCUS]*. THAT[] [WAS] ONCE A YEAR. YOU KNOW?"

L.S.: "WE DIDN'T WANT TO MISS THAT. . . ME AND MY BROTHERS."

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M.M.: "YEAH. AND THEY WOULD HAVE LOTS OF ACTIVITIES. THEY[] [WOULD] HAVE A ZOO. YOU[] [WOULD] GO TO THE ZOO ONCE A YEAR [ON] THE NINETEENTH OF JUNE. [*'JUNE TEENTH' IS THE DATE BLACK TEXANS CHOSE TO ANNUALLY CELEBRATE THE EMANCIPATION.*]

"AND LET'S SEE, SOMETHING ELSE THEY HAD THEN. . . BUT WELL, USUALLY WHEN YOU [] [WENT], (LIKE I WAS SAYIN[G]), IF YOU [*WHITES*] JUST LOOKED AT ME [AND SAW] I [] [WAS] BLACK, *YOU [WOULD] JUST PRESUME IN YOUR MIND, 'NOW WELL, HE'S POOR. HE AIN'T GOT NOTHING.'*

"BUT IF I LOOKED AT *YOU [WHITES]* AND *YOU* HAD MONEY, WELL, YOU COULD TELL IT. BUT IF *YOU W[ERE]* [AS] POOR AS I AM, YOU COULD SEE YOU AS FAR AS YOUR EYES COULD SEE. AND YOU COULD TELL THAT *YOU [A POOR WHITE]* DIDN'T HAVE [ANY]THING. AND *YOU* WOULD BE THE VERY ONE I [] [WOULD] HAVE TO WATCH. BECAUSE *YOU* WOULD BE THE HARDEST ONE TO TRY TO, YOU KNOW. . . '*BE THE MAN AT THE BIG HOUSE.*'

"BUT [IF] *YOU* LIVED IN A SMALLER HOUSE--HAD TO COME THROUGH MY YARD TO GET TO YOUR HOUSE. YEAH, THAT[] [WAS] WHY *YOU* WOULD BE SO ROUGH BACK THEN IN THE FIFTIES. AND THEN, MOST WH[ITES]. . . NOW, MOST OF THOSE GUYS BACK IN THE FIFTIES AND FORTIES, THEY WERE GROWN, MY AGE, THEN. . . WELL, THEY '*ALL DONE DECEASED.*' [THEY HAVE ALL DIED]. AND THEY [HAVE] '*GONE ON*' [DIED, GONE TO MEET THEIR MAKER]. AND THEIR CHILDREN. . ."

S.S.: "CARRIED ON. . ."

M.M.: ". . . [THE WHITES] THAT WENT TO SCHOOL WITH MY KIDS SAW THAT BLACKS WEREN'T AS BAD AS THEIR '*FOREPARENTS*' HAD PRETENDED THAT THEY WERE. THAT THEY WERE HUMAN BEINGS AND THE[IR] BLOOD WAS RED. THEY'RE A LITTLE BIT BETTER NOW. AND THAT'S WHY IT'S A LITTLE BIT BETTER NOW.

"BUT THERE[] [ARE] STILL SOME [OF THEM] THAT REMEMBER THE[IR] GRANDPARENTS. WHAT THE[IR] GRANDPARENTS SAID. AND THEY DIDN'T FORGET IT. SOMETIMES [] THEY [WERE] WORKING AT THE BIGGER HOUSE[S] WITH THE RAZOR WIRE AROUND IT. BUT THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS."

S.S.: "H-M-M-M. . . WELL, I LIVED IN GEORGIA, SO I. . ."

M.M.: "IT'S B-A-D. AW, IT WAS BAD THEN AND DOUBLE BAD NOW IN GEORGIA."

L.S.: "WERE YOU BORN HERE?"

S.S.: "I WAS BORN IN CALIFORNIA. THE WHOLE SOUTHERN EXPERIENCE IS DIFFERENT FOR ME."

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M.M.: "BUT [] LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT CALIFORNIA TOO. CALIFORNIA WAS BAD, BUDDY..."

S.S.: "OH-H, YEAH. . . OH YEAH."

M.M.: "... CALIFORNIA WAS JUST AS BAD AS LOUISIANA OR KENTUCKY. RIGHT NOW. THINGS ARE JUST WIDE OPEN OUT THERE. WIDE OPEN."

S.S.: "YEAH. RIGHT NOW. [THERE IS] A VERY DEFINITE RESURGENCE OF TRADITIONAL VALUES."

M.M.: "I [] [WOULD] RATHER FOR YOU [TO] BE FROM TENNESSEE, THAN [TO] BE FROM CALIFORNIA."

L.S.: "WE'VE HAD SOME GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES."

S.S.: "[. . .] I HAVE A FINAL QUESTION IN HERE. I SA[ID] SOMETIMES PEOPLE USE HUMOR TO DEAL WITH INTOLERABLE CONDITIONS THAT THEY ARE FORCED TO ENDURE. DO YOU HAVE ANY EXAMPLES OF THAT?"

M.M.: "... I DON'T GUESS I GOT [UNDERSTOOD] THE QUESTION."

S.S.: "SOME PEOPLE USE HUMOR TO DEAL WITH CONDITIONS THAT ARE INTOLERABLE. AND I WANTED TO ASK IF YOU COULD SHARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THAT?"

M.M.: "FOR THE HUMOR?"

S.S.: "YEAH. . ."

M.M.: "LIKE UH. . . NOW IF I'M GETTIN[G] THE DEFINITION OF 'FOR HUMOR,' THAT MEANS IF I'M IN A BAD HUMOR?" [IF] THAT AIN'T WHAT IT MEAN[S]. . . WELL, TELL ME WHAT [YOU] MEAN [] AND I'LL ANSWER IT."

S.S.: "N-O-O. I MEAN IF YOU WILL USE A JOKE TO DEAL WITH SOMETHING [] THAT'S PAINFUL OR HUMILIATING."

M.M.: "YEAH. OH YEAH. THAT'S ME. THAT'S NINETY PERCENT OF MY LINE RIGHT NOW. YOU DO SOMETHING TO ME, (WELL EVEN IT HURTS MY FEELINGS SO BAD I COULD CRY), BUT I'LL MAKE A JOKE OUT OF IT. YOU KNOW, I'LL JUST GO AND MAKE A JOKE OUT OF IT AND SAY, 'THAT POOR BOY SURE NEED[S] SOMEONE TO TEACH HIM A LESSON.' I'LL MAKE A JOKE OUT OF IT. YEAH. [] I'LL USE THAT NOW, RIGHT NOW."

"YOU KNOW I WORK IN A PUBLIC PLACE. AND YOU[] [WOULD] BE SURPRISED HOW MANY TIMES A DAY MY FEELINGS GET HURT. BUT YOU DON'T LEAVE HOME GOING TO WORK WITH YOUR FEELINGS ON THE ENDS OF YOUR FINGERS EITHER. YOU KNOW. YOU DON'T TAKE YOUR FEELING'S TO WORK [WITH] YOU. BUT SOMETIMES, YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE WORKING AT A COMPANY AND THEY SAY, 'YOU BE NICE TO YOUR

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] CUSTOMERS,' OR WHATEVER. YOU['VE] GOT[] [TO] BE THAT. YOU DO THAT BECAUSE SOMEBODY[] [WILL] GET YOU[R] JOB. AND YOU [WILL] JUST BE NICE, SMILE, AND GO ON. BUT THERE[] [ARE] A LOT[] [OF] TIMES THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO SMILE. . . YOU D[O] N[O]T MAKE JOKES.

"JUST THE OTHER DAY, A LADY ASK[ED] ME []. . . (I'M A COOK). AND SHE ASK[ED] ME, [] 'DO YOU KNOW YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO PUT YOUR HANDS IN THAT?' (YOU KNOW, I WAS MAKIN[G] A PIE). [SHE SAID], 'YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO PUT YOUR HAND'S [IN THAT PIE].' (SHE WHISPERED LIKE [] [THERE] WAS SOMEONE AROUND). . .

"I TOLD HER, 'TALK LOUD. AIN'T NOBODY HERE LISTENING!'

"[I SAID], 'IF IT IS[N'T], (I MEAN THAT'S MY JOB), WHAT IS IT?'

"[SHE SAID] 'YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO THAT!'

