

AL 143

Interviewee: Myrtle Dudley

Interviewer: Lisa Heard

Date: February 25, 1992

H: Today is February 25, 1992. My name is Lisa Heard, and I am interviewing Miss Myrtle Dudley in her home, Dudley Farm, in Newberry, Florida. Miss Dudley, can you tell me your full name?

D: Myrtle Elizabeth Dudley.

H: Will you tell me when you were born?

D: December 1, 1901.

H: Can you tell me where you were born?

D: Right in that bedroom, right in yonder where I am [now] sleeping.

H: Is that right?

D: Yes. In my parents' bedroom.

H: The recorder does not bother you?

D: Not a bit. I am used to it. Good lands, everything in this house has been recorded.

H: Is that right?

S: The state has a record of everything in this house. I told the man in charge then: "You even have my birthday. When is my death going to be?" He said, "I do not know and do not want to know."

H: So you were born in this house.

D: Yes, ma'am, I was born in this house. [I was] three months premature.

H: How long has your family been in Florida?

D: I would have to go get the papers. They were in South Carolina first. He came to Florida before the Civil War because he grew cotton for the government with slaves. They shipped that cotton to England. They grew the cotton around in here and in Gainesville, my daddy told me. They got it in these bags somehow and got it up to Jacksonville. They caught the boats over there and went to

another place on the coast where everything goes. I cannot remember that name right now, but, anyway, it is the capital of the next county over there. Where is that big place where the park is right on the gulf?

H: Tampa?

D: No. You are going the wrong direction. [It is] right straight over yonder. There is Gainesville and then this other little place.

H: Cedar Key?

D: No. You are going this way now. You want to go the other way.

H: Straight over is Jacksonville.

D: It is over there where that boat place is. It is over there on the coast.

H: St. Augustine?

D: No. St. Augustine is down here. It is over there on the coast where the boats are, and it is an old place. My father, grandfather, and a bunch of slaves cut a road from out yonder [to] St. Augustine. I knew it would come back to me. St. Augustine is where it was.

H: So they cut a road from out here.

D: The slaves [did]. My granddaddy and my daddy got, I think he said, twelve extra. Them poor niggers were starving to death, and he got twelve. He went so far. Then another group met him, and they went so far. They went that way with the ex-slaves until they got over there to St. Augustine.

H: So they went all the way to St. Augustine? They cut a road all the way to St. Augustine?

D: Then they came back, and the west-end people cut a road to the Gulf over yonder. We have that mapped off over there on that map. Now, if necessary, I can prove what I am telling you.

That is when Grandpa and them hitched up his slaves, got his own slaves up, and was made captain of his own army team, and he went to the War Between the States. He was in the battle at Jacksonville. They tore it all to pieces. He traced it all the way around the coast clear back to over yonder on the coast over there. Then he turned in and come back to where he was at first. He took camp dysentery, and they brought him home in a wagon that [was] padded. They did

not think he was going to live to get here, but he wanted to go back to Mary. That was his wife.

When they got here with him, they thought he was gone. He was just limp. She went out there and looked at him, and she called the nigger woman that was with her all the time. Wherever she went, that nigger was right behind her: old Aunt Becky. Old Aunt Becky went through the war with my granddaddy and them. She (Mary) looked him over and felt his pulse. They say she turned around and said: "Becky, get your shovel and go out yonder, right in the field" – right out yonder in this field. She went out there, and Aunt Becky had been a slave here. She knew the woods and the fields.

She told Aunt Becky [just] what they have in the book in there. (I have a book here, and you can get all of that out of it.) They brought Grandpa home, and they thought he was gone. When Grandmother looked at him, they say she just turned around and said, "Becky, go get that root over yonder, and let's make a tea and get it in him." They say in less than two hours that man was conscious again. That tree is over there yet. They have cut the pines, and they have cut the oaks. There was some grown saplings in there, and they cut them until I cannot go to it anymore. And I cannot get out and walk like I could.

H: But it is still out there somewhere.

D: George Wright, a cousin of mine who lives right over yonder, knows right where it is at, but the state will not take his word. They have got to have mine. Well, I have been ailing so the last two years until I just have not been able to go out to it, but I am going to try it one day before long, if I do not get to feeling worse.

H: Do you remember your grandmother?

D: No, I do not remember Grandmother. She died [before I was born]. I have it in all in a book. I have every bit of that written down that I have told you.

H: Did she die before you were born?

D: Good lands, yes! She died in 1880. It was still steaming and had not settled down.

H: Right.

D: But Grandpa got all the way around the coast over there. He came back into up there where they were at and took camp dysentery, and they padded the wagon and brought him down here. Grandma doctored him, and he got all right. He got up and went to work.

H: Then he lived on this farm, right?

D: Yes. His house was just a little piece out there in the field on the other section of the land. This is on one section. My father already had homesteaded it, and one of my uncles homesteaded the other forty. You could not homestead but forty acres at a time. But my father owned this forty right in here, and Uncle George [Wynne] (my mother's brother) was just a teenager. Grandpa helped him get the next forty over there. There were eighty acres here in the Dudley Farm. Then Grandpa got a chance to buy 640 acres adjoining it, and that was west of us. It is still west of us. The state has it now. But there was some hard work done straightening this thing up where it is now.

H: Then your father inherited this farm?

D: My father had this farm, and it is mine now. It was mine, but it is the state's now. I gave them this twenty-four acres here with the house for the exhibit. I thought that was enough. The day I gave the property there was a dedication, they had the service at the front gate. I could not travel about then; I had just had major surgery. I think we had twenty-four or twenty-eight people who came to it. Others would have come, but they said they would put it in the paper. Well, they never did put it in the paper, and they told me not to, that they would. People ask me, "Aunt Myrtle, why did you not let us know?" I say, "Because the state told me they were going to put it in the paper." I got up here one morning, and I called one of the people who lives over back there. I called others that live this way. I got, I think it was, 123 of them here that day – Dedication Day.

H: Would you tell me a little bit about your father and mother and what their full names were?

D: [They were a] typical mother and father. Mother had twelve children, and [she] raised every one of us. She [also] raised Uncle Charlie, who was the same age as Mother's third baby. Grandmother Wynne died, and my daddy had to go over to Georgia and pick up the children and bring them home. Grandmother was gone and so was Grandfather, and left a newborn baby and a twelve-year-old girl. Somehow they got word to Grandpa. Mother could not go because she had just had a baby, and my father went and brought them here to us. Mother nursed Uncle Charlie just the same as she did Bob.

H: So your mother took care of your father's younger sibling.

D: No, my mother's younger siblings. Yes, she took care of the boys. She and my father worked together. He said he would tend to his, and let Fannie tend to hers. Now, it was hard on her because she had been boss over that whole flock of slave women. It was hard on her (my grandmother), but she went through it.

And we have letters that she wrote to him in the camps, different places, from Gainesville all the way around the coast back to over there where they went off by St. Augustine.

H: You have letters from the Civil War?

D: [Yes], from Grandfather to Grandmother and then from Grandmother back to him. That book will tell you as much as I can. But when they brought Grandfather home they thought he was a goner. They had the wagon padded with a bed pillow bedding. They brought him from Lake City to here, and he did not know a thing about it. She sent old Aunt Becky out in the field for that tree, and they made that tea. He drank it, and in three hours they noticed the difference in him. They stayed one day and one night here – those folks who came – and they went back to where they came from.

H: How did your parents meet? Did you know about that?

D: I guess I know a little bit. Grandfather Dudley and his two brothers – they do not know what become of either one of them – and his mama [came together]. I hate to tell you why Grandpa came here. Grandpa and the queen of England were in love. She was going to marry Grandpa, and it was against the law for English to do it. Somehow he got word that they were going to kill him. One brother was with him, and the other one came later. But they drifted off to Miami. One of them went down there, and we do not know where the other one went. That is the way they got scattered out.

H: What was your grandfather's name?

D: Philip Benjamin Harvey Dudley. It was the same thing that his son was [named] and the same thing my brother was. Then there is another one way back.

H: So that is a name that has been in the family for many generations.

D: Yes, three generations that I know of.

H: And your father's name was [what]?

D: Philip Benjamin Harvey Dudley.

H: The same name.

D: Then the next one, his son, is [named] the same thing. His son, Harvey, was born right here in this house. His [my grandfather's] great-grandson was born [here]. Grandmother came here after the war. Grandpa was already here out at

the house here. He had a log cabin out there in the fields. [It had] two rooms; [there was] one room here and one room here and an open hall here.

H: In between.

D: Yes. That is what he and Grandma lived in for a long time. Now, the well was over this way from the house. [That was] the well that the slaves dug with shovels and picks. It is still good. It has a frame around it now because there are cows out in there.

H: Now, you told me that you were born in this house.

D: I was born right in this house. Two of Mother's daughters were born in Archer, where they [had] moved first. They lived in Archer. At first they lived by Fort Clark [Baptist] Church for a couple of months. Then he found a place out from Archer that he liked better as land for farming. He bought that and built a house very much like this one, but not with this back part on it. He and Grandmother were living there. When Grandmother passed on, they did not want Grandpa to be left out in the field in his house and Mother and the baby were down here, so he went down to Archer to his daughter. See, one of them died in the spring of the year, and the other one died in the fall of the year, the grandfather and grandmother. They both are buried at Jonesville [Cemetery]. It is a little old community over yonder [between Newberry and Gainesville].

H: This house was built by your father and grandfather?

D: [Yes, it was] built by my father and grandfather. He tried to do it. Grandpa helped with it the best he could to show the young man how to fix the house. It is a whole lot larger than the house in Archer was. I have been wanting to go back down there to that, but I cannot find anybody who knows where it is at. It was way back there in the nineteenth century when Grandpa came up here I believe.

H: So tell me again, if you will, the story of your birth in this house. Now, I know you have told it to me before, but we have not done it with a machine on.

D: Mother had two girls when she was in Archer. Then she came up here and had the rest of the girls, except me, right at first. Then she had the other girls. Then she had four boys. Then I came along to be a nuisance, and everything fell on me to straighten out from way back to the Civil War. I have got it straight.

Now, [as to] my nephew that was living here with me that died, his great-great-grandfather was an Indian. I had to find that Indian's birth certificate before I could file the papers that I had here settling George's estate. He had lived down

in south Florida somewhere. So I gave my lawyer time to find it, and he got it and brought it up here. Everything has went along smooth since then.

But I keep getting letters about different Dudleys here, there, and yonder. I say that the only Dudleys that I ever knew were right here in my house. But there was another family of Dudleys. They did not come here; they went to Texas. Father's brother went to Texas. I do not know how he got there, got out there, or anything, but he went there.

Grandpa lived up yonder in the field in the two-room log shack. Then he had to come down and help my mother. Mother had a new baby, and her mother had just passed on and left a new baby. She had brought him here, and Mother had two babies to take care of. He told her, "Fannie, I am going down to Archer." He went down there, and he did not live but three months. She died in the spring, and he died in the fall of the same year.

H: That is your grandmother and grandfather.

D: Yes, Grandfather and [Grand]mother.

H: So, then, your mother raised those children?

D: Sure, she raised them as well as hers. Well, there was Uncle Tom, Uncle Fred, Aunt Edith – I think there were six of those children, Uncle George, Uncle Charlie. The older girls took care of them. The older girls were not women then; they were just teenagers. They took care of them. We had an aunt that lived out four miles the other side of here, and she came down and helped the girls. She had took care of Mama and the babies. When Mother came to and found her baby nursing a nigger, she like to have had a fit.

H: That is when you were born?

D: Well, she was an ex-slave's daughter. That old nigger knew just what she was doing. They did not even dress me until in the spring. They had sheets up like that. I said it looked to me like they took a bed sheet and cut it up in two pieces and put me on it. They did not dress me until the spring of the year. They said there was not nothing there to dress.

H: [laughter] You were a tiny thing?