"I TOLD HER, YOU KNOW, 'HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET IT IN THERE?' YOU KNOW. 'THIS IS THE ONLIEST WAY I KNOW TO USE MY HANDS. THAT'S THE ONLIEST TWO [HANDS] I GOT. YOU [ARE] SUPPOSED TO USE YOUR HANDS.'

"[SHE SAID], '[] [AREN'T] YOU SUPPOSED TO USE YOUR GLOVES?'

"I SAID, 'USE GLOVES TO MAKE A PIE?' (AND I'M MAKING OVER A HUNDRED OF [TH]EM). 'USE GLOVES OR A SPOON? YOU DON'T MAKE. . . YOU DON'T FILL PIES WITH [] [A] SPOON WHEN YOU['VE] GOT OVER A HUNDRED TO MAKE.'

"SHE SA[ID], 'WELL I'M FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT. AND I'M GOIN[G] [TO] DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!'

"I SAID, 'WELL THAT'S GOOD. THEN. I WON'T HAVE TO WORK. YOU JUST DO THAT.'

"BUT SHE WASN'T. . . SHE WAS J[U]ST, YOU KNOW. I MADE A JOKE OUT OF IT. BUT SHE WAS SERIOUS. SHE WAS REALLY. . . SHE DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO USE YOUR HANDS TO [. .] MAKE A PIE. TO PUT MERINGUE ON A PIE. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN DO IT. YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT PIE AND TURN IT UP, SPIN IT AROUND, AND GET IT BACK UP. YOU['VE] GOT TO KEEP IT UPRIGHT. SO I MADE A JOKE OUT OF IT. BUT IT SORT[] [OF] HURT MY FEELINGS."

L.S.: "YOU KNOW I WORKED FOR THE PUBLIC, TOO, FOR A GOOD WHILE. AND CUSTOMERS WOULD COME IN, AND JUST LIKE HE SAID, 'YOU CAN'T GO [A]ROUND WITH YOUR FEELINGS IN YOUR HAND.' AND YOU'RE WORKING. AND SAY I WAS. . . IF THEY C[A]ME THROUGH THE DOOR, AND THEY ALWAYS SAY 'THE CUSTOMERS IS RIGHT AND YOU['RE] WRONG.' HA, HA, HA. . . AND THEY ALWAYS SAY THAT IF SOMETHING GO[ES] WRONG, WELL, 'I'M RIGHT AND YOU'RE WRONG, [BE]CAUSE I'M THE CUSTOMER.' "

S.S.: "THAT'S RIGHT."

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L.S.: "SO YOU JUST. . . YOU KNOW. . . A LOT OF TIMES [YOU] HAVE TO TAKE IT. THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY. AND I SAY IF YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN, YOU'LL BE THINKING OF A WAY. AND THEN IF YOU BRING UP THE LORD, JUST MENTION THE LORD TO SOME OF [TH]EM, IT[] [WOULD] SCARE [TH]EM. AND THEN THEY [WOULD SAY], 'WELL, I'M SORRY I EVEN SAID THAT' AND 'YOU MUST GO TO CHURCH.' AND SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW? BUT THERE IS A WAY THAT, YOU KNOW, YOU CAN HANDLE THINGS LIKE THAT--NOT EVEN WITH A FIGHT. . . YOU CAN JUST TURN [TH]EM OFF."

S.S.: "ARE THERE OTHER EXAMPLES [] THAT YOU HAVE LIVED, [. . .] [DURING] THE PERIODS THAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT, WHERE THAT WAS HAPPENING--ESPECIALLY THEN?"

L.S.: "YEAH, LIKE THE ONE [WHO] C[A]ME IN [AND] SA[ID], 'WELL, I TRIED TO DO THIS . . . AND I SAY 'WELL, NOW I['VE] BEEN DEALING WITH YOU SUCH AND SUCH A LONG. . . I KNOW YOU BY NOW. . . AND WE['RE] GOIN[G] [TO] SETTLE IT.' YOU KNOW? NOT IN [] [AN] UGLY WAY. SO WE CAN [] GET IT SETTLED."

"MOST OF THE TIME, IF YOU WORK WITH A PERSON A LONG TIME IN A BUSINESS ANYWHERE, (JUST LIKE BROTHER MAC JUST GOT THROUGH [SAYING]), YOU ALMOST KNOW [ALL] THE CUSTOMERS WHEN THEY COME IN THROUGH THE DOOR. AND YOU ALMOST KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM, IF YOU [HAVE] WORK[ED] THERE A LONG TIME . . . YOU ALMOST KNOW HOW TO TREAT [TH]EM."

M.M.: "YOU KNOW, THERE [] [ARE] SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE, SOME OF THE WHITES, (THAT WAS BACK IN THE FORTIES [AND] FIFTIES), . . . THEY AREN'T ALL DEAD. THEY'RE IN YOUR CONVALESCENT HOMES AND YOUR REST HOMES. [DURING THE] FORTIES AND FIFTIES, YOU COULD NOT GO THROUGH THEIR FRONT DOOR OR SIT ON THEIR FRONT PORCH."

"BUT TODAY. I'M AN ORDERLY. I'M TAKING THAT SISTER TO THE BED PAN, TO THE SHOWER, [AND] TURNING HER OVER. AND SHE'S ENJOYING IT, AND LIKING IT. THAT'S HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED. BACK IN THE FORTIES AND FIFTIES, I [] [WOULD] WALK IN[TO] A WHITE LADY'S BEDROOM, (I DIDN'T DO THAT), THAT[] [WAS]. . . YOU DIDN'T DO THAT. BUT TODAY, THEY'LL RING THAT BUTTON AND THAT LITTLE RED LIGHT[] [WI]LL BE [ON] OUT THERE. AND THEY [WILL] WANT YOU TO COME IN AND GET [TH]EM AND HELP [TH]EM [GET] ON THAT [BED] PAN [AND] CLEAN [TH]EM. AND SOME OF THEM, [] THEY'RE NOT GRATEFUL ENOUGH RIGHT NOW TO SAY THANK YOU. AND [THEY] CAN'T TURN OVER [BY THEMSELVES]."

"BUT DO YOU KNOW? THINGS NOW [] [ARE] MUCH BETTER. BUT THAT[] [IS] NOT AN UPGRADE FOR ME--TO TURN YOU OVER AND PUT YOU ON A BED PAN. THAT[] [IS] A DOWN GRADE. THAT[] [IS] PUTTING ME DOWN EVEN LOWER, YOU KNOW. . . SO IT'S JUST. . . IT'S STILL SIX IN ONE HAND AND HALF A DOZEN IN THE OTHER. A 'TWO' DEAL. IT'S. . . ."

"BUT MANSFIELD HAS BEEN REALLY GOOD TO ME. REALLY GOOD. [. . .] I HAVE ADVANCED FROM WAY BACK. AND IT'S JUST BECAUSE [. . .] [THEY WERE] THE PEOPLE

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] THAT MADE THE *JIM CROW LAWS*. AND [THEY WERE] THE ONE'S THAT ENFORCED [] [THE LAWS THAT] MADE ME [*STAY DOWN*] AND ADVANCE.

“SO I [] [WOULD] WORK BESIDE YOU. AND YOU [ARE] GETTING BIG DEALS [] [WHILE] I'M GETTING MINIMUM WAGES. AND MINE [MONEY] IS GOING FURTHER. AND THAT MEANS THAT I'M EATING FOOD FROM THE VINES THAT I DIDN'T RAISE, DRINKING WATER FROM THE WELLS I DIDN'T DIG. SEE, THAT[] [WAS] GOING A LONG WAY. AND I'M TAKING TH[OSE] MINIMUM WAGES, GIVING A SHARE BACK TO THE LORD--LIKE *HE* SAID.

“AND IT GOES A LONG WAY. I'M SURE SOME OF THE WHITES DO[] THAT TOO. BUT MY DOLLAR CAN GO AS FAR OR FURTHER. BECAUSE WHERE HE HA[S] TO GO TO *STEAK AND ALE'S* [] [TO] EAT[--]TO FILL UP, I CAN GO DOWN TO *BEEFERS* FOR NINETY-NINE CENTS [AND] BUDDY, [] I'M JUST AS FULL AS YOU ARE. AND BELCH A LOT LOUDER. B-H-A,-HA,-HA. . .BIG TIME. NOW THAT DOESN'T MAKE A LOT OF SENSE DOES IT?”