D: A six-month[-old] baby has nothing there to dress. But that nigger woman nursed me. Mama caught her at it, and trouble broke loose.

H: Your mother was not happy about that.

D: She hated niggers the same as I do. One thing [that] makes her hate them [was] a nigger killed two of her brothers.

H: Tell me about that.

D: Well, there is nothing to it. Only one of them was all that went over to somewhere east of here to arrest one of the niggers that had shot Uncle George. (I think they had shot him. Yes, they did, too.) Of course, they went right on, but they tried to rush him to Jacksonville. [They] held the train over there at Waldo to get him to Jacksonville, but when they got there with him he was gone.

H: And this was your Uncle George?

D: Uncle George Wynne.

H: He was on your mother's side [of the family]. And he was a deputy?

D: Yes! He was the first one that the county had.

H: Is that right?

D: Yes.

H: So he was shot while –

D: – on duty.

H: Yes. So he was shot by –

D: Let me tell you – if you will excuse the expression – hell broke lose! We had eight niggers hanging up in the oak trees in Newberry the next morning.

H: Is that as a result of that incident?

D: Everybody worshiped Uncle George. He was quiet with you. If he told you no, he meant no; if he told you yes, he meant yes. Back then you could not go by but half of what people would tell you.

Uncle Charlie was a baby then, younger than Uncle George. My father left mother with a newborn baby. Old Aunt Becky Perkins was an old nigger slave's daughter. When he came back, he had brought the newborn baby and five others. He just dumped them on my mother to take care of them. Old Aunt Becky was right there all the time. Even after they were freed they had a house. Grandpa gave them lumber just like in the house, and they built them a little

house up there. Well, they built a house, and they lived in it. I do not know how many people lived in it. Then somebody stole that house. It was just a small house up there, and they stole the house before I was in charge of it. They built just a log shack up there – Ralph, Jim, a nigger man, and his wife and half a dozen little nigger slaves.

H: How old were you when your Uncle George was killed?

D: Fifteen years old.

H: Do you remember it?

D: Well, we never said nothing about it because it was done at night. They grabbed his body up out of the train at Waldo and carried him to Jacksonville, but he was gone before they got there. Mother said if she had seen him before they left Waldo, she would not have let them carry him up there, because he shot him right through the liver.

H: She knew he was not going to make it.

D: Yes, she knew. And he knew it. He begged them to carry him to Fannie's house, but the state man from Gainesville got a hold of him and rushed him to Jacksonville. But he was gone when they got there.

Then somebody come out here and told my daddy about it after it happened. He had let Harvey (that is the oldest boy) go with Mother. He said: "You go with your mother. You stay with her. I will try to keep things out here and take care of these seven women." Of course, niggers could have jumped him and killed every one of us.

Here is Newberry, and there is [the] Dudleys. They hung those niggers between here and Newberry out there in that oak thicket on this side of town. They had to hang there two days. There was two men that stayed out there, and they would not let them take them down for two days. One man said he done the cut with one of them. Come to find out, he was not even out there. I knew the man's family. I said he might have been at his house under the bed or somewhere hid. I said he would not come out from there. But that was one wicked man.

Actually, people came in that we have known all our lives. They were in such a tantrum and I do not know what all you would call it. But they did not look natural. And they said who pulled the ropes where they hung the nigras. Come to find out, that is the man who got out and got hid under his house. They told me who did it, and I said: "Oh, no! That coward did not." I got to thinking about it, and I said, "I can tell you just who did it, and I was not out there."

H: Do you mean who killed your uncle or who did the lynching?

D: A mad bunch of folks done the lynching. They just went crazy around here.

H: That is what you are saying. You would see them, and they just did not look like the ones.

D: His friends. And the man who pulled the switch that dropped those nigras down was the ex-sheriff of this county, and he was living over at Tallahassee. Now, how they got him here that quick I do not know, but he was here, and that is what two or three of them have told me who done it. They say a man that lived out there done it. He had his horse jerk him up that way to break his neck. But instead of him doing that, him and his horse left. They went somewhere. We do not know where.

This place was [crazy]. I do not ever want to be in anything [like] the condition it was in. Everybody loved George (that is my uncle).

H: That must have been a difficult time.

D: It was. And they found three nigger men buried in the banks of the railroad between here and Gainesville on that side where it went high. They do not know who done that. The man who done it had been a sheriff of this district for a while, Bob Wells. He was the one that done the tying of the knot. There is a certain way that you have to tie a knot to hit the back of their head to break their necks. There is a certain way they tie that.

H: Right.

D: Now, I do not know how, and I do not want to know how.

H: I do not blame you.

D: But we kids all ran out to see what was the matter. Mother went to crying so when they told her how Uncle George was shot. We went to our mother. He [Daddy] said, "Y'all get in the house." He told one of my older sisters that was almost a mother to us, "Laura, get those young'uns in that house and make them stay there [even] if you have to switch them!" He got ready to go. Mother did not know how far my daddy was going the other way. He turned around to my brother (he was about grown then) and said, "You go with Fannie, and I will take care of the girls." Do you know what he done? He got two men that he could trust, and he put them out in the woods.

H: And that was something that people were concerned might happen?

D: Why, everybody that knew George loved him. He was one of that kind, and he was the sheriff. He should have known better than going into a nigger's house in the middle of the night. He had somebody with him, but they both got shot. Mr. L.G Harris lived, but George did not.

But I do not ever want to live through anything like this community was for about ten days. At sundown, every door on every house was shut just as tight as they could shut them. They were afraid that the niggers were going to team together and get them.

H: But that did not happen?

D: No, it did not happen. I had a nephew that got on his horse and rode down the Newberry Road into the nigger quarters [and said], "Get in those houses and lock your doors and stay there!" They did. After they saw that bunch hanging up in the hammock, they were going to do what they were told to.

H: So everybody was in their houses and scared.

D: Well, they were safer in the house than they were wandering from one house to the other trying to see what the neighbor was doing and doing what he does. They had it!

My daddy was here with us, and he told us, "You girls get in the house and stay there!" And we got in the house and stayed there.

H: Then your father left. He did not stay here. He went off.

D: No, my father did not go. He sent Harvey, his oldest son, with mother. He was way up in his teens, and he was a great big old husky boy. He sent him with Mama. He said if there was any trouble, he did not want his children in it.

H: And where did your mother go?

D: She went from here to over yonder somewhere and caught the train. They held the train until they could get there with Uncle George and the other fellow, and they went to Jacksonville.

H: So she went with your uncle?

D: Yes, she went right in the train with her brother. She said she tried to make them turn around and come back. He wanted to die at home, and this would be his home. But he got so weak he could not talk, so they carried him on over there. We had an aunt living over there. She met them at the depot, and they carried

him to the hospital. They checked him and said he was dead and cold and there was nothing to be done.

He wanted to be buried at Quitman, Georgia, where his mother was. They got things straight, and Mother and Harvey went to the funeral. But my daddy said he was going to stay here and take care of his girls. He had the whole neighbors come in here and take care of us. Except one of them, and he would have come in here and killed us if he could.

H: There was one you did not get along with?

D: We did not have nothing to do with him. He was a just a mile south of us, and we did not have anything to do with him. He would get on terrors every once and a while. My daddy said he was drinking. If we saw him coming down the road out there, he would tell us kids to get in the house, [that] trouble may break loose. We got in the house, too, and stayed there.

H: That was a different life.

D: I would say it was a hell of a life. But my father was satisfied here, and my grandfather must have been because he stayed here during the War Between the States. He was up yonder in the field in his little log cabin. I wish they would have taken care of it, but, no, my daddy had an old male hog that he wanted to shut up that he could not keep anywhere. He would fight you if he wanted to get up here, and he put him in the house and locked him up. Of course, the hog ruined the house.

H: Hogs? You are talking about hogs?

D: A hog is a strong thing, and those rails, you see, were just one on top of the other. There were cracks in them, and he could get his nose through there. He tore out.

H: He could tear out the fence?

D: Yes, and Grandpa shot him. He said if he could not keep him one way he could another.

H: [laughter] And then he did.

D: That was the only way back then they could protect themselves from animals. You could not take them to town and put them in a lock-up there. There was nowhere to take them.

H: Yes.

D: We made it rough on this whole place, the four girls and my mother and father. Grandfather – if you know where that Fort Clark Church there – had a nice house very much like this house back in there where they lived for about a year. That is where he found a place in Archer that he wanted to go. Then he got down there, and I do not know how come he came up here.

H: But this is where you grew up, right here on this farm.

D: Yes, right here.

H: What is your earliest memory of living here?

D: I spent all my life, so I do not know what the earliest was.

H: You do not know where to start?

D: I do not have anywhere to start.

H: Sally was telling me that there were Indian mounds on this land and that you had a little story about how you used to play there. You found a pot.

D: Yes, we went down there. We went out there. It is right out in yonder.

H: Out back here?

D: Out in there. Well, Dr. Emmel bought the place. I sold Dr. Emmel a place. I had to have some money to tend to the needs of six siblings, and I sold him forty acres of land. He goes and plants it in pines. Well, I know about where that tree was, but I cannot go over ditches like that. My body just will not take it. I tried one time to go with it, and the logs are still a part of it. I told Jerry, "Jerry, turn around and go back the other way or you are going to have me ready to bury when you get back to the house." He turned around and looked at me, and he told Sally, "Sally, get back there and help Miss Myrtle to lay down." They brought me back to the house, and I have not been back out there. I cannot go across those furrows like that [with] limbs hitting an old woman's face. But I have a cousin who lives right over yonder. He knows right where that is at.

H: The Indian mound?

D: He is a cousin here.

H: But there was an Indian mound on this land, right?

D: There was, but after he got the trees cut in there and he sold the trees and they cut them off and he got the trash and the stumps out of the field and [got it] replanted, naturally he tore up [everything].

H: There probably is not much left now.

D: There was not much. It is under the ground, though. And there is a sink hole that George Wright says he has went in a many a time with a bunch of Boy Scouts. He could go to it, but he said he would have to have me to show him where to go. Well, I am not going out in that field with those ditches and all that mess.

H: When you were a little girl did you go out there?

D: No, sir, not if our folks were there. I went out there one day and got as pretty a little bowl as you ever saw just about that big. Of course, I had to go run show it to Mama. Well, I got my behind paddled.

H: For taking it?

D: Boy, I do not remember just what Frank and Norman got, but my daddy got a hold of them, and we went over there. He made me go with them. "You went with them before; go with them now!" We went over there and put that stuff all back in that place and filled the hole up with dirt.

H: And why did he make you take it back?

D: Because we had stolen it out of an Indian grave.

H: So he felt that was not showing respect.

D: Well, you would not want someone to go in your grave and dig your folks out and take them off, would you?

H: No.

D: Well, they did not. But they was all gone, and me and Harvey was over at Waldo for a while. The Indians never did bother us. They would come in here and walk around and make all kinds of signs. My daddy would take his gun and put down by the side. He said, "Now you can walk through that house, but don't you take a thing out with you."

H: The Indians would come here? The Seminoles?

D: Yes.

H: And why would they come?

D: Walked, mostly. We never saw any [other] way for them to travel. They had a camp, you see, between here and the coast over there. I cannot think of the name of the place, but there was an Indian camp there.

H: Why did they come here?

D: Because some people told them that if they wanted to find out anything to go to Dudley's, and he could tell you. The post office used to be right out here in front of the gate.

H: Did your father run the post office?

D: Yes.

H: And the store, too?

D: Yes.

H: So this was the center of the community.