S.S.: “YEAH. IT DOES. . .”

M.M.: “YEAH. . .”

S.S.: “THAT'S. . .”

M.M.: “YOU'RE SMILING, BUT I'M FOR REAL [TELLING THE TRUTH]. YOU KNOW I'M FOR REAL DON'T YOU?”

S.S.: “I KNOW YOU ARE. HA, HA, HA, HA. I'M GOING [TO]. . .GEE, MY MAMMA SHOULD BE HERE NOW. HA, HA, HA, HA. [] ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC OTHER ITEMS THAT BOTH OF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?”

M.M.: “YEAH, I WOULD [. .] LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR TAKING YOUR TIME.”

S.S.: “OH! . . .MY. . .”

M.M.: “. . .FOR DOING THIS. AND [THANK] YOUR STAFF, OR WHOEVER'S OVER IT IN YOUR STAFF. [. .] I WANT TO THANK YOU. . .”

S.S.: “WELL, THANK YOU. . .”

M.M.: “. . .AND I WANT TO LET YOU AND WHO[M]EVER SEES THIS TAPE [TO] KNOW THERE'S NOT ANY ANIMOSITY FROM ME. BECAUSE I'M HAVING THE '*BIGGEST SMILES*' [*BEST TIME*] THAT I [HA]VE EVER HAD. . .LIVING GOOD. AND THEN, LIKE I SA[ID], [] I WAS DOWN AND I DIDN'T KNOW IT. AND IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN UP, YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE DOWN. YOU THINK THAT'S THE WAY THINGS [ARE] SUPPOSED TO BE.

M.M.: [CONTINUED] “AND. . .*UNCLE REMUS* [FROM THE BOOK, *THE TALES OF UNCLE REMUS*, BY JULIUS LESTER] NEVER DID KNOW HE WAS ON A PLANTATION. IT WAS SO LARGE HE NEVER DID KNOW THAT IF YOU [] [WENT] OUTSIDE THE GATE, YOU[]

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M.M.: [CONTINUED] [WOULD] BE IN ANOTHER WORLD. HE THOUGHT HE WAS RIGHT THERE UNTIL A LITTLE BIRD LIT [ALIGHTED] ON HIS SHOULDER AND TOLD HIM--THE BLUEBIRD. AND HE MADE A SONG OF IT. YOU NEVER HEARD OF *UNCLE REMUS* HAVE YOU?"

S.S.: "NO. . . WHERE'S HE FROM. . .?"

M.M.: "SEE THEY. . . BACK THEN, THOSE GUYS FROM *JIM CROW*, THEY WOULD WANT TO GIVE YOU A NAME. WANTED TO. . . LIKE THE MAN WAS NAMED 'WILLIE.' THE LADY IN THERE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW 'HAPPY JACK' WASN'T HIS NAME. SHE THOUGHT THAT WAS HIS NAME, AND JUST KEPT SAYIN[G] IT. BUT HIS NAME WAS 'WILLIE,' --WR[ITTEN] ON IT JUST AS BIG. SHE THOUGHT HIS NAME WAS 'HAPPY JACK.' SEE, THE JOKE WAS ON HER. IT WASN'T ON 'HAPPY JACK.' HE'S LAYING THERE SMILING. . . .

"SHE JUST G[A]VE HIM THAT NAME. SHE LEFT. THE MAN DIED. SHE [WAS] THINKING HE WAS HARD OF HEARING. SHE[] [WAS] HOLLERIN[G] AT HIM, 'H-A-P-P-Y- J-A-C-K,' 'HAPPY JACK.' [SHE] DIDN'T KNOW WHO HE [REALLY] WAS. [IF] SHE[] [HAD] CALLED HIM 'WILLIE.' HE[] [WOULD] ANSWER JUST [. . .] [AS IF] HE DIDN'T KNOW IT. . . SO I THANK YOU."

S.S.: "THANK YOU."

L.S.: "I WOULD LIKE TO SAY I APPRECIATE YOUR QUESTIONS AND ALL. AND I GOT TO DISCUSS A LOT OF STUFF [] [WITH] YOU. AND I IMAGINE *TO YOU*, [REFERRING TO FELIX WONG, THE CITY PLANNER SEATED IN THE AUDIENCE], [BE]CAUSE HE'S NEW HERE IN MANSFIELD. HUH?"

S.S.: "WE[] [WOULD] ALWAYS BE [CONSIDERED] NEW IN MANSFIELD, EVEN IF WE LIVED HERE. . ."

L.S.: "I KNOW YOU'VE HEARD A LOT OF STUFF THAT YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT WOULD[] [HAVE] HAPPENED IN MANSFIELD. [THINGS] THAT WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT SUCH AS, YOU KNOW--USING THE WHITE FUNERAL HOME. AND I DON'T KNOW IF YOU W[ERE] IN HERE OR NOT, WHEN WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE HEARSE. W[ERE] YOU HERE?"

M.M.: "I [HA]VE TOLD *HIM*, [FELIX], RIGHT AT THE CITY COUNCIL."

L.S.: "YEAH. WE USED TO USE THE WHITE FUNERAL HOME. AND HOW, [. . .] WHEN TIME C[A]ME FOR THEM TO BURY THE BLACKS, THEY WOULD [], (INSTEAD OF USING A HEARSE), [. . .] USE A VAN WITH HALF [OF] THE CASKET HANGIN[G] OUT. NOW I KNOW THESE YOUNG ONES DON'T REMEMBER THAT. *LENA* [BRAZELL] DO[ES] N[O]T REMEMBER THAT[--]ALL THAT STUFF. . ."

M.M.: "THEY PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF IT."

L.S.: "HUH? . . . PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF IT."

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M.M.: "THEY DIDN'T EMBALM YOU THEN. . ."

L.S.: "... AND THE NAME WAS STILL. . .IT WAS 'ERNIE BLESSING.' SO, THAT MEANS THAT THE NAME GOES ON WITH THE FUNERAL HOME IN MANSFIELD. BUT WE HAVE CHANGED. THAT [] [IS], [] [TIMES ARE] CHANGING []. SO, WE STILL DON'T HAVE FUNERAL HOMES HERE, BUT WE HAVE GOOD FUNERAL HOMES IN FORT WORTH."

M.M.: "WE HAVEN'T CHANGED THAT MUCH. IF I W[ERE] TO EXPIRE AND YOU ASK[ED] HIM [ERNIE BLESSING] TO COME PICK MY BODY UP, HE WOULD BE, HE WOULD ADVISE YOU TO CALL SPENCER['S], OR WHATEVER. OR IF HE WOULDN'T, I GOT MY FIRST BLACK TO 'SEE IN' [LOOK INTO] HIS FUNERAL HOME. [] HE [] [WOULD] WANT YOU TO HURRY UP. HE WOULDN'T WANT TO EMBALM YOU."

L.S.: "BUT IT WAS [BECAUSE] SOME OF THE PEOPLE W[ERE] THINKING THAT [] ALL YOU [COULD DO], YOU KNOW, [. .] WAS JUST CALL HIM. AND HE [] [WOULD] COME OUT HERE WITH THAT LITTLE. . .AND IT WASN'T. . .WE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER HE WAS GOIN[G] [TO] MAKE IT TO THE CHURCH OR NOT. IT [THE VAN] WAS RUNNING SO BAD [. .] IN THOSE DAYS . . .THAT'S WHAT WE'VE COME THROUGH."

S.S.: "I WANTED TO ASK PASTOR EVANS PROBABLY. . .JUST TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH HERE."

L.S.: "SURE. HE CAN TAKE MY SEAT."

S.S.: "AND WE CAN BREAK FOR LIKE THREE.[MINUTES] . . ."

S.S.: "WHAT I [] [WOULD] LIKE TO. . .WE'LL ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTIONS, [] [LIKE] GIVE YOUR NAME, PLACE, [AND] DATE OF YOUR BIRTH. AND TELL US HOW LONG YOU'VE LIVED HERE. AND [] THEN GIVE US SOMETHING, SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF *BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH*."

"[] I THINK SOME OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS WE SAW, ([AND] ALSO OF [] THE [] LARGE BAPTISMS IN *WALNUT CREEK*), [] [ARE] IMPORTANT INFORMATION. AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THE PAST PASTORS AND LEADERS FROM THIS CONGREGATION."

MICHAEL EVANS, (M.E.), "ALRIGHT. *MY NAME IS MICHAEL EVANS* AND I'M ORIGINALLY FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS. I WAS BORN IN 1966. I CAME TO *BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH* ORIGINALLY IN 1989. I BEGAN SERVING AS PASTOR IN [19]91 AND I [HA]VE ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED, IF YOU WILL, WITH THE HISTORY OF *BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH* AND THE PEOPLE WHO MADE UP THAT HISTORY. THEREFORE, I [HA]VE ASKED A LOT OF QUESTION'S ABOUT OUR HISTORY. I THINK THAT WHEN YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE THAT YOU'VE BEEN CALLED TO SERVE, IT GIVES YOU A GOOD [. .] WINDOW TO LOOK THROUGH. IT GIVES YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO KIND OF FRAME YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE."

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] "OUR CHURCH WAS FOUNDED IN 1870, (UNDER WHAT SISTER BRISCOE, AS SHE MENTIONED EARLIER IN THE DAY), UNDER A *BRUSH ARBOR*. WHICH IS JUST THAT. IT'S [] REALLY LIKE A BIG SHADE--HUT-TYPE THING. AND THE PEOPLE WOULD MEET THERE.

"ORIGINALLY THE CHURCH, (AND FOR QUITE A FEW YEARS, WELL INTO THE 1930'S), THE CHURCH ONLY MET TWICE A MONTH. AND I'M THINKING IT WAS THE FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS [OF THE MONTH], IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN. AND [] AT THE TIME OF COURSE, THE CHURCH WAS [. .] DEFINITELY THE GATHERING PLACE.

"ONE THING THAT WAS DISCOVERED, I THINK TODAY, IS THE FACT THAT QUITE A FEW OF THE MEMBERSHIP LIVED ON THESE. . . AND OF COURSE BEING A CITY BOY, THEY LIVED ON THESE 'H-U-G-E' PIECES OF LAND. AND WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY CAME FOR THEM TO GATHER TOGETHER. . . I MEAN YOU SAW, GOSH, WELL OVER A HUNDRED AND SOME ODD PEOPLE [WHO] WOULD GATHER TOGETHER FOR SERVICE. TH[AT] WAS THEN AND EVEN NOW, ONE OF THE LARGEST BLACK CHURCHES IN THE AREA.

"YOU SEE. RIGHT NOW [PROBABLY] EVEN THE LARGEST []. THE LARGEST CHURCH IN THIS IMMEDIATE AREA NOW IS MAYBE ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE MILES FROM US. AND THAT'S *MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH* IN ARLINGTON. [. .] IT WAS SMALLER THAN *BETHLEHEM*. *BETHLEHEM* SERVED AS PRETTY MUCH THE CHURCH THAT FED OTHER CHURCHES [. .] [[FROM] THE FORT WORTH AREA.

"YOU MENTIONED THAT CONNECTION. QUITE A FEW OF THE PASTORS WHO SERVED HERE AT THE *BETHLEHEM CHURCH* LIVED IN FORT WORTH, IF YOU WOULD. AND WHEN WE BECAME, LET'S SAY, A FULL-TIME CHURCH, (MEETING EVERY SUNDAY IN THE MONTH), THAT WAS UNDER *REVEREND C. C. CARSON*.

"HE LATER ON WENT TO PASTOR THE *MT. CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH* IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS ON VERBENA STREET. HE [ALSO] SERVED LATER [] AS WHAT WE CALL OUR '*DISTRICT MODERATOR*,' WHERE HE SERVED OVER THIRTY-SOME-ODD CHURCHES. AND HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL, AGAIN, IN SEEING TO IT THAT CHURCH SERVICE WENT ON EVERY SUNDAY. AND HE WAS HERE FOR SOME NINE YEARS. AND THAT WAS FROM THE THIRTIES INTO THE FORTIES.

"AND IT WAS [SOMETIME] IN [] THE FORTIES THAT THE MAN, (WHO BUILT SOME OF THIS FURNITURE HERE), BECAME THE PASTOR--*REVEREND L. E. BILLINGSLEY*. HIS WIFE WAS AN EDUCATOR. . . PASTOR BILLINGSLEY['S].

"AND THE BUILDING THAT WE'RE IN RIGHT NOW--THIS EDIFICE [*BEFORE IT WAS BOUGHT BY THE CHURCH* []--WAS THE LAST SEGREGATED SCHOOL HERE IN MANSFIELD. RIGHT HERE. RIGHT WHERE WE ARE.

"AND THE [ORIGINAL] CHURCH, AT THAT TIME, WAS LOCATED ABOUT A MILE FROM HERE OR LESS THAN A MILE, AT *MC CLENDON*--WHERE *MC CLENDON PARK* IS NOW. THERE'S A BRICK HOUSE THERE. THAT AREA AND *BETHLEHEM*, AT THE TIME, (AND IT'S EVEN SHOWN IN PICTURES), WAS VIBRANT. AND I'M HAPPY TO SAY NOW, (EVEN WITH

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS), [IT] IS BECOMING THAT AGAIN--A VIBRANT CHURCH. AND A CHURCH THAT'S ALIVE. [] AND THIS PROPERTY ALONE. . . IF YOU WOULD. . . AFTER HAVING BEEN GIVEN TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND BOUGHT BY THE CHURCH. . . .

"I THINK IT WAS MENTIONED EARLIER IN THE DAY WHERE ONE OF THE DEACONS OF THE CHURCH WAS THREATENED, IF YOU WOULD, BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT HE WANTED TO INTEGRATE THE SCHOOL WITH HIS RELATIVES. AND HIS HOUSE IS THAT OLD HOUSE DIRECTLY WEST OF US [. .] HERE NOW AND [] *BETHLEHEM*.

"AS A MATTER OF FACT, SOME OF THE STORIES WE'VE HEARD ABOUT. . . THAT IS, THAT THE MEN ALL LEFT THE CHURCH. (THAT IT WAS ON A SUNDAY, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN). THEY ALL LEFT CHURCH THAT SUNDAY AND WENT HOME AND GOT THEIR GUNS AND WENT OUT [TO] THE DITCH. AND THEY WERE WAITING, YOU KNOW. [. .] BUT QUITE A BIT OF THAT TALK GENERATED UP AROUND THE CHURCH, YOU KNOW. '*WE[RE] GOIN[G] [TO] TAKE CARE OF BROTHER MOODY,*' [T. M. MOODY] AND WHAT HAVE YOU. AND THEY DID THE BEST THEY COULD.

"AND OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN THE PLACE WHERE THE AUTHOR, (I CAN'T THINK OF HIS FIRST NAME, HIS LAST NAME IS *GRIFFIN*), WHO WROTE THE BOOK *BLACK LIKE ME*.

HE WOULD COME IN THE FIFTIES. AND AGAIN, ALL THIS IS HISTORY THAT I [HA]VE. . . THINGS THAT I [HA]VE READ. *HE* [] [*JOHN HOWARD GRIFFIN*] [WOULD] COME IN THE FIFTIES [. .] AND SIXTIES. AND HE WOULD TALK WITH THE PEOPLE HERE AT THE CHURCH ABOUT THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE. AND HE WOULD EVEN, IF YOU WOULD, COME AND SAY TO THEM, '*I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH [],*' (YOU KNOW), '*[NOW] THAT I [HA]VE DONE THIS THING TO MYSELF.*'

"AND OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN VIBRANT. IT [] [HAS] BEEN A CHURCH THAT [] [HAS] BEEN ACTIVE EVEN IN THE POLITICAL STRATA. [] [BECAUSE] BROTHER MC CLENDON MOODY, WHO PRECEDES ME, SERVES AS A COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE. WELL, QUITE A BIT OF THAT MOVEMENT, YOU KNOW, . . . QUITE A BIT OF THAT SPRUNG UP FROM THE CHURCH, IF YOU WOULD. AND EVEN NOW, IN REGARD TO VOTER REGISTRATION, WE MAY HAVE VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS IN THE PROGRAM ON SUNDAY MORNING[S]. AND SAY DURING THE OFFERING, [WE] FILL THEM OUT.