D: Yes, this was the center of the community. Mr. Griffin down there could not get along with himself, much less anybody else. He got to fussing about the post office being up here. He said: "Most of the people are south of the road. Why has Dudley got the post office?" Well, Dudley got the post office because they had the road dug through there. They sent mail out twice a week by wagon and mule. "Well, why did they send it to him? Why did they not send it to Griffin?" He could not get along with himself. [laughter]

Now, he had a couple of daughters that were as nice a women as you would want to meet. Then he had one that had epileptic fits. It was pitiful. She had three children, I think. They sent her upstairs. She was pregnant, and [it was] just about time to deliver the baby. The house was upstairs. They made her go upstairs. She was upstairs, and she saw every bit of it right out the window. It did not do any good because she would just drop out sometimes. Then when they got [the post office] down there we quit bothering with it. We said if they wanted it they could have it. Anyway, when we moved from here it was Mister Griffin's.

But my daddy was a peaceful man. He did not fuss with anybody, and he did not want anybody fussing and cussing around here. If anybody came here to come

in, if he [was not] soft-spoken, he said: "I don't want them [here]. Get out. Don't come in that gate if you are in that condition. Get out and stay out!" And they did it. He was quiet, just like Ralph was.

Now, they cannot say I am easy, because I get mad. But I have had it several times since and no help. I had a nephew that was helping me, and come to find out he stole \$9,000 and a home from me. I thought he was working for me, and he got every bit of a forty-acre piece of land [and] a house. I got nothing but a cussing. I was not making no family trouble.

We had a clock that they brought across the ocean with them when they came across in the paddle boats. [It was] a clock about this big around, and it was still running good. I had had it fixed. I had been in the hospital two days unconscious (I do not know what was the matter with me, and I do not think they knew), and that nephew came in here and got the things he was to get at my death. But he did not wait until I was dead to get it. Now, he took eighty acres of land that was George's and sold it. He got the money. The sheriff is on top of him. And there are other people I am going to have to do the same thing with. I cannot get out and do like I used to because I cannot walk good.

H: But you have lived on this farm all your life.

D: [Yes], all my life. Edna was teaching school (that was my sister) in Live Oak, and I went up there and stayed with her and went to school the last two years.

H: And what years of school would that be for you?

D: I finished the twelfth grade.

H: So you went right through?

D: I went right through it – all except one subject. And I do not know why that got left out. I went to going through the papers that I had and went back and showed them. They found it there, and they finally said, "How in the devil did it get left out?" I said: "Ask him. He knows. I do not." (That is the man who was arguing about it.) But Edna did not go back to teaching. She did go back to being a librarian when I came home.

H: Where did you go to school when you were younger?

D: Newberry.

H: What kind of school was that?

D: It was just a sorry old country school out there. At first it had two rooms in it. At first it was right out yonder in my yard. Then they moved it down to Griffin's, but they kept so much fuss down there and fighting and shooting one another until they moved it to Newberry.

H: What grades were in that school?

D: Well, from the first, my older sisters – there is five of them – [went to that school]. Two of them finished grammar school, and the other two finished the next two years. The grandfather and [grand]mother found out from an aunt of ours where they could get a room in a house in Gainesville, and the three older sisters went over there.

H: To finish their education?

D: They finished over there. Now, that was the oldest one, Mary Catherine. They called her Dolly because she was the first dark-haired baby Grandpa had ever seen. She was born with black, curly hair. When he saw that he went to calling her Dolly. He bought her some flowers. He had a rose bush. That was Dolly rose. It grew a rose about that big. I have some of it left, but it needs attention.

H: What kind of rose did you say?

D: It is a little rose, and the bush does not grow much higher than that. I can show it to you. It is a pretty little kind of whitish pink [bloom]. I have got one over there on the porch there, but it is not doing good. I cannot tend to them anymore.

H: You never got married.

D: No!

H: How come?

D: After waiting on four brothers, I had enough. I will take one for a friend or buddy, but that is where it ends. I finished school in Live Oak – all except one subject. I do not know how they left that out, because I had it on the report card. I got Jerry – that was one of the state men, and he said he was going up there – [to help me]. I said, "Will you carry this up there to the county commissioners and show it to them and ask them if it is any good?" It was where they had passed me in everything except one subject, and I would have to finish that at the university to be an accredited high school graduate. Now, that was not hard to me, so I finished at the University of Florida. I wanted to be a nurse, but my father and mother said, "No, sir!" He said, "These nurses nowadays ain't a thing but the doctors' women." And I found out that a lot of them are that.

H: So your parents did not want you to go into nursing.

D: I have been to the University until I pretty well knew it. It was just a two-room place not much bigger than this the first time I went into it. You see what it is now.

H: Can you tell me a little bit about the circumstances surrounding your birth?

D: I am a four-month-premature baby. When I was born, Mother went out [unconscious], and she was out four days before she knew a thing. They had me, and a nigger woman had a baby that same night that my [mother] had me. They said [a four-month baby] would not live, but that nigger woman nursed that baby [me] just like hers. She brought her baby up to the house. Mother [said I] was so little they could not put [my] clothes on. They rolled her up in sheets. We said it was outing (soft cotton flannel), but they said it was flannel or some other name. It was just out of strips, is what it was. [They] did not try to put clothes on her; she was just too small. That nigger woman nursed her three or four times a day until Mother came to.

Mother got after the Negro there, and she said, "Try to wait until we find out what happened." So the nigger woman went home to her mother, who was old Aunt Becky, an ex-slave that was Mother's guardian with her and the children during the Civil War Between the States. She went back up to her house. It was a house up there in the field where they stayed. There was a slave quarters up there in the field, and they stayed up there.

That woman went up there, but she kept bringing bottles of her milk, [or] her mother did, [rather]. She did not go back down there. They fed me that way for a while, and it went bad. They had troubles. Everything they put in my stomach went bad. I just was not old enough to [properly digest the milk].

The doctor said I was not going to live. But old Aunt Becky said, "That girl is going to live." I say she is the one who saved my life, old Aunt Becky and her daughter. And that was a long time. They tried cow's milk; they tried goat's milk; they tried everything imaginable. [It was] just about a day I could take it, and the next day it would come back. That is the way my stomach gets. If it gets something in it that it does not want, [it gets upset].

H: All right. You were talking about Aunt Becky?

D: She was a nigger ex-slave.

H: What was her daughter's name?

D: We always just called her Peggy.

H: Do you remember their last name?

D: When she got married, she married a Hurst. [She] got married over there. Grandpa and that girl's father built a house over yonder on the highway that is still there. That is where she and her husband lived. They did not live up here in that field with Aunt Becky and her husband. They lived there for a long time.

Then when they freed the [slaves], you should just think about those poor niggers turned out, some of them without a shirt on their backs and all. They got things straightened up better. We were still here. Then they got up a group of nigras, my granddaddy did, and they started making a road to Gainesville.

H: This was after the Civil War?

D: Yes, after it had settled down some.

I will go back to Grandfather now. They brought him home from Charleston, South Carolina, to die, but he did not die. That old nigger woman and Mother looked him over good, and he did not know a thing. [For] two days he did not know a thing. They had brought him home with a two-horse wagon. Two men were keeping him in the wagon, and the third man was driving the team. They stayed with him for twenty-four hours after they got him here before they tried to take him out of the wagon.

Grandma, when she looked at him, they say she rubbed on his arm. One of his arms was close where she could get to it. She turned to the nigger woman and said, "Come on, let us go get the tree root that they use." They went over there and got that and came back. They made a tea out of it and got him drinking it by the spoonful. He was that near gone. He got up a cup of it, and they let him alone. Then they noticed his eyes kind of open different after that. Those three men that came with him stayed with him. They thought he was a goner, and they stayed for nearly two weeks helping with him. Then when he got up and got things straight where he could do something, he started in with something else. I do not remember just what he started in with. But he stayed in the army until he died.

H: They called him Captain, right?

D: He was a captain. Before he was put as captain of anybody, he had worked with slaves growing cotton and shipping it to England. They had to take it to St. Augustine by boat from Gainesville. Then they carried it on to Jacksonville by the train. Then it would go from that place in the north. I do not know what it is.

H: Savannah, you mean?

D: No, it is up there in this [state]. It is not Tallahassee; that is west. Anyway, it is a camp that is up there. It has been there since before the war. They shipped the stuff by boat down this river to there, and then the folks got it and sent it on up to Charleston, South Carolina. And they got it on big boats there and carried it across to the other country.

H: From South Carolina?

D: Yes. But I cannot remember the name of that [town in Florida]. It was an older place up there. St. Augustine. It was St. Augustine. They had big boats there, and they shipped it on. We have got the papers here. [Actually], the state has them. I do not have them now. I saw them being taken away and not knowing who still had them. I turned them over to the state, and they have them locked up upstairs.

H: OK. I wanted to talk to you a little bit today about what you remember from your childhood growing up here on this farm.

D: Working, woman, working! We worked right on, and I was a spoiled, rotten brat.

H: I will bet you worked harder than most kids do today, though.

D: Well, if our mother told us to go do something, we went and did it. I have even hoed corn, beans, and other stuff out here in the field. We children worked here. A few of those old nigras stayed here. Some of them went to the towns and around different places. You do not know how many of them were killed and just buried, either.

H: Would your family get up early and start your day early?

D: We would get up before daylight. After the kids got older – I am the youngest one of the group – there was a school south of here that they went to until they got to what would be the twelfth grade now. Then they moved it over south of here.

H: When you first started school, did you tell me there was a school right here on the farm?

D: At one time there was a school right out yonder in front of the gate. That was long before I was born or even thought of. The school, the church, and the grocery store were all right outside in front of our gate. Everything that was brought to it was brought by horse and mule and a wagon. There were no cars.

They would get it in Gainesville and then bring it out here. They made the rounds twice a week. See, they would bring here one time and go that way one time. Finally, they had six of those teams and six different places they carried groceries to.

But one of our neighbors got to fussing. He went to Granddaddy and said, "You have nobody on that side of the road except your children, and you have money, so you can send them to another school." [He was fussing because] they wanted to move the school two miles from here. Well, they did not move it down two [miles], but they moved it one.

H: So is that where you went to school?

D: No, I did not go to school there. I went to school in Newberry and then Live Oak. I finished high school up at Live Oak. Edna, one of my sisters, was teaching up there. I could not go to Newberry because it was too far for the horse and buggy. It was over five miles. You cannot do that and go to school every day.

I went down there. Frank got mad and quit going to school a while. I went down there where Edna was teaching. She and I had one room we lived in in another lady's house that we had for the two years that I went to school there. I would have graduated up high, but I got sick and had to come home. [There was] one subject (mathematics) I had to finish at the university. The others all went through good, but that one I had not reported on it. They had not held it. Then when I got things straight after getting home and getting over them things that liked to have got me, I took it from the University, and by copies they sent out here. I kept doing it, and I got a good report and a good signing in graduating.

But I did not go to the schoolhouse here. All my sisters [did]. See, it was close. They all went to the school, but it was just a mile down here. Well, when they got to fussing about it, they moved it down two miles. You know, a six-year-old child could not walk from back here in our field to down there to school. They got to fussing and fussing about it. My daddy did not fuss. He just told them to take the thing and do whatever you call it. They carried it on down there to the other place. It stayed there about ten years, and then they moved it further south.

H: So how did you get to school then?

D: Well, after it went to Newberry, they split. Part went this way and part went to Newberry. They were both schools. After then we went to school in a horse and buggy.

H: Do you remember the classroom? Was it one classroom for all the grades? Was there one teacher, or did you have two teachers?

D: There were two classrooms over there then. There was just a partition [between them]. One classroom was just about like this room in here, and the other one was smaller than that. And [the one the size of] this one was used for the auditorium, too. We had class in the auditorium, so if anything would come up, we had to pull all those seats back to the back corner. I went that way until I was in the tenth grade. I went to Live Oak where Edna, my sister, was teaching and went to school up there. I graduated from there.

H: So you had to leave home to finish high school.

D: Yes, I had to leave home to finish high school or go by myself to school, and Mother would not hear of me going from here to Newberry by myself. I tried to stay out there. There was so much fussing about it, so Mother said I could go down to Live Oak with Edna if I wanted to.

H: How was that for you, living out it Live Oak with your sister? Did you miss being at home?

D: Why, sure.