"DURING THE TIME OF SEGREGATED SCHOOLS, THE CHURCH WAS. . . IN MANY CASES, . . . WAS PROBABLY THE FORUM WHERE SOME OF THE *NAACP* LAWYERS, AND WHAT HAVE YOU, WOULD COME. AND THEY WOULD HOLD FORUM AS TO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO INTEGRATE THESE SCHOOLS. AND EVEN TODAY, WE STILL HAVE A WORKSHOP ANNUALLY [WITH] THE *NAACP*. SO, OUR CHURCH [. .] HAS REALLY BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF A LOT OF THAT ACTIVITY. I'M JUST HAPPY TO SERVE AT A PLACE--AT A CHURCH LIKE THAT."

S.S.: "STRONG HISTORY. . ."

M.E.: "VERY STRONG HISTORY."

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S.S.: "I WAS COMMENTING TO YOU, (I THINK EARLIER TODAY), REMARKING ABOUT A PHOTOGRAPH THAT SHOWED A RATHER LARGE BAPTISM HELD ON WALNUT CREEK. I THINK IT WAS. AND THE CAPTION ON IT READ, 'COLORED BAPTISM.' AND IT WAS [AROUND] 1912, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND I REMARKED, 'WELL, . . . THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF ANGLO PEOPLE THERE.' YOU KNOW? AND I WAS KIND OF SURPRISED BY THAT. CAN YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT THE INCIDENT, OR INCIDENTS, THAT FOLLOW THE SAME TREND?"

M.E.: "WELL, HISTORICALLY SPEAKING, YOU KNOW, THERE'S EVEN A SONG [. . .], A NEGRO SPIRITUAL THAT SAYS, 'I'M GOING DOWN TO THE BIG BAPTIZING, I'M GOING DOWN TO THE BIG BAPTIZING.' AND THAT'S JUST WHAT A BAPTIZING WAS WHEN YOU HAD IT IN THE CREEK, IF YOU WOULD. AND I THINK THERE WAS [A] 'ROCK CREEK' THAT THE DEACON MENTIONED.

"WHEN YOU [] [WENT] DOWN TO THE CREEK TO BE BAPTIZED, I MEAN, IT WAS AN EVENT! THE WOMEN WOULD [] . . . EVERYBODY WOULD DRESS UP IN WHITE. THE CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM WOULD DRESS UP IN WHITE. THE WOMEN'S' HEAD[S] WOULD BE COVERED IN WHITE. AND YOU WOULD HAVE . . . MY GOD. . . THE EMOTIONS WOULD BE HIGH, YOU KNOW.

"[. . .] AND IF YOU JUST SAID THE NAME 'JESUS,' THE PEOPLE WOULD BE ON THE BANKS SHOUTING, 'A-MEN.' YOU WOULD HAVE INDIVIDUALS WHO, . . . IF YOU WOULD. . . AND I'M SURE QUITE A FEW OF OUR FOLKS DIDN'T KNOW THAT THEN. [W]HAT SOME PEOPLE, WHO ARE HISTORIANS, KNOW NOW. BUT [] FROM THEIR BLACK HERITAGE THEY WOULD BE ON THE SHORE--SHOUTING, DANCING, [AND] JUMPING. YOU KNOW? BECAUSE IT WAS A JUBILANT, (I MEAN GOOD LORD), EVENT!

"AND WHAT YOUR ANGLOS WOULD DO, THEY WOULD [. . .] COME BECAUSE [] OF ALL OF THE EMOTION [. . .] INVOLVED. IT WAS A SPECTACLE, IF YOU WOULD. QUITE A FEW OF THEM, [. . .] (AND EVEN TODAY), WOULD SAY, 'GOSH, I WISH THAT MY CHURCH COULD WORSHIP LIKE THIS CHURCH, OR HAVE A SERVICE LIKE YOU GUYS DO.' YOU SEE?

"AND [] QUITE A FEW PEOPLE WOULD COME. EVEN THE WHITE PASTORS WOULD COME TO KIND OF COPY SOME OF THAT STYLE. YOU KNOW? AND [] THAT RHYTHM THERE [. . .], I MEAN, GOSH, THESE PEOPLE WOULD BE ON THE BANKS. YOU'VE GOT, SAY, [. . .] A HUNDRED-SOME-ODD-FOLKS ON THE BANKS. AND THEY WOULD BE HUMMING THESE SONGS, AND MOANING THESE NEGRO SPIRITUALS. AND IT WOULD MAKE YOUR FLESH CRAWL!

"AND [] THAT [] [WAS] WHY, (IN THAT PICTURE YOU SAW), SO MANY PEOPLE [. . .] [ARE] ATTENTIVE AND LOOKING. BECAUSE OF THE HEIGHT OF THE EMOTION [THAT WAS] THERE. AND WHEN THAT PASTOR IMMERSSED THAT PERSON IN THAT WATER, YOU SEE, (AND THE SENIORS CAN ATTEST TO THIS). WHEN THEY BROUGHT THAT PERSON OUT OF THE WATER, (OH, MY GOD, YOU KNOW) YOU COULDN'T, . . . I MEAN IT WAS OVER. I MEAN WHATEVER YOU WERE TRYING TO DO, YOU COULDN'T DO IT WITH ANY SET

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M. E.: [CONTINUED] LITURGY, IF YOU WOULD, BECAUSE IT WAS JUST A . . . YOU KNOW . . . A 'PENTECOSTAL MOMENT.'

"AND MAN. THE LADIES AND THE BROTHERS WOULD BE SHOUTING--ESPECIALLY IF [. . .] [THEY] W[ERE] A SENIOR [CITIZEN]. MAN, IF [] [THERE] WAS A SENIOR MAN OR A SENIOR WOMAN, [. . .] THE PEOPLE WOULD BE SO HAPPY THAT THIS PERSON DID NOT DIE BEFORE BEING BAPTIZED. BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH WE KNOW THAT BAPTISM IS SYMBOLIC, IF YOU WOULD, OF ONE'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION. YOU KNOW, A SIGN OF DOING WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US. THE BELIEF IS, (AS IS WITH CATHOLICS AND OTHERS), THAT IF A PERSON DIES AND IS NOT BAPTIZED, THEN THEY'RE GO[ING] [TO] GO TO HELL.

"YOU SEE? THAT WAS THE THOUGHT PROCESS AT THE TIME. AND BEARING IN MIND, YOU SEE, HEAVEN WAS, (IN MANY INSTANCES), THE BEST THING THAT AFRICAN AMERICANS OR BLACK PEOPLE HAD TO LOOK FORWARD TO. SO, MY GOD. 'IF DAD WASN'T BAPTIZED, IF MAMMA WASN'T BAPTIZED, THEN I WON'T SEE 'EM EVER AGAIN! BECAUSE, SURELY, I'M NOT GOING TO HELL.' SEE? THAT WOULD ALWAYS BE THE LINE [IN A SONG], I'M NOT . . . YOU KNOW? 'IF MAMMA DON'T GO, I'LL GO. IF THE PREACHER DON'T GO, I'LL GO.' (YOU KNOW), 'I'LL GO IF I HAVE TO GO BY MYSELF.' THAT [] [WAS] THE SONG THAT [] [WAS] LIKE THAT.

"AND IT WAS A GREAT OCCASION BECAUSE THEY WERE SAYING THAT, 'LATER ON, AFTER ALL THIS HELL, AFTER ALL THIS MESS. LATER ON, WE'RE GONNA' SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. AND WHEN WE SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.' ANOTHER SONG SAYS, 'I GOT SHOES, YOU GOT SHOES, ALL O' GOD'S CHILDREN GOT SHOES.'

"WELL, WHAT IT MEANT WAS [. . .] NO LONGER ARE WE SLAVES. NO LONGER ARE WE OPPRESSED, YOU SEE, BECAUSE EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT SLAVES DIDN'T GET TO WEAR SHOES. BUT IN HEAVEN, 'ALL GOD'S CHILDREN GOT SHOES.' YOU SEE? THAT MEANS THAT EVERYBODY WAS BROUGHT TO A LEVEL OF BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD, RIGHT AND EQUALITY. . . WHICH MADE THAT A POWERFUL EVENT."

S.S.: "YOU'RE A GOOD ORATOR. HA, HA, HA. WHERE IS 'ROCK CREEK?' AND YOU QUALIFY IT BY USING 'WALNUT CREEK' AS 'ROCK CREEK.' "

M.E.: "SURE. . ."

S.S.: "WHERE IS THAT?"