H: Did you enjoy being out there?

D: I had to do so much studying I did not know whether I was there or where I was. They had not half taught [me] where I was going out here in the woods. They did not teach half the things they ought to have. When you got up there, you would have a pile of books like that, and you studied them. You did not just throw them down and leave. But I had my report card, and all of it was in the nineties.

H: Wow! So you were a good student.

D: Well, I was there with just Edna, and I had one room at Miss Westbrook's house. When I went home from school – I usually went ahead of her when I did not wait and go with her – I got my books and got down on the floor and got my schoolwork done. I laid down on the floor with my books.

H: And you stayed with Miss Westbrook?

D: We had a room ready at Miss Westbrook's.

H: Did she feed you meals?

D: No, she did not feed meals. We had an old stove about like that. There was just two of us, and sometimes we would get a [meal] at the school. They were feeding them up there then. But Edna did not like the way the food was handled,

so we quit [eating at school] and went to cooking at home. Miss Westbrook would make a roast or something like that. We would get it, carry it to her, and while we were away she tended to it. We stayed up at her house two years.

I did not get to graduate with the class. I had my dress and everything.

H: You had one credit you had to get before you could graduate, right?

D: They gave me a copy of it, and when I got to my next subject they gave me the diploma. They just went on with the courses just like I was there. They said they knew I would get the other one, and they just went on with them.

I missed going to that party that night, though. I had my dress and everything made. I took that illness, and I just could not stay up there [in Live Oak]. Edna carried me home on a Saturday, and she went back to her school on Sunday afternoon. I stayed home then and finished at the University of Florida correspondence course.

H: And after that you stayed here on the farm.

D: I have been here all the time.

H: So tell me something about living on the farm and how you did [various chores]. Who did the cooking, and where did the cooking happen?

D: We had a kitchen right behind the house, a kitchen and a dining room. [It was a] two-room, nice, big, wood house.

H: The dining room was separate from the [main] house also, or just the kitchen?

D: The dining room and kitchen. It was just about from here to the front gate [away from the main house]. It was out there, and they did the cooking in the kitchen and put the stuff in the dining room. We went down the steps and across that sand place to the kitchen and dining room. They say they are going to put that back up out there, but I do not believe them.

H: I know that is how they used to do it, outside the house.

D: Well, we had a nice house built out there for the kitchen. It was two rooms.

H: Right. And who did the cooking?

D: All of us. We would take turns out in it. One would cook a while, and then another would go in there. But Mother was right there with all of us.

H: She was the boss of the kitchen.

D: She was not the boss of anything. She would just ask you, "Can't you do better than that?" She would not tell you to do it. [She just said], "Can't you do better than that?"

I stuck with my mother until the very last. When she went on, it was raining – just pouring rain – and the boys came in out of the field. All the boys were here, all four of them. Norman was not doing anything; he had just come in out of the service. He was not doing anything, [but] oh, boy, he kept a noise up. He was sitting on a rock out there by the walk. We had a bell we rang for dinner, and he like to have jumped out of his hide. [He said]: "I heard a bell! I heard a bell!" After that he went to hearing and getting along good.

He made one of the highest electricians there was in this part of the state. He was in Jacksonville, and they sent him to Tallahassee. Then they sent him to different places. One time they had him sent clear across to Jacksonville, way over there. He was over there eighteen months. He got better before he went over there. He had been in the trenches four months before he was [discharged].

H: Which one?

D: Norman, the third boy.

H: Which war did he come home from?

D: The First World War.

H: So he was suffering from some kind of battle fatigue?

D: Well, he was shot all to pieces, you may say. He came home here, and, of course, we folks all worked with him. If he wanted to go out in the yard and walk around, one of the older girls would go with him. They would not let me go. They say he might go on one of those [fits he had]. Sometimes he got started jerking this way, and you better look out. They were afraid he might take one walking with me and hurt me, so I did not get to go walk with him.

One day about noon he was sitting on one of those rocks that was out there in the yard. (They have carried the big one off, but the other one is there.) He was sitting out here in the sun, and he liked to have jumped out of his hide. "I hear the bell! I hear the bell!" From then on he got better. But what we went through I do not want to go through again. He was right in those trenches half the time.

H: Was he wounded?

D: [He was] shot all to pieces just about.

H: So it took him a long time to get over it.

D: He never got over all of it. He dragged his leg, but he would not put on an artificial leg. He has gone on now.

H: But emotionally he became [better].

D: Sometimes yes, and sometimes you would see him and he would kind of dump his head way down that way and his face [would] turn red. You better be getting up out of his way. We had it here with him for about eighteen months or two years. One day the rain was just pouring, and all of them came in out of the fields. They were sitting on the porch talking, and they rang the bell for dinner. He said: "I hear a bell! I hear a bell!" From that we worked slowly and built it up to where he could go back on his electrical work. He was an electrician for the government and was sent across the waters two or three times to do things over there that they could not get straightened out.

H: And your mother was still alive then?

D: My mother was still alive. Somebody would write us a card where he was working. They knew his division. They said that was the best electrician they ever got a hold of. You could give him wires, and first thing you know he would have it to where you could turn it together and plug it in and you would have a light. He was a born electrician. He was studying electrical work when the army got him.

Mother had four sons, and she had three of them in service at one time. Peace was declared on Sunday, and Ralph (that is the other brother) was going into camp, too. He was going to training camp, and that just left Mother and the girls there.

H: So three of your brothers were in World War I?

D: Yes.

H: Did they all go overseas and fight?

D: Norman and Harvey went overseas, yes, but Frank had just gone in. He was the one who did not have enough training. I do not think he was old enough for them to send him across the water. But, you know, they were taking almost

knee-sized kids like that; they were getting weaker soldiers.

H: That must have been hard on your mother.

D: It was hard on everybody. And you could not go out to the store and buy anything hardly because [those people] that could work were working somewhere else if they were not in the service. We had an aunt who had four boys, and they got all four of her boys at one time. We said that was not fair. But what could you do about it?

H: And you were maybe fifteen or sixteen at the time?

D: Yes. Frank was just old enough to go into the student training corps. That made him about eighteen, and I was two and one-half years younger than him.

H: So did they all come home after the war?

D: Yes, they all came home. But Norman never did get completely over the shock or whatever that was. You would see him every now and then jerk all over. After he went to work with the electricity, he got with an elderly electrician man, and they worked together. He used that electricity on Norman, and he finally got him where he could talk to you and he could walk. For a while he could not talk. He just [said], "Wooooo, wooco, wooco." He got him to where he was talking, and then he put him to work.

First thing you know they had him give a report how he was doing, and they (the army) sent him a diploma. Boy, he was so proud of that. I thought he was going to break Mother's neck when he was hugging her after he got his paper. [She said], "He got his paper! He got his paper!" (He just called it a "paper.") He stayed around here, I reckon, a week or ten days, and then that old gentleman who was working with him called him.

I do not know right where they went first, but he went back to the other country. That is what Mother hated, him going back over there working when they did not know where they were going to dig up a bomb or what they were going to get into. That is what she worried [about] the most.

H: Did she want you all to stay around here?

D: She did not make us stay here. We just stayed here.

H: You just did.

D: We thought more of Mother than we did anything else – and father, too. And we

seen some weddings that were turned into – I will not say what. They did not hold. The girls just said if they had to be ordered around and kicked around like those were, they were not bothering with no man. Leila got married, and that was one of them. Dora married that skunk she married. Annie married a man older than her. The rest of us are old maids.

H: So three of your sisters got married.

D: Yes. Let me see. There was Annie, there was Leila, and Dolly and there was Dora. Yes, three of them. And then there was Edna and Myrtle and Winnie and Laura who did not get married.

H: But Laura died when she was pretty young.

D: She died when she was about twenty or twenty-two or somewhere along in there. She died from appendicitis.

H: So you never got married, and you never wanted to.

D: No. I said all men were like them brothers of mine and had to be waited on hand and foot, I was done with them. I am still that way. Time he gets up and you sit down there, [he] hollers, "I want this," and, "I want that." Time you get it another one was hollering what he wants. I just said men are not in my line of duty, and I have stuck to it. It has been rather hard at times to do it, but I have done it.

H: You have been on your own.

D: Yes.

H: And you have pretty much ran this farm with your sisters, right?

D: We had an old Negro that was here, and then my brother Ralph stayed here until he went on. We worked in the fields, just like the rest of the niggers, hoeing, planting, gathering, and things like that. We women folks were right out there just the same as the rest of them.

H: And you did the cooking and the washing.

D: There was always one or two that stayed at the house to do the housework. They would take turns about which one stayed this week and which one stayed next week. They all liked to cook except one, and she did not cook any.

H: Who was that?

D: Leila. She did not cook. She told them she would do anything from plowing right on [down the list], but she was not going to cook.

H: She did not mind the field work?

D: No.

H: And how about yourself? What kind of work did you prefer?

D: Everything that came along.

H: You did not mind anything?

D: The hardest work I had was tending to a bunch of old sick cows Ralph had here one time. You cannot trust a cow.

H: You have to watch out.

D: You have to watch out. And the male animal out there takes care of his women folks. You have to watch him like a hawk. We had to look out for that. After everything was gone, George Wright said, "Well, I got a chance, and I sold the cows." [There were] eighty-four head of them.

H: Wow! That is a lot.

D: And there was one that was having a calf that night, but the man came and got them the next morning. That poor little old heifer had it hard all night. They were going to put her in a truck that they had there, put a cloth over and under her, and take her on. I said: "You let that cow alone right there where she is. When that calf comes she is mine; she is not yours." And I still have her.

H: You do?

D: She is over there with George Wright's [herd]. I sold George Wright either three or four heifers, and he is taking care my cow. If she has a bull calf, they alter it. If it is large enough, they butcher it and he gets half of it. If it is a heifer calf, George takes it and takes one of his bull calves [to butcher] and gives me half of it and he takes half of it. Each one of us takes half of the expense for butchering, cold storage, and such as that. That is the way we work with that meat.

H: That is a good system.

D: Well, you see, if my cows did not have a bull calf, his usually did. We could eat

his little bull the same way we could eat mine. He got half of it for the care of it and the butchering of it. The last one that was butchered, I had to help pay for the butchering because George got called somewhere, and he had to go. (You know, he was a sheriff for a while.) We did not get it done like it ought to have been done, but it got done. He said let it go.

H: Do you remember the Depression?

D: It was bad. You could not get stuff. And then in all that mix-up we had 600 laying hens.

H: You had 600 laying hens?

D: Yes. We had two [chicken] houses out there. We had two out yonder where there is just one. There was none out here. We had a lot that was left open. If you went on out by the barn out yonder, there was another chicken yard. You come down where the gate was at that went out in the field and there was another chicken yard. Then they got out here where the cane mill was and there was another. You could not keep too many laying hens in one place because they would go to eating one another's eggs. We sold eggs to a hatchery in Gainesville, Wells's Hatchery, for I do not know how long until Mr. Wells went sick.

H: When was that? What years are we talking about?

D: I will have to be honest with you. I do not know, because I was in the hospital most of that time. I was not dragging around here tending to the chickens.

H: That was a lot of chickens to take care of.

D: Well, if you get them in line where you can start and go all the way around, it is all right. If you have got to go this way and that way, you get mixed up yourself.

My job was to gather eggs in the stables. When I had a man coming in with horses. Those chickens that were here in the yard would go into the stable feed boxes [to lay their eggs]. Horses like eggs, so we beat them out of that.

One day I did not know the old animal was out there, and I went in the lot. The first thing I knew here he come charging after me. I came out through the gate. My brother came in, and he called that thing by its name (I do not know his name right now). He said, "He would not hurt a flea." I said, "I am not a flea, but he sure was after me."

H: What animal was this?

D: A big old Hereford bull. I did not go over the gate or under the gate; I went *through* the gate. About that time the dogs we had knew there was something wrong, and they got up there and sent him back out where he belonged. Two or three days later Ralph said, "Well, he would not hurt a flea." So we said: "All right. Keep on." Two or three days later we heard Ralph just a hollering out there. That darn thing had put him up in the top of the stable where they have the logs across for braces. There he was sitting up there hollering for help. I should not have said it, but I said, "He won't hurt a flea, will he?" He told me, "You shut up!" [laughter] We got him out of the way, and then we got Ralph down.

We did not have a telephone at the time. Somebody else had one. McElroy had one. He took the truck and went down there, and in about an hour he had a truck come to get that animal. They worked out there four hours trying to get him in the truck. You know, they never did get him in there. So they got two of our horses, one on each side of him, and ran him up through the middle of them. They went clear over to Waldo, way back over in there, to where we bought him. They took him. The man said he could go over there. He said, "I'll do something with him." Ralph said they turned him out, and the man walked right out in there. He said he had to go up the tree. Well, he could not believe what Ralph told him.

H: [laughter] Ralph did not believe you, either.

D: When you get a fighting animal like that, the best thing to do with it is take it out in the woods and kill it. It has been done with some here.

H: You do not mess around with it.

D: You are liable to get hurt and get your fences tore down. That is a job, to keep fences. The rail fence is up. See, they could run against a panel of that and knock it every bit down. And they soon learn just how to do it.

But after Ralph took sick we sold the chickens. Ralph and I were both in the hospital at the same time. I was in there two weeks, and I do not know how long Ralph was in there. And there was only one sister here to tend to them. Dora could not hobble out and do it. When we came home she sold our chickens.

H: She sold the chickens?

D: She sold all the chickens and all the equipment that went with them. I was glad of it, because I was tired of going under houses and all around after eggs.

H: You were looking for eggs everywhere, right?

D: And then [we were] going way over yonder to deliver them. It just was not worth it. Then Dixie Jones brought us those amaryllis lily bulbs. He gave each one of us one, and we got to where we were making good money off of those things.

H: Really? You grew lilies and sold them?

D: We had a bed of them. First we had them here in the front yard, and they outgrew that. Dixie Jones gave each one of us two bulbs. Each one got two bulbs just alike. We kept them in there, and they multiplied like that. I think we got this bed here full, and then we put them out yonder where we had a garden. They ran that over. Then we put them out here in this field, [and they made] a field of lilies. There was good money in them, but they were so hard to keep going like they ought to.

H: Did they take a lot of fertilizing?

D: Well, we had the chicken fertilizer still in the houses. You see, we had not got that cleaned out or we never would have been able to take care of them.

H: You were going to tell me about the Depression and how it was here.

D: Well, you see, after those nigras were freed, they had absolutely nothing and no work that they could get to do. Some of the owners in this community burned everything the niggers had when they were freed. It was pitiful around, and them babies had to eat. They got to where they would come up a work a half a day almost for a piece of bread. Well, you see, they had the little niggers at home, and they had to be fed somehow. We finally got up a group and got together and got Red Cross help for them. We would get the food brought here, and we would make him come here and take it off. We got it to where it was too much work, and we turned it over to the state then to tend to them.

They gave them so much each month. If it did not do them, which it never did do, they would come here and get it. They would come here and work a half a day for enough potatoes to cook for one good meal. We would double the crop of potatoes and stuff like that, and the niggers helped work it and eat it. They did not get money or anything like that. They just got food to eat. It kept [on] that way for a long time. Finally, it got to where there were too many here for us to keep and feed, and one of the Kinnard boys had a great big old covered wagon.

He came out here twice a week and brought the mail and groceries. (We had a mailbox out there until Mr. Griffin raised cane. My granddaddy would not put up with that.) Then when they got that straightened out, we got along a whole lot better.

Then they decided they wanted a road from here to Gainesville. Each group of

men – some of them were women, too – got together, and they opened up a strip so far. They met with a group down there that had a group, and he took over and went on so far. [They eventually went] from here to St. Augustine. Then there was another group, when the Chaires brothers worked, over here on this side and back to the ocean. They started there, and they got the opening clear to the Suwannee River. Then they went to using it for the road, and they used it there for a long time. You can see the markings of it out there yet.

It finally got to where some of us said: "We are on our feet now. Let's fight it out." Well, my daddy kept four of his niggers all along. He could not run them off. "You helped us enough for the niggers, we are going to save you." So they stayed on here and worked until [they died]. Old Aunt Becky, I do not know how old she was. She was in service with Grandma. Everywhere Grandma went, if there was anything she could do, she did it. If there was something Grandma had to look into, she was right there to see what to do and to get what they had to.

There is a tree up yonder in the woods – if Dr. Emmel had not got so biggity, we could have found it – that they cut and used for rheumatism and diseases like that. When anybody in the neighborhood got rheumatism, they would come up here, and my daddy or Ralph would out there and get the bark off that tree, boil it good, cool it and strain it, and in three days that rheumatism would be better. It would not be well in three days, but they said it [would] not [be] hurting [or] eating us up like it was before. But I cannot go to that [tree] because it is out in pine trees. He has had them cut for timber.

Ralph had promised that doctor in Gainesville that eighty acres of land back there. He had the papers and all made. After everything was gone and I was straightening up, I started not to let the doctor have it. But I said it would be making Ralph a liar if I do not go on with it. Of course, he [Ralph] was gone. I let him have forty acres over there. But I cannot go to it [the tree]. I showed them the sinkhole, and they went there. They went down in it, and they said there was no more going in that sinkhole for them.

H: You have quite a few sinkholes on this land, right?

D: Let me see. There are three right down here, two up on the hill, and there are six over farther right down the road.

H: My goodness! That is a lot.

D: There is one of them over there that has an animal (turtle) down in there. They got his head [skull] out. They got his head out, and it is about that big around. The state has got it now. Now they are trying to get the rest of the bones and

things out of that thing. They have got a hole about this big around [through which] the men go down in it.

H: So they found fossil remains or the skeleton of an animal, I guess.

D: Yes. And they have got his head up to here out. It was all a man could lift almost, because down in there it is damp. Well, they have it over at the museum. That is where that is at, unless the state has it. They were going to try to get it. The rest of it is up here in the sink. They keep telling me they are going to blast it out of there, and I say go ahead. But I say: "Be sure you are about a half a mile from it when you turn your blast loose. Now, that underground stream is running in there like a river. You do not know where it is going."

H: You do not know what will happen.

D: No. They might blast over yonder and you will be over here. Your dirt will go down--you and your dirt and all. That sink that they got that skeleton head out of, I have never been down in it, and I do not think I am going. But I have been in one over there. You can go in about like from here to the kitchen, and you can come out in another one. Then you can come out of that and walk about like from here to the kitchen. You can go in one, and I do not think it has an end to it up yonder way. The University students have come in here a hundred and some odd feet from the edge and went in. I said: "Just keep on. If a piece of land out there breaks down on you, you are a goner." It is nothing but sand, [but it is] good farm land.

H: Did you play in those sinkholes when you were a child?

D: No, ma'am!

H: Your parents would not let you?

D: If we went in them sinkholes and did not have our older brother with us or Uncle George, we got our backsides paddled. She [Mother] told us to stay away from them, and we had sure better.

Now, one time Norman, Frank, and Myrtle went down there, and I brought back the prettiest little bowl you ever saw, about that big around. Well, Mother saw it. The boys showed my dad what they got. Boy, we three kids got one whipping and were made to take those things back over there and put them where we got them.

H: And that was from a Seminole [burial] mound.

D: [Yes], the Seminole grave mounds.

H: They made you take that back.

D: We had to take that back and bury it back just as good or better than what it was.

H: Do you remember what it looked like?

D: The bowl was a pretty little bowl about that big around and about that deep. [It was as pretty] as [any] you ever saw. We washed it and were playing with it and showed it to Mother. She called my daddy. He was at what we called the workhouse out there. He came over there, and he got Frank and Norman, and she got me. We carried them back and tried to put them right where we got them from.

H: What color was the bowl?

D: White and a pretty different pink and red all mixed together on it. It was a pretty thing.

H: Did it have designs on it?

D: Yes.

H: You were telling me about a little black boy who led the mules. Do you remember that story?

D: Well, when we were breaking the corn and had the mules [hitched] to the wagon, the mules would not stop when they told them or they would not start when they told them. They went and got that little nigger – he was not a bit higher than that – to drive the team. Well, they got him and put a board across there where he could sit down. When they would holler whoa, he would stop the team; when they would holler at him to come on, he would make them come on. He done that for a long time. A time or two he would go to sleep and fall over in the corn.

H: Was this when they were harvesting corn?

D: Yes, harvesting corn. It was this field out here.

H: And he was just a small child?

D: Well, a little nigger about this big. You could not hardly see him when he stood up in the wagon.

H: About two and one-half feet high.

D: Yes. His daddy and brother was there working in the corn. His daddy went and got him. You see, [when] you get to breaking corn, you have got to get that team so far and then go again. Sometimes them mules would decide they were going the other way, but that little nigger [would try to turn them back]. They fixed them where one hand pulled this mule and one hand pulls that mule.

H: Pulling on the reins?

D: Yes. He went to sleep on the seat there one day and fell over in the wagon. We thought he was going to stay out, but come to find out he got in there and got him a stick. He said, "If that mule starts out again, I am going to hit him." But then after he got grown he worked for us until he got killed over yonder in a motorcycle accident. He would not have gotten killed if he had gotten them to bring him here where we could have got him to the hospital in time, but he bled to death. The nigger woman he was living with did not have the sense of a jay bird. She hid him out in the pine thicket where we could not find him after he was wounded.

Then one of the other nigger men came in there the morning Dora was operated on, and I could not go to her. She said, "If you don't go get Major and take him to the hospital, he is going to die." I said, "I can't do it today, Sam, because Dora is to be operated on this morning, and they want me over there before they take her into surgery." I said, "I'll call Frank." (That was my brother.) I called Frank, and he wanted to know what was the trouble. When he got to the hospital he was dead. Gangrene had set into that wound.

H: What was his name?

D: Major Hurst. He had worked here for me [since when he was] like that until he was killed. He had patience with children, too. When the grandchildren came here, he would go out there and let them ride a horse. Frank, a buggity rascal like he was, brought his horse down here for the children to ride. They could all get on her. She got to where she would bite the children. They would pull her hair like that, [and] when they pulled her hair she bit them.

H: She would turn around and nip them.

D: Yes. And we told Frank about it. "Aw, shucks, she would not bite a flea." He went out to brush her over and look her over and get her ready for the kids to ride here in the yard, and she like to have took a chunk out of him. [laughter] He did not do a thing but stop and said, "Go to the house to Myrtle." He went down to the place where the telephone was and called the man over at Waldo, I think,

to come get the horse. He said, "What is the matter with him?" Frank showed him his arm and said, "Look at here where that thing bit me." (I am not going to tell you what he called her.) He said, "She did not do that when you got her." I said: "No, those children there did that. They would reach up and pull her hair too long, and she got enough of that." She was a nice horse, and I hated to see her go, but I did not want Frank's kids hurt.

H: Really! Now, this Major Hurst was good with animals.

D: Anything that you could put him to do he was good at, [even] if he was a nigger. And he was here from the time he was four until, you may say, he was killed.

H: Was he one of Aunt Becky's grandchildren?

D: No, he was no kin to Aunt Becky. The older folks in the family were two slaves who worked for Grandpa.

H: So his family had been with your family for generations?

D: A long time, yes. Grandpa, you see, was growing cotton and tobacco. He had eight to twenty nigras growing that cotton, and they would ship it to Jacksonville by boat. Then they would ship it back to Tallahassee on the water. Then they would ship it on across the ocean.

H: Did you all ever grow tobacco here at Dudley Farm?

D: Yes, it has been grown on this Dudley Farm. It was done by the slaves.

H: What did you grow here when you were running the farm?

D: Anything you could eat: corn, beans, peas.

H: Now, I remember you telling a story about your father in the corn crib.