M.E.: "WELL, THEY JUST COVERED IT UP. HA, HA, HA. BUT THEY DIDN'T REALLY COVER IT UP, THEY JUST SMOOTHED OUT THE ROAD. IF YOU WENT [TO] THIS VERY NEXT BLOCK HERE--WEST OF THE CHURCH, GO TO THIS BLOCK, MAKE A RIGHT, AND [ANOTHER] RIGHT AT MOODY LANE, (IT'S NAMED AFTER BROTHER MOODY). RIGHT THERE, AT MOODY LANE YOU'LL . . . EH, THE DIPS AREN'T THERE ANYMORE. ARE THEY OLD FELIX? THEY TOOK CARE OF THAT BUSINESS. GOD BLESS YOU. GOOD JOB, FELIX.

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M. E.: [CONTINUED] “ ‘ROCK CREEK’ WOULD FLOOD EVERYBODY OUT, BUT [] IT'S RIGHT THERE AT MOODY LANE. YOU SEE, MOODY LANE. AND I THINK [] [THERE IS] A LITTLE BRIDGE THERE [. . .]. BUT YOU CAN SEE DEBRIS ON THE SIDE THERE. AND THERE MIGHT BE SOME WATER STANDING. THAT'S ABOUT WHERE. . . .”

S.S.: “SO THAT WAS THE PLACE FOR BAPTIZING, NOT *WALNUT*?”

M.E.: “RIGHT. BUT WEREN'T THEY REALLY BOTH THE SAME.?”

M.M.: “YEAH, THEY WERE THE SAME.”

M.E.: “YEAH, THEY WERE THE SAME. BUT AGAIN, THE NAMES. . . WE CALLED IT ‘ROCK,’ THEY CALLED IT ‘WALNUT,’ YOU KNOW. ‘WALNUT’ WAS BEAUTIFUL, *ROCK* WOULD FLOOD YOU OUT. [. . .] [THAT’S] THE DIFFERENCE.”

S.S.: “HOW OFTEN DID THE COMMUNITY GET FLOODED OUT? AND THE OTHER QUESTION I REALLY WANTED TO KNOW IS, WHEN DID THE COMMUNITY, AS WE KNOW IT HERE, BECOME DEFINED? BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, ALL I [HA]VE HEARD TODAY IS THAT EVERYBODY [] [WAS] LIVING DISPERSED OVER THE PRAIRIE.”

M.E.: “THAT'S A GOOD QUES[TION]. AS A MATTER OF FACT, VERY LATE. AND YOU MAY WANT MOODY BACK UP HERE FOR THAT. THAT CAME VERY LATE, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CITY LIMITS W[ERE] N[O]T EVEN OUT THIS FAR AT ALL.”

M.M.: “. . . IT WAS DOWN BY *LILLY SHEPPARD* [‘S].”

M.E.: “RIGHT. AND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT MID-SEVENTIES. IT WAS WAY UP THE ROAD THERE. EVEN THE PARK THERE, THAT YOU GUYS PASSED, THAT WASN'T [WITHIN] THE CITY LIMIT[S]. SEE WHAT I'M SAYIN[G]? SO ALL OF THIS WAS, (YOU HEARD BROTHER LAWSON MENTION), ‘*THE TIMBERS*?’ WELL, ALL OF THIS WAS SEEN AS [] RURAL.

“AND YOU CAN EVEN TELL THE DIFFERENCE TODAY BECAUSE YOU'LL SEE CEMENT AND THEN PAVEMENT. YOU SEE? WELL, THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHERE YOUR SPLIT CAME. WE DIDN'T HAVE THE PROVERBIAL ‘*RAILROAD TRACK*.’ WE HAD THE DIFFERENCE IN THE ROAD THERE, THAT'S STILL THERE. AND YOU CAN SEE THAT. AND THIS DIDN'T BECOME A PART OF MANSFIELD UNTIL SEVENTY, SEVENTY-EIGHT.”

M.M.: “RIGHT ALONG IN THERE.”

M.E.: “YESSIR. THIS WAS ALL DIRT ROAD. BUT WHEN THE CHURCH MOVED OVER HERE, IN SEVENTY, ([IT] HAD TO BE SEVENTY-SEVEN). . . WHEN THE CHURCH MOVED HERE IN SEVENTY-SEVEN. IN NINETEEN, SEVENTY-SEVEN THERE WERE INDIVIDUALS. . . WELL [AT] THE CHURCH, WE HAD OUT-HOUSES AT THE CHURCH IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-SEVEN. [THEN] WE [] GOT [] THE CHURCH SECRETARY IN THE SEVENTIES, FOR EXAMPLE. THEY WERE, YOU KNOW, THEY WERE BLESSED.

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M.E.: [CONTINUED] “[] [THERE WAS] A FAMILY, (JUST TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF THE KIND OF STRENGTH OF THIS CHURCH). [] [THERE WAS] A FAMILY WITH SIXTEEN [OR] SEVENTEEN CHILDREN, OKAY? AND THE PARENTS MADE THEIR LIVING BY WORKING THE LAND, LITERALLY. LITERALLY. SO, QUITE A FEW OF THE AMENITIES THAT WE HAVE NOW, . . . AND WE'RE GETTING READY TO GO INTO ANOTHER RENOVATION PHASE HERE AT OUR CHURCH. . . BUT I MEAN [IT] WAS JUST LIKE, WELL, WE WERE 'HIGH COTTON'. . . REALLY LIVING--LIVING LARGE. I MEAN, IT WAS JUST SOMETHING.

“SO, WE'RE TALKING LATE SEVENTIES. LATE SEVENTIES THAT THIS PARTICULAR PART OF MANSFIELD CAME INTO EXISTENCE. ON THIS SIDE OF TOWN YOU HAD [. . .] QUITE A FEW OF THE HOG PENS [BE]CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY THE PEOPLE MADE THEIR LIVING.

“AND I REMEMBER [THE] TALK TEN YEARS AGO OR [IN] EIGHTY-THREE [AND] EIGHTY-FOUR[,] (AND THIS AGAIN COMES FROM THE FORMER COUNCILMAN). [. . .] THEY WERE TRYING TO MAKE THE PEOPLE GET RID OF THEIR HOGS IN EIGHTY THREE. AND MAN, THEY WERE GO[ING] [TO] KILL HIM [T. M. MOODY] BECAUSE, . . . AGAIN, THERE'S THAT JOKE HERE IN TOWN WHERE YOU DIDN'T HAVE THAT KIND OF RUCKUS [INTEGRATION] IN THIS TOWN. YOU SEE?

“AND MANSFIELD NOW IS CHANGING SO FAST--I MEAN THE DEMOGRAPHICS HERE. IN THE SEVENTIES [AND] EARLY EIGHTIES, QUITE A FEW OF THE RURAL BLACK REMNANT, (IN REGARD TO YOUNG PEOPLE), MOVED OUT. THEY MOVED TO ARLINGTON AND FORT WORTH. THEY LEFT IN NINETEEN, NINETY-ONE AND NINETY-TWO. A DIFFERENT TYPE [OF] AFRICAN AMERICAN BEGAN TO MOVE TO MANSFIELD. TRANSPLANTS FROM ARKANSAS, FROM, YOU KNOW. . .

“JUST AS THE DIFFERENT COMPANIES SHIFTED THE PEOPLE, A DIFFERENT TYPE [OF] PEOPLE MOVED HERE. PEOPLE WHO DID NOT KNOW THE SOCIAL ETHOS, [WHO DIDN'T] HAVE ANY IDEA OF THAT, OR ANY IDEA OF THE HISTORY. THEY'RE COMING BACK. AND YOU KNOW, WHERE YOU HAVE FOLKS WHO REMEMBER WHEN THE EFFIGY WAS HUNG UP [] AT THE CITY LIGHT. HERE YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT TYPE [OF] PERSON COMING IN. AND THEY JUST LOVE THE COUNTRY. 'OH, HOW BEAUTIFUL THIS IS!' YOU KNOW? THEY'RE LIVING IN A ONE-HUNDRED [AND] FIFTY-THOUSAND-DOLLAR HOUSE.

“AND NOW THEY'RE COMING. AND IT'S AN EXPERIENCE IN ITSELF WATCHING THE TWO DIFFERENT TYPE[S] [OF] BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE MESH. SAY MIX. AND IT'S SOMETHING. BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT TWO DIFFERENT TYPE[S] NOW. PEOPLE THAT[] [ARE] COMING TO MANSFIELD. AND PRESERVING THIS HISTORY IS GOOD, BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW THE STORY.”