D: Oh, he had gathered the corn crop. The crib was made out of slats [from] split logs. You know, they left cracks in [them]. There were three men standing out there that morning. They had been hauling the corn in and throwing it like they ought to to make it come by the walls so they could put in more. It would be gone the next morning.

H: They put the corn in the crib, and the next morning it would be gone?

D: Yes. [It was] stolen that night. Well, they fixed that up, and they put the corn up by the crib real close. They put a row of traps in there on the corn pile. The next

morning when my daddy and granddaddy went out, there were four standing there with their hands like that in the corn crib.

H: They could not get out, right?

D: Why, they could not get out of those traps. And there was not any more corn stolen.

H: Did your father let them go?

D: Sure he let them go. He had done all he wanted to do with them.

H: But they did not steal any more corn?

D: No. One of them came back and wanted to go to work for him. But life on the farm is – I will not say what. You have the animals to look out for, the two-legged and the four-legged.

H: Right [laughter].

D: But my granddaddy and my daddy never was real mean to them [the hired help]. When he told them to do something, he expected them to do it. One time this man that lives up there joining us almost, John Smith's daddy, came over here when he got married. [He] slipped off and got married and [then] slipped off and came over here because [he was afraid of] what they were going to do about him getting married. He stayed in Uncle George's house (that was my uncle who homesteaded forty acres of land here). They stayed in his house. The first night they were there, they had two bales of hay to sleep on. They did not have a stove. They did not have anything. When they ran away and got married, they did not even have their clothes. Well, we let them stay over there, and Daddy went as soon as he could (he did not go to town the next day) and gave them some hay to sleep on. They came up here and ate dinner, cleaned up our kitchen, and went back up there. They kept on until they moved into their granddaddy's old workshop.

Finally, the school building used to be out here at the front gate. Old man Griffin made so much fuss about it Granddaddy turned it over to him. Then they had the schoolhouse down there and a blacksmith's shop that belonged to Mr. Holt. It was right down this way just a mile and another half a mile this way. The school moved three times. They could not please one man any way they tried. When we carried it to Newberry, we went [to school] in a buggy with a horse. A lot of the little old kids walked to school.

H: Did you like going to school? Did you enjoy school?

D: Yes and no. Sometimes Frank would not come, and I would get so tired before I got home.

H: He would not come to pick you up until late, you mean?

D: No. We were driving an old horse to school, and instead of him going to school those days he slipped out and went somewhere else with another bunch of boys. There he was not there to bring me home. I was walking the street there one night, early, and Uncle George came by. He said, "Myrtle, why have you not gone home?" I said, "Frank is off somewhere with the horse and wagon." (A horse and wagon is what I told him, but it was a horse and buggy.) "Well," he said, "I'll carry you home and bring the horse and buggy back." It was nearly the next day when Frank got in, but oh, boy!

H: He got in trouble then?

D: He sure did.

H: And your Uncle George was a deputy, right?

D: At that time, yes. He was the deputy in here until he got shot and killed.

H: Yes.

D: Man, that night after he got killed, wheeew! People did not actually look human, they were so mad.

H: Now, he was shot by a black man?

D: He was shot by a black man.

H: What was the story, now?

D: George Wynne was my mother's brother. That nigger's name was Boisey Long, I believe. Anyway, he [Uncle George Wynne] and Mr. L.G. Harris went over there in the middle of the night to arrest him, and they thought they had him away from his guns. He had a gun under his pillow. He shot Uncle George right in through here--just shot him in two. I do not know where he hit Mr. Harris, but it was a minor hit.

They got him back to here, and then they got him on to Newberry and caught the train up here on the other side of Alachua and held it until they could get him and carry him to Jacksonville. But he was dead when they got him to Jacksonville. Mother said that if she had seen him before he left up yonder, she would not

have let them carry him. If they had left that man in here and the neighborhood had seen him [there would have been outrage]. People that you knew, they were so mad and wild almost. (And there is quite a few nigras buried in the railroad banks around here. They do not know who they are or where they came from.)

H: Do you remember that time and what happened?

D: Sure. I was about ten years old.

H: And when did your mother hear about this? Was she here at the house?

D: I do not know how they got the word in, but they got it in. Everybody that could get to him got to him. The different ones said who hung the six niggers in the hammock out there. [There were] six niggers – two women and the rest men – hanging up in the oak trees the next morning. They do not know how many are in the railroad banks around different places. They just went wild. People that you knew and had known all your life did not look human as mad as they got because Uncle George was shot. There was one man who had been sheriff in Gainesville a long time. He was in Tallahassee that day. Somehow they got word to him, and he got up here. He was the man who hung them; he was the man who pulled the cable. We had a neighbor that said he had done it, and everybody knew that neighbor. They said if he thought he was going to see a man hung he would have fell down or run, one.

But it was not safe. They took [two men] and put a man [each] on two horses – one to go one way and one to go the other. They told the nigras there in Newberry that were in the houses, "Get in those houses and shut the doors, and don't you come out!" You could not get a nigger to stick his head out of those houses. In a week or ten days some of the older ones would not come out.

Everybody loved Uncle George, and he loved them. He was kind to them. It liked to have killed Mother. Whenever she came to the front gate that night for her (it was right over yonder), my daddy was out there. She wanted somebody to go with her. She said: "Harvey, you will have to go. I have to stay here and take care of these young'uns." See, all we girls were here then, the older ones and me, too.

H: So your mother went out to the front gate?

D: She went out to the front gate, got in the cart, and went over to Waldo or somewhere and caught the train. They went and carried him to Jacksonville, but he was dead before they got out there. His insides were just shot out through here.

H: And he did not really want to go?

D: He did not know anything after he was shot. Mother did not want him to go, but when you get a bunch of men in a tantrum like those were [there is no changing their minds]. People you have known all your life were in such a high temper until they looked not natural.

H: They would come around here and you would see?

D: They would come here and want to know where the men were at, whether they went that way or whether they went this way or which way they went. They wanted to go where the crowd was. I think there were twenty-five or thirty nigras killed out here in the woods. And not a white man in among them.

H: No white men were killed, then?

D: No white men were in it. That was pure nigra.

H: But the white people stayed home too and shut the doors at night?

D: They stayed home.

H: You said your father made you all get in the house and stay there.

D: Yes. He stayed here and let Mother go with Harvey. I am glad he carried Harvey, because there was a special nigger they did not get that Harvey would have got.

H: Harvey was a black man that worked here on the farm?

D: Harvey was my oldest brother. My oldest brother went with Mother. They carried him to Jacksonville, and then they carried him back to Quitman, Georgia, up there where he was buried. They did not pretend to bring him down here because if they had brought him down here to have his funeral, I do not know what the people would have done.

H: So that was a hard time.

D: It was a hard time for the niggers and a hard time on us – everybody. They did not know whether those niggers were going to team together and jump up on folks around here or what they were going to do. A nigger is a wicked animal. He ain't a human; he is a wicked animal. But I do not ever want to see anything again like folks got [back then]. Daddy would not let us get out on the front porch even.

H: You were only ten years old then.

D: He told us to get in the house and stay there, and we done it. We would go upstairs a time or two and peep out. If he heard us up there, he would tell us to get downstairs where we belonged. But he said he thought he would be better with all the girls. All of the eight girls were here. He sent Frank, my brother, on a horse or mule the next morning to tell Aunt Nerva (that was George's and Mother's sister). When he got to the other end of this lane, [there were] four dead niggers piled up in a pile. He like to have went to pieces. He was just in his early teens then. But he went on out, and he told Aunt Nerva. I do not know how they got together, but Uncle George went to Quitman, Georgia, where they buried Uncle George. If they had brought him in here –

H: That would have been trouble, right?

D: Well, Mother said she tried to get them to bring him here and have his funeral here. That is what he said he wanted to be done. He had said he was almost born here, [and] he wanted to be buried here. But they buried him up there where the rest of his folks are.

On our father and mother's family, we have every one of them except two buried in Jonesville Cemetery. Our Aunt Edith took one of her brothers – he was about six or seven years old – over to south Florida where she was teaching. She was teaching and carrying a baby, too. She neglected him somehow, and he died over there. He may have been weak in his heart anyway. But we never have been able to find his grave. There were two of Uncle George's brothers and a sister buried in Gainesville.

We worked and we worked and we worked. Finally, Mother, Winnie, Ralph, and I went over there one day. We said we would go sweep the cemetery and find the graves of the three of them – two of the boys, who were twins, and another girl [and] Uncle George, who were also twins. The man in charge over there said he had walked ten miles and tried thousands of people to find out whose graves those two were. They were just in the gate just off that way from it. They were not marked or anything else, but they were [from] before the War Between the States when Uncle Jesse was living there.

H: Where are your parents buried?

D: In Jonesville [Cemetery]. There are three generations out there.

H: Most of your family is buried in Jonesville?

D: There are three generations out there.

Now, Grandfather and Grandmother are buried on the west side of the cemetery, and our lot at Jonesville is on the southeast side. That one there got filled up with nieces and nephews. And some neighbors came in where they did not belong, and we did not bother them. Our family has always been for peace. You go to talking about people on a cemetery and you had better look out. They are already hurt and worried.

H: Do you remember how it was around here during World War II?

D: It was bad parts of time.

H: There were not too many men around then.

D: There were not any men around. I had three brothers in service during World War I, and I just had four brothers. If Ralph had not went in when he did [on] that Sunday peace was declared, the fourth boy would have been in on Tuesday. He had already [received the] papers calling him on Tuesday. That would have left my daddy with six little gals at home. But we would work right on.

That First World War we started sewing for the Red Cross different things that we knew we could make – dresses and stuff like that. They had given somebody a great big old box about that square of cloth to make baby diapers. They had cut this way, they had cut that way, and they had cut any other way except making it straight. They brought us three of those boxes out here so large that that chair would have gone in them for us to make baby diapers. We made baby diapers until we thought we were going to turn into one. Then they brought some out here and brought a dress pattern for the girls and a shirt pattern for the boys. They brought different material, and we worked day and night part time on it.

H: Was this the First World War?

D: Yes.

H: What about the Second World War? Do you remember that time?

D: The First World War was first.

H: What about World War II, during the 1940s? You must have been grown up by then.

D: It was worse than the first. But the ones of ours, we did sewing right on just as long as they needed. They brought out here boxes that square of cloth. Then they got to bringing cloth, and we made little dresses. My brother was there one

day, and they had a box of it up like that. He said, "What are you going to do with that pile of cloth?" He said, "We are going to take it out there and burn it." [My brother] said: "No, you are not. You are going to put it in the back of that truck, we are going to take it home, and those sisters are going to make clothes out of it for little kids." We made children's clothes until we thought we were going to turn into one. We had three machines, so we really had a little factory going. The girls' little skirts were made out of that. You know, if you make a little full skirt and put a little sleeveless body on it, the little kid will shout when she puts in on. The little skirts had a little waist on them, and the little pants did not; they just had a little strap over them. There were some of them in here that did not have money to go and buy clothes.

But we worked. The state would bring those great big old boxes out. They would call and say, "How many diapers have you got dry?" We would tell him one box was full and the other one was half full. [He would say], "Well, we will send a truck out there to pick them up. They came out here and picked them up and carried them there to where the Red Cross used to be on the southwest corner of the square.

H: Downtown?

D: [Yes], downtown. We started just going in and helping out in town, and they finally let us have the stuff and bring it home and do it there. They would carry it there and dole it out. They would just give so much to so many. It was not long before they would be out here with another box of trash. That is what they called it, "trash."

H: And more work for you to do.

D: Yes.

H: Well, we had better wind up for today. Is there anything you would like to talk about today?

D: Not right now. I made a little disturbance, but I do not want it out yet.

H: OK.

[Sally Morrison, a state park ranger and overseer at Dudley Farm, joins Lisa Heard and Miss Dudley for this segment of the interview.]

H: Do you remember the Depression and how it was here in Newberry at that time?

D: I sure do. Let me see. That was after the war. [Miss Dudley refers to the period

after the Civil War as the "depression." Ed.]

M: Did you all feel the Depression here?

D: Yes, ma'am, we sure did. And from the time that the war was over until that really bad depression came, Ralph was working a group of men making roads through the community. That was his job; [he was] boss over, I think, fifteen men who he had to keep working. I do not know what they paid them, but they paid them so much each week.

H: Did you all have trouble keeping the farm going during the Depression?

D: No. We had trouble keeping nigras wanting to work for a loaf of bread. They would come here and look for potatoes and bread and anything we had that they could eat. You see, them creatures did not have a thing when they were turned loose – just the clothes that were on their bodies. They were not counting on a bunch of little niggers running around there in their shirt tails.

H: Right. But you all had enough here.

D: Yes, we had enough. Some of them had a few chickens, and the little nigras sometimes would come up there on a horse. (They did not look like they were big enough to get on a horse, with their feet sticking out on each side.) They would have two or three eggs, and [they would say,] "He wants some tobacco for Pawpaw." He did not even get off the horse. He just rode up to that side door. But, now, if he got off and went in that store, you had to watch him.

H: Now, this was at the store?

D: There was a store right out there in front of our gate. It was the only one in this community at the time. After Grandpa carried that down to old man Griffin, it stopped him a-fussing and a-cussing worse than I do not know what. Still, we run up here hunting the mail. We would have to send them down to Griffin's to get it. Then they started Newberry. Mr. Griffin, you could hear him cursing a mile when they took the mail route away from him.

H: He did not like that?

D: He was for Mr. Griffin only. In this community, in the case of needing anybody in [a] death or anything like that, [we had a signal]. If they wanted just to notify you, they shot a gun once. If it got to where they thought they were going to have to have you, they shot twice. By the time they got that, the men got their horses saddled. When the third time came, they went right to them because it was an emergency.

But that morning there were two cousins shooting it out. One got the other. They had put the one who got killed's sister – she was married staying at home, and he was somewhere else – in the upstairs of the house where she could not see anything out[side], they thought. But she saw her brother [get] killed. But it did not do her any harm.

Then they started and went to Newberry. It was out there a long time before they ever got the post office back out there. It was out here at Jonesville.

H: When did they move the post office to Newberry?

D: Let me see. When was the First World War?

H: 1918.

D: Well, it was just right after that. You see, this land here was all covered with virgin pines – pines like this house was made out of and not these water oaks. (We always called them water oaks, but they were pine trees. It was a short-leaf pine.) We had that kind then, [those] like this old house is made out of. They cut all of that, and then they found that we had phosphate. Then they went to digging for phosphate. That is when things began to climb up a little. After that they went to selling the places to get the people to different living quarters.

H: They mined phosphate in this area?

D: More than anywhere else. They are still mining it down in south Florida in one place (or I think they still are). There is one place in south Florida where they are still mining phosphate.

M: That is how Newberry developed, as a mining community.

D: Yes, Newberry is where they started.

H: I did not know that. So the town started to grow then?

D: Yes.

H: When did they start mining phosphate?

D: Just after the war, because they had cut the trees [to make room] for the phosphate [mines] during the war. (The boys tried to cut them.) Some of them [phosphate pits] were pretty nice little holes about as big as that.

H: Then your brother started building roads? They probably needed more roads.

D: Not my brother [but] the whole community. They met here one morning out there where the old store was. The men around this community and the slaves who were still with them [got together], and they cleaned the highway from the gate to [a place] I can show you between here and Gainesville where they stopped. The other folks on that side carried it on to Gainesville. Then they got up a group in Gainesville, and they carried it on clear to the ocean.

M: Now, this was prior to the Civil War. There is a paper that made her grandfather road commissioner, and he was designated to go and cut the road in this area.

D: You can go back and trace it and find that I am pretty near right on it. Sometimes I get things mixed up.

Then some of those freed niggers got to where they were biggity! One killed my uncle, and then trouble, oh, boy!

H: Yes. I remember you told me that story.

D: That was one time my daddy used his head. They came and told us about it so that they could get from over there. It was just a mile and a half from here. He and Mother were standing at the front gate, and they had a car (I do not know whose car it was). They carried him over yonder and put him on the train that went to Jacksonville. They carried Uncle George over there, but he was gone before they got there. When that broke loose, my daddy said: "Harvey, go with your mother. I am going to stay with my girls." See, all us girls were at home then. We were glad that Harvey went, because there was one special nigger he wanted to kill.

H: It was good to get him out of there.

D: He did not get him though. He was a nigger preacher. They would steal a hog or something up this way this week. The next week you would find they would steal something over yonder. They would just go out in the corn crib, and right down in the bottom was where the best corn was. We did not have any corn to break. They had already broke [corn] for us.

But they have had it in this community. When they started this way with the road, they cut out the virgin pines. The man used to drive his cows. There used to be a pond down here, and he would drive them down there and water them and camp there that night. He said, "Well, it would have been better. If those folks can make a road, we can too." And they made a road from here clear to the coast over [there]. Different communities would take so much, and that is how the roads got cut.

Ralph, my brother, was over the district here one time, and he did not like it. He worked until he got it up to here. Two or three of his men said: "Ralph, you are not going to make us work, are you? We are not nigras." He said: "You have got your names down on here as needy. The hide does not change the paper." That family has stuck to us through thick and thin. It is the Green family: Charlie Green, and I do not remember what Charlie's father's name was.

H: How about after you all grew up? Some of your sisters married, right?

D: Yes.

H: But some of you all stayed here, yourself and a couple of other sisters.

D: Winnie stayed here, Myrtle stayed here, Edna stayed here, and Dora stayed here.

H: And you all kept the farm going?

D: The boys [did]. You see, after the war there was Ralph, Harvey, and Frank. Norman was not himself then. They stayed here and worked until Frank got a notion he wanted to go to Jacksonville and work in the railroad shop. He went over there and got a job, and he was working with honeybees [here on the farm]. He had 123 hives of bees. They [the hives] got to where they had to be "robbed," and we had to call him off the job to help us with them. So he came home, and we robbed bees two or three days.

H: You had honeybees here on the farm?

D: Yes.

H: One hundred and twenty-three hives?

D: Yes.

H: Wow!

D: Or more. Everywhere anybody would see a swarm of bees in the trees, they would say: "Frank, there is a swarm of bees. Go get them." One Sunday afternoon we had three neighbors on the front porch just sitting out there talking. We noticed up in the magnolia tree (an immense tree), way up in there, that there was a great big swarm of bees hanging on a limb hunting a nest. Ralph said that if I would help him down on the ground, he would go up and put the bucket under the bees. He climbed up in the tree, knocked off that swarm of bees off in a foot tub (that is what it was), and let them down to me on a rope.

When we looked back, everybody was off the front porch with the door locked.
[laughter] But we got the bees, and nobody hardly got stung.

H: And then you put them in a hive.

D: We put them in a hive.

M: Did you make your own hives?

D: We made them, but we bought them [pre] cut.

M: So you did not use the old tree trunk.

D: They were almost cut to perfect fit. You see, we did not have anything to cut those little strips about like your hand that honey went on.

M: It took a special saw.

H: And did you all tend the bees yourselves?

D: Yes, ma'am. We have worked in the kitchen here with these machines getting honey. For two days at a time we would be robbing bees. Oh, boy, the bees that we did have around the house. We never did get real stung by them, if you watch what you are doing. But there are some people they will sting regardless of what you do.

H: Right.

D: But that Sunday afternoon I think there were three or four ladies out here from Newberry. When they started up the tree to get the clump of bees knocked loose so they could come down, they came in and shut the door and got out here looking through the window.

H: How would they get the bees out of the tree?

D: They went up there in the tree and tied a rope to the limb that they were on, and the fellow that was down on the ground would give it a hard jerk and knocked it loose. The other brother that was up in the tree had the foot tub, I believe (a foot tub or a little washtub one), and he got them in that. Then he turned it over and got them down on the ground. Myrtle was out there getting bees into the hive until they got down out of the top [of the tree], and then I left them with the bees.

H: And who went to the hives and got the honey out?

D: Frank would go up to the hives and bring the honey in more than us, because we women do not try to tote a case of honey. We had a machine that we put that in [that spun around] and extracted it from the comb. It was in the dining room. We got two barrels of honey that time [in] two day's work.

H: Then did you sell the honey?

D: Yes, ma'am, by the barrel. You have to sell it or do something with it when you get it that way because it does not keep good out in the open. If you have something to put it in, [it will keep]. But, you see, you get two barrels of honey, and it takes a lot of things to hold it. We would work one day, and the next day we would take the honey out of the barrel it was in and put it in whatever you were going to put it in. [We took it] right out of the machine and put it in the barrels. Then we would get it out of the barrels and put it in whatever you were going to put it in.

You got some [honey] on the wax, just like the bees had it. You had to handle that carefully. We had a box about that square we put all the boxes of strained honey in that it would hold. We would carry them to Gainesville. There was a store there right on Main Street right where the railroad track used to be across the main part.

H: Downtown.

D: There was a place there that we sold the honey. We would get to the little grocery store up there on Railroad Street. He would send somebody out to help, and tell them the honey was here. When we killed the hogs, he made the sausage. [He hollered], "The head cheese and the meat is ready." Here you would see them coming with a pot or a pan or something to get the head cheese. We had it in a big old box we had. We done that for a long time. Then Frank got to where he would listen to Mother and put the honey in a barrel and sold it to somebody in Jacksonville, and they would come here and get it. They would call up and want to know when we were going to have a barrel of honey, and we would tell them about when. [They would say], "We'll see you about daylight" when we would tell them it would be about sundown.

H: So then you did not have to haul the honey into Gainesville. They would come from Jacksonville and get it.

D: No, no. Honey is awful hard to manage. It is sticky.

H: Messy, yes. [laughter]

D: It is messy, yes!

M: What about those pretty glass jars that are about this tall and about that big around? Did you sell it in those?

D: We put it in those until they used the jars up.

M: We still have a case of them that you all [gave us].

D: I think there are two or three in the yard. There may be some of them out there yet.

M: They are. They are in the barn.

H: Did you take other things into Gainesville to sell?

D: There was not anything else to take into Gainesville.

H: What did you take into town to sell?

D: Syrup and vegetables. Daddy would fix the wagon, and here he would go. He would come back about night with not a corn cob. He done the turkeys the same way one Christmas. He had a wagonload of turkeys.

H: Did you ever go into town when they went to sell products?

D: No. We were supposed to stay home.

H: How about when you were older, when you were an adult?

D: Yes, when we were older if we wanted to go with him, he would let us go. But when we were kids [he said], "You go back and stay with your mother." And we went back.

H: Yes.

D: Sometimes he would carry Frank, the youngest boy, to drive the team for him. But he got to where he was so cranky with it that he quit letting him go with him. But he would take a wagon with every turkey in it that he could pack in it, leave here before about daylight, and I will not tell you what time he got back that night. But he did not have a turkey in his wagon. He went to a place there, and there were four women. They said, "We want them, but we have got nobody to kill them." He passed something, and he said, "There is the clothesline, and I have got the cord in the car." He had that clothesline full of dead turkeys. Everywhere around there came here to kill their turkeys. You know, a turkey is hard to kill.

H: Is that right? I have never tried it [laughter].

D: If you do not [know how], you had better not try [laughter].

H: Let me see. You all did honey, and you said you grew flowers for a while here.

D: Yes, we did.

H: People would come out and buy them?

D: They would come out and buy them. They still do that.

H: You told me that you started with two bulbs each or something. What was that [story]?

D: I think we had three or four bulbs is all we had when we started with the lilies. When we ended up, we had a field of them. Now we have got them scattered all over the yard here. I got some of them yesterday. Miss Liz was here and said she would take those you put in the flower pit, but she said she will not take them from me. She has got to take them from you.