S.S.: “IT'LL BE SWALLOWED UP.”

M.E.: “OH, MY GOSH! [] TEN YEARS FROM NOW, NEXT YEAR, WHEN THEY OPEN UP [LOOP] 360, . . . WE'RE TRYING TO HELP FELIX [WONG] UNDERSTAND THIS--HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT THEY GRASP HOLD [] [OF] THIS OPPORTUNITY NOW. HIS OFFICE KNOWS THAT YOU'VE GOT PRIME LAND OUT HERE. IF YOU C[O]ME BACK OUT HERE IN TEN YEARS, I DON'T THINK ANY OF THIS WILL LOOK LIKE IT LOOKS NOW.”

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B.B.: Betty Benjamin
F.L.: Fred Lawson

M.B.: Maggie Jackson Briscoe
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S.W.: Shirley Larue Barton-Washington

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S.S.: "WELL, I THINK THERE IS AN OCCASION TO ADDRESS THAT IN NORTH DALLAS, (WHICH IS A SEA OF TWO-HUNDRED [AND] FIFTY, THREE-HUNDRED, FOUR-HUNDRED, FIVE-HUNDRED-THOUSAND-DOLLAR HOMES).

"THERE'S THIS INTERSECTION AT SPRING VALLEY AND PRESTON [ROADS IN DALLAS]. AND THERE'S THIS LITTLE BLACK CHURCH THAT HAS THE CORNER. THAT IT HAD. . . IT ALWAYS HAD THAT CORNER, BECAUSE THAT WAS A FARM AND MARKET ROAD. AND THAT WAS ANOTHER ONE OF TH[O]SE NASCENT COMMUNITIES THAT I SPEAK ABOUT THAT [] HAS BEEN--THEY [HAVE] LITERALLY [] [BEEN] SWALLOWED UP. AND THEN THE TAXES, (BECAUSE OF THE SURROUNDING PROPERTY VALUES), EVENTUALLY PUSH THEM OUT.

"BUT IT'S. . . I CAN AT LEAST ENUMERATE ABOUT FIVE THAT I KNOW OF. [. . .] WHEN I FIRST CAME TO DALLAS, I WAS VERY SURPRISED TO FIND THAT IT'S OCCURRING AT A DRASTIC AND HORRIFIC RATE. AND THAT'S JUST THE SWALLOWING-UP OF RURAL LAND FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS."

M.E.: ". . . AND LET ME OFFER THIS. WHEN YOU GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE DOWN THE[] ROADS HERE, (WHICH I HOPE YOU GET THE CHANCE TO DO THIS COMING WEEK), YOU'LL FIND THAT MOST OF THE HOME OWNERS ARE SENIOR CITIZENS. AM I RIGHT?"

M.M.: "YOU'RE RIGHT. . ."

M.E.: "MOST OF THEM ARE SENIORS [WHO ARE] HOLDING ONTO THAT LAND. BUT THEY'RE IN THEIR LATE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES. IT'S GO[ING] [TO] BE GONE. [] THERE'S] NO NEED IN US TRYING TO [HOLD ONTO IT]. IT'S GO[ING] [TO] BE GONE. AND [] THESE ARE PEOPLE, [WHO WERE HERE] RIGHT TODAY. YOU CAN GO AND. . . MRS. BRISCOE, (WHO WAS HERE), HER HOME IS STILL THERE. NOW SHE LIVES IN 'WALNUT CREEK'--ACROSS FROM THE COUNTRY CLUB. BUT HER LITTLE HOUSE IS STILL THERE. AND HER GRANDCHILD STAYS THERE, YOU SEE.

"BUT, THAT'LL BE GONE. THAT'LL BE GONE. AND ONE THING THEY HAVE TO HOLD ONTO IS THE LEGACY [THAT] I BELIEVE [] [IS] HERE AT THE *BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH*. SO THAT'S [WHY], YOU SEE, WE'VE HELD ONTO [THE] PICTURES. AND YOU HAVE OUR LITTLE HISTORY BOOK THAT WE KEEP. IT IS BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT [. . .] SOMETHING VALUABLE IS HERE. AND WE'RE GO[ING] [TO] BE HERE ANOTHER HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. WE PRAY."

S.S.: "WE TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT. . . WELL YOU MENTIONED THAT I SHOULD DO A TOUR OF THE CEMETERY. IN ANOTHER LIFE, I HAD WORKED IN COASTAL GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA ON PLANTATION SITES. AND THERE ARE CURIOUS PRACTICES SUCH AS MARKING GRAVES WITH STONES OR WITH SHELLS OR WITH THINGS THAT ARE AFRICAN."

M.E.: ". . . SAME HERE."

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S.S.: "IN ANTECEDENT, THE DISCUSSIONS TODAY, (WHICH I FOUND REALLY INTERESTING), DEALT WITH THE BAGS WHICH WERE HUNG AROUND THE NECK."

M.E.: "ASAFETIDA? [TO] KEEP YOU FROM GETTING SICK."

S.S.: "RIGHT. . . BUT THAT, TOO, IS VERY AFRICAN."

M.E.: "YEAH."

S.S.: "AND IT'S THE SURVIVAL THROUGH THE TRADITIONS AND WHETHER [OR NOT] THEY'RE INTERMIXED AND REINFORCED IN LOUISIANA, YOU KNOW WITH THE INFLUX OF HAITIANS. . . IT'S STILL A TANGIBLE COMPONENT THAT WAS THERE NOT SO LONG AGO. I THINK THERE'S SOME INTERESTING THINGS THAT NEED TO BE LOOKED INTO A LITTLE MORE IN DEPTH."

M.E.: "YOU'VE GOT QUITE A FEW [MORE] STORIES AND LEGENDS, YOU KNOW, I'M SURE [] [LIKE] YOU'VE FOUND IN SOME OF YOUR OTHER STUDIES. . . AS YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU DID ABOUT THE CEMETERIES--ONE IN PARTICULAR BECAUSE IT WAS A BLACK CEMETERY. THIS HAPPENED YEARS AGO. . . YOU CAN ASK ANY OF THOSE SENIORS [] [WHO] W[ERE] HERE TODAY. AND THEY CAN PROBABLY TELL YOU [ABOUT] THIS THING THEY SPOOKED ME WITH IT."

"BUT [IT] W[AS] YEARS AGO, (I FORG[O]T THE DATE WHEN IT WAS, [SOMETIME] LIKE [IN] THE TWENTIES OR THIRTIES), WHEN THERE WAS A WHOLE BOXCAR . . . (REMEMBER THAT)? . . . OF THOSE. . . OF MEXICANS. [] SOMEHOW, THEY GOT TRAPPED IN THIS BOX CAR. AND QUITE A FEW OF THEM DIED. I MEAN ALL OF THEM DIED--LIKE THIRTY OR FORTY OF [THEM]."

"AND THE LEGEND IS . . . THAT OUT THERE. . . AND YOU CAN SEE IT [] [IS]. . . AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S THERE, BECAUSE I HAVEN'T LOOKED. BUT YOU CAN SEE WHERE THE AREA KIND [] [OF] SINKS IN. BUT IT'S SUPPOSEDLY A HUGE HOLE. THEY DUG A MASS GRAVE AND JUST DUMPED THEM IN[TO] IT. YOU SEE, AND THAT KIND [] [OF] THING. AND EVERY GOOD FRIDAY, WHEN WE GO. . . THEY SAY, 'THEY'RE RIGHT OVER THERE.' HA, HA, HA."

"BUT YOU KNOW, YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE WHO ARE [BURIED] OUT THERE FROM THE 1800'S. . . IT'S IN A DEPLORABLE STATE, YOU SEE. AND THAT [] [HAS] BEEN ONE OF OUR PET PROJECTS AS A CHURCH--TO TRY TO GET THAT THING [THE CEMETERY] WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE. BECAUSE . . . LEGENDS LIKE THAT ARE THERE."