M: OK. So she knows it is alright. Did you all cook with the honey? Did you like to cook with the honey?

D: No, it was too nasty to clean up after [laughter]. If you let it boil over and scorch on the stove one time, you would not try to cook with it anymore.

M: Did you make cakes or anything with it?

D: No.

M: But you did use syrup.

D: We used syrup in every way we could possibly use it.

H: Was that cane syrup?

D: [Yes], cane syrup. We made our own cane syrup.

H: So you grew sugar cane here?

D: We ground the cane [and] made the syrup.

H: And you preferred to cook with the syrup.

D: [With] honey, if it boiled over on the stove, you had to stop and get your fire [put] out and clean it out or the first thing you know your honey would be burning on top of the stove.

M: Miss Myrtle still makes a syrup pie with the cane syrup. It is one of her specialties.

H: Is that right?

D: I think the syrup pie is about the best thing made out of that syrup. I have been wanting to make one, but I just have not done it. I have [not] been able to do it, I had better say.

H: What is in a syrup pie? What goes into that?

D: You have four eggs, you have a cup of sugar, you have got two cups of syrup (I think it is two or [maybe] three), and a little corn starch.

H: That sounds pretty sweet [laughter].

D: It is.

M: It is a pecan pie without the pecans.

D: Oh, right. That is what it sounds like.

D: After you make your pie crust, you just take that pie filling and put it in your crust. You cook it like you cook your crust, and you have got your pie. But do not get too much filling in that pie pan or you will have a stove to clean.

H: [Laughter] Really! That is a hard job. Well, Miss Dudley, do you have anything else you want to say?

D: Is there anything you want to put on there?

M: I was wondering if the women in your family drove the buggies and rode the horses or if that was mostly men who did that.

D: When? When the crops were being [gathered]?

M: Yes. Did you drive wagons?

D: No, sir!

M: That was men's work?

D: That was *men's* work. Those women stayed out of those wagons.

M: What about the buggies to school? Did you ever drive it?

D: We had a buggy. I do not know were they got it. It was a two-horse buggy. You see, there were six of we kids going to school at one time. When the older girls were going, there were the four older girls. The boys were old enough to go then, but I was not. When they finished the Jonesville school, we had an aunt living in Gainesville. Those four older girls went over there and went to school and stayed with her. Then the boys went to Jonesville one year without anybody with them. I was not big enough to walk the mile and a half to school. Then it was moved to Newberry, and we got a horse and buggy and went that way.

M: Did you and your sisters ride horseback?

D: No, ma'am! My mama did not want us on a horse. She said a lady did not belong on a horse.

M: But you did shoot a gun, and you were pretty good at that, were you not?

D: Yes.

H: How did you learn to shoot a gun?

D: I had brothers that were always practicing, and I was hanging on their coattails. I started trying. One day Frank (that is my younger brother who had children; the others did not have any) was out there practicing with the kids down here in the bowery in front of the house. We had a ditch where they had dug clay and rock out of and carried it down to the highway down yonder. They made them a gun place down there where there would be no danger of killing an animal or hitting anybody. Frank and his kids went down there that morning. Sue had whipped her daddy in target practice that day. They were raising sand [saying], "They beat Daddy! They beat Daddy!" I walked out there, and I did not say a word. I just reached over and got Frank's rifle and shot the target. I won. That girl got so mad she cried and went home and would not even come up here for a month or more. [laughter] Aunt Myrtle beat her with the rifle, and she did not know how to shoot a gun.

But we all practiced. We had that place fixed where we knew there was no danger of anybody or any animal getting in it. But that kid said: "They beat so-and-so! They beat so-and-so!" But when I beat "they" the tune changed. [laughter] She did not even come down here for nearly two weeks.

M: What animals did you hunt with the gun when you were shooting?

D: Squirrels, rabbits, and anything that was edible.

M: So you hunted for food for the table?

D: Yes.

H: And what did your mother think of you girls all shooting rifles and hunting?

D: She kind of objected even to that honey being worked in the dining room. It was the bees that came in with the honey that she did not like. [laughter] She did not go out there then. She just told Frank and the rest of us and Major, "You do that and I am out of the kitchen."

H: Major would help you with all of that honey business, too?

D: He would bring it in from the hives to the kitchen. Major worked with anything, and he was a good worker. But he done just what I told him. Somebody was going to get killed with that motorcycle. A nigger boy got one, and I think he rode day and night. He rode Major out one night and throwed him off over yonder in the woods about three miles from here. Major hid out in the pine and oak thickets. Frank could not find him that Sunday. My sister was being operated on that same day, and I went to my sister. I called Frank to [go find] Major. It took three men to get him into the back of a car and carry him to the hospital. They had already put syrup on him and this, that, and the other to stop the burning. It took three men to put him in the back of the truck and hold him there until they got him to the hospital. But he died. Gangrene had already set in. If he had come to me as he should have, I could have given him something for that burning. He was skint-up, too.

H: They used syrup to treat that?

D: Yes.

M: What would you have done for his burns? How would you take care of the burns?

D: I would have got me some clean water first and rinsed it off. Then I would have got the nitroglycerin and poured that over it. That and some syrup mixed in with it does not leave a bad sore. But, now, if you turn the nitroglycerin on there, it is liable to blister it. That syrup will keep it from that, and it holds it in place.

But he did not come to where we could get him, and my sister was to be

operated on for a broken leg that Sunday. That was on Sunday when they came here and told me where Major was. They said he was going to be dead if we did not do something for him. I said, "We have hunted two days for him." When they found him, it was too late, though. He hid in an oak and pine thicket over there, him and his woman.

H: Was your mother still alive then?

D: No.

H: She had already passed on.

D: She had been gone quite a while.

M: Did you all build the kitchen and dining room that is here now after your mother died, [so that] she never saw them?

D: She never saw this room. It was 1924 when the kitchen was built.

M: Well, she was still alive until 1937.

D: Yes, she saw the kitchen when it was the way it is now, because she fussed enough about doing it.

M: She did not want to change the house.

D: She did not want to change the house. She wanted it just like Ben left it. We were taking care of her. We were not thinking about my daddy at that time.

M: Did you move the old kitchen up to the house and connect it with it?

D: We moved the old kitchen up and joined it up to the house first.

M: While she was alive?

D: Yes, while she was alive.

H: How old was your mother when she passed on?

D: I do not know. I will have to go hunt up the record to find out. She was up in her eighties.

H: So she lived a long time.

D: Yes. My father died young, though.

H: And your mother lived on this farm most of her adult life?

D: Yes, right in this old house. At first, when she came up here, Grandmother Dudley passed on in the spring of the year, and Grandpa [died later]. Mother was looking for a baby. She had two of them [already] and was looking for the third one. He [Grandpa] went to stay with his daughter that lived just up yonder at Archer [after Grandmother died]. The Williams were down there at Archer. They had a big old two-story white house right straight on up from the road that went from here down there. He went down there. She was buried in the spring, and he was buried in the fall of the same year.

H: Had this house been started being built by the time he moved over?

D: Yes.

H: So that makes this house older than he.

D: This house is old!

M: It would have been built in 1881.

H: This house was built in 1881?

M: Somewhere in the 1880s, if he died in 1881 and it was not started.

D: There is a book over yonder [the family Bible] that I can find when the house was built without too much trouble.

H: And your mother had all her babies here in this house?

D: No, she had two at Archer. The rest were all born here.

H: I see. Did she have a midwife come and help her deliver babies? Who helped her with that?

D: Mrs. Nipper helped mother one year have a baby, and the next year Mother helped Mrs. Nipper have a baby. Now, that is everything was. There was no midwives or anything like that. There was nobody else here but us in this community.

H: So they helped each other.

M: Miss Myrtle, did your grandfather ever see this house?

D: Yes, he helped.

M: He helped build it?

D: He helped build it. There was just a frame that Mother lived in, and there was no upstairs.

M: When was the third baby born in this house?

D: Let's see. Dolly and Dora were born in Archer, and the third baby was born in that room in yonder.

M: That helps us put a date [on the house].

D: You know that bed back there in the back room?

M: By the window?

D: The other bed. She took that bed, because it is a long fall for a kid to roll off that other bed in there.

H: [Laughter] Right.

D: It is a big old high, four-posted bed.

M: So that bed was her bed by the window where you sleep now?

D: Her bed was by the window.

M: Then the big canopy bed was your father's bed?

D: I think so.

M: And you had a treadle sewing machine at the foot of that bed by the window for sewing.

D: That was her whole house.

M: In this room you would not have had these modern chairs. What did you have?

D: We had benches.

M: What about your cowhide chairs?

D: We had the bench stuck out on the porch that were not all the way covered, and we had some boards that people could sit on.

H: You just had benches for kids? There were a lot of kids in this house.

D: There has sure been a lot of them in here, too. But the children nowadays are getting to where they want to go tearing up stuff.

H: Yes.

D: If we had tore up something, we would have gotten tore up!

H: [laughter] So you think children raise their children differently today.

D: I know those brothers of mine felt like breaking my neck many a time getting out to play ball with them. George Wright's great-grandfather played around here just like George's oldest grandson [does] now.

M: You did not buy a store-bought ball, did you? What did you make it out of?

D: We would save thread off of the different things that the thread came in, and Mother would help us make them. Sometimes we would take a piece of cloth and make a round piece out of it and then take a needle and sew the ends of that thread in that cloth and then finish the rest of it by winding it up with the thread. The thread was stronger than the straight piece.

M: You used a twine or string?

D: Anything we could find. And Harvey (that was my oldest brother) could make one that looked almost like a store-bought one. He got to where he was making them and giving them away, and his daddy got after him about it. "Well," he said, "I hate to charge my friends." After that he made them pay for the thread.

M: It sounds like your daddy was a businessman.

D: Well, if Daddy said stop, we had better stop. But we had a dog that would put a stop to that. He would go to spank one of us – the boys, especially, and not me – and the dogs would get after him.

H: Really?

D: He would have to go get in the smokehouse to spank the kids. And don't you

think he did not spank us, either.

H: But the dogs were protective of the children.

D: Well, he just went in the smokehouse and put the strap on us anyway.

H: But you kids were not allowed to go into the smokehouse usually, right?

D: We did not have any business. You had to go to work if they went in there and messed it up. See, we had the meat all in there hanging up in the middle.

H: Did you all do any fishing?

D: We had a sink over in the field that we could get a little bit of fish out of, but not many. We fished in it until it caved in one day. We had an old nigger slave that every year he would grow a bushel of rice, and he toted the water [to flood the rice paddy] out of that sink. He and his wife would water that rice. And there would not another nigger go in there and pull a grain of that rice, either. That was Captain's rice.

M: Who was Captain?

D: My daddy.

M: Oh, they said it belonged to your father or your grandfather.

D: Both of them. My grandpa was still here. But after Grandmother went on, you see, he was just left up there in the house by himself. He was getting to be an old man. He went and traded his little piece of farm and a house down in Archer to my daddy.

M: So your grandfather and grandmother lived in the log house until they moved to Archer.

D: Yes, until they moved to Archer.

M: So really they built this house for your father and mother.

D: For Father and Mother, yes. They built this house for us.

M: Your grandfather never got a chance to live in it.

D: He would not move in. He would rather stay up at his old house. He called his wife by her name and said, "She died up there, and I am going to die up there."

But he died in Archer. So did she, and he was buried in Archer.

He had a daughter down there. When they started from where they were at in the Carolinas down here, he was not going to come down, but he was not going to be left. He was going to come with us. My granddaddy said, "You are not going anywhere with us until you marry her." He said, "You are not going to be hanging around her without marrying her." They were married on the corner of the street, I think. That is where they were married.

M: Before he could make the trip?

D: Grandpa had to go hunt up a place and a lawyer. But he did not leave out of there until he was married.

M: I believe we had better let you rest your voice and get something to drink.

H: Yes.

[End of the interview]