"IT'S REALLY. . . THAT'S GO[ING] [TO] BE AN ADVENTURE FOR YOU. I REALLY MEAN IT, BECAUSE [] [THERE ARE] GRAVES EVERYWHERE. [] [THERE ISN'T ANY] [] PATTERN, M.E.: [CONTINUED] IT'S JUST . . . AND YOU CAN SEE THE ROCKS AND YOU'LL KNOW [THAT] SOMEBODY'S THERE, I MEAN, BECAUSE OF THE WAY THE THING IS MARKED. [] [THERE IS] A LOT OF STUFF THERE. UNSPOKEN HISTORY THAT. . . YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAP [INTO] TODAY."

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S.S.: "INITIAL INTERVIEWS ARE KIND[] [OF] TOUCHY BECAUSE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW YOU AND ALWAYS[] [WILL] BE KIND[] [OF] FROWNING AND VICE VERSA."

M.E.: "WELL, THAT'S ONE I WANTED TO GET OUT, BECAUSE I WANT SOMEBODY TO GO LOOK. HA, HA, HA. AND I WANT TO BE THERE. HA, HA, HA . . ."

S.S.: "I GUESS I GET TO BE THE GUINEA PIG. . ."

M.E.: "LOOKS LIKE A LEG TO ME. . ."

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE] "LET HIM DO IT. HE'S CRAZY."

S.S.: "IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE. . . I'M KIND[] [OF] GOING INTO BRAIN OVERLOAD?"

M.E.: "I UNDERSTAND. IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY."

S.S.: "HOW MANY SUCCESSIVE CHURCHES WERE THERE? OR SUCCESSIVE LOCATIONS?"

M.E.: "I'M THINKING . . . I'M THINKING THREE. ONE BACK BY THE WILSON PLACE BY BROTHER MOODY['S], AM I RIGHT?"

M.M.: "RIGHT. RIGHT BY MY HOUSE. BY THE TREE . . ."

M.E.: "YES SIR. BY BROTHER MOODY'S. AND WE SKIPPED OVER HERE, AND WENT OVER BY THE PARK [MC CLENDON]. AND THEN, HERE. [THERE WERE] EIGHTEEN PASTORS, SEVENTEEN. . . I'M NUMBER EIGHTEEN."

S.S.: "THERE WAS ONE QUESTION IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE THAT DIDN'T GET ASKED, AND THAT WAS, WHO BUILT THE HOUSES? [WERE THEY BUILT BY] MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT LIVED IN THEM, OR WERE THE[Y] [BUILT BY] BLACK CARPENTERS?"

M.M.: "MOST OF THE TIME, [THEY WERE BUILT BY] THE ONES [] [WHO] LIVED IN THEM. AND THEY WERE BLACK."

M.E.: ". . . AND THE CHURCH MEMBERS."

M.M.: ". . . MOST OF THE TIME. AND THEN CHURCH MEMBERS JUST, (WHEN THEY WEREN'T WORKING THE FIELDS). . . SA[ID], 'HEY, WE'RE GOING OVER TO BROTHER SO AND SO'S. . . AND BRING YOUR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS.' AND WE [WOULD] GO TO HELP HIM RESTORE HIS HOUSE. BUILD HIM A HOUSE."

S.S.: "SO, IF I FOUND ANY HOUSES FROM THE TWENTIES THAT ARE HISTORICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH FAMILIES FROM THIS CONGREGATION, THEY'RE GO[ING] [TO] BE BUILT BY. . ."

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M.E.: "BUILT BY THE FOLKS. AS I SA[ID], THE PASTOR THAT PROCEEDED ME, (WELL, TWO PASTORS BEFORE ME)--THAT'S WHAT HE DID. [. .] HE BUILT ALL OF IT. HE DID IT ALL. HE BUILT THE CHURCH. THAT[] [WAS] RIGHT WHEN THEY DID THE RENOVATION. HE DID IT. SO, . . . THEY BUILT IT THEMSELVES. FOLK GET TOGETHER, AND LIKE I SAY, JUST GO OUT AND DO IT."

S.S.: SO DURING THE *DEPRESSION*. . . (I'LL CONFIRM THAT AGAIN), DURING THE *DEPRESSION*, THINGS [WE]RE NOT AS BAD FOR PEOPLE HERE BECAUSE THEY[] [WERE] NOT DEPENDENT ON JOBS FOR FOOD?

M.M.: "THAT IS RIGHT. IT'S HARD TO TELL NOW WHO IS POOR AND WHO IS RICH. EVERYTHING IS ANYONE WHO IS ABLE TO GO OUT AND GET IT GETS IT. AND THE ONES THAT DON'T HAVE IT ARE THE ONES WHO DON'T GO GET IT."

M.E.: "RIGHT. . . THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK THAT[] [WAS] PRETTY CONSISTENT IN MOST RURAL COMMUNITIES AT THE TIME. BECAUSE MY GRANDMOTHER SA[ID], '*WELL, WE MISSED THE DEPRESSION.*'

"WE ALWAYS. . . WE MAY NOT HAVE HAD ALL THE CLOTHES THAT WE NEEDED, BUT WE ATE EVERYDAY. BECAUSE THEY RAISED THEIR [OWN] FOOD, YOU SEE. . . THEY DID. AND AS I MENTIONED IN REGARD[S] TO MEAT, YOU KNOW, THERE WAS A LITTLE BOLOGNA. . . WHEN YOU'RE POOR AND YOU DON'T KNOW IT, IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU. AND YOU DIDN'T HAVE TELEVISION TO LOOK AT. A RADIO, YOU MAY HAVE HAD A RADIO. . . BECAUSE EVEN THE LANDOWNER. . . *Y'ALL [YOU] DIDN'T DRESS TOO FAR APART--WE DIDN'T HAVE THE NAME BRANDS.* . . .

"ONE THING YOU HEAR AROUND THE CHURCH ALL THE TIME, IN PARTICULAR . . . [THEY] SAY IN REGARD[S] TO THE NEW REFORMS IN WASHINGTON. QUITE A FEW OF THE SENIORS OF OUR CHURCH. . . THEY KIND OF SHRUG IT OFF. THEY SAY, '*AW, HECK. WE HAVEN'T NEEDED THAT STUFF ANYWAY,*' IN REGARD[S] TO [] *WELFARE.*"

S.S.: "WHAT ABOUT *MEDICAID* THOUGH?"

M.E.: "THAT'S A GOOD POINT. . . MOST OF THE PEOPLE YOU SAW HERE TODAY. . . THEIR CHILDREN TAKE CARE OF THEM. ISN'T THAT SOMETHING? MRS. BRISCOE, HER SON WAS A STATE SENATOR [WHO] WORKED DURING THE *REAGAN* ERA. . . WORKED FOR REAGAN. AND HE TOOK CARE OF [HIS] MAMMA. AND THAT[] [WAS] WHAT QUITE A FEW PEOPLE DID.

"I FOUND OUT ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO, THAT QUITE A FEW OF THE SENIORS HERE WEREN'T EVEN ON *SOCIAL SECURITY*. ISN'T THAT SOMETHING? HOW DO YOU APPLY? IN HOUSTON, TEXAS EVERYBODY KNEW. ISN'T THAT SOMETHING? SO, THEY'LL TELL YOU IN A MINUTE. A BAG OF RICE AND SOME BEANS, AND YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER. AND YOU WOULD! PREACHERS NEVER WENT HUNGRY BACK THEN. I GUARANTEE YOU THAT THEY ATE EVERY WEEK."

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S.S.: "THIS IS A REAL . . . A VERY DIFFERENT COMMUNITY FOR ME TO WORK, BECAUSE I [HA]VE BEEN WORKING IN THE URBAN AREAS--IT'S REAL[LY] DIFFERENT."

M.E.: "HERE'S A COMMUNITY THAT'S MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM RURAL TO SUBURBAN. . . YOU'VE LITTLE POCKETS OF DRUG ACTIVITY, LITTLE POCKETS OF A LITTLE GANG ACTIVITY. BUT IT'S HIDDEN, IT'S UP IN THE WOODS THERE. AND I GUESS IT'S GO[ING] [TO] BE LIKE THE SPOTTED OWL. WHEN THEY START SPREADING OUT THIS DIRT AND THIS LAND HERE, IT'S GO[ING] [TO] RUN [TH]EM OFF TO BURLESON OR SOMEWHERE. YEAH . . . IT'S FUNNY. . . BUT PEOPLE LOVE TO MOVE HERE."

S.S.: "THAT'S THAT. WELL, THANK YOU. . . VERY MUCH."

M.E.: "THANK YOU."