

*Office of Oral History
at the
South Caroliniana Library*

South Caroliniana Library Oral History Collection

Tom McConnell Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Tom McConnell

SCLOH# 011

Interviewer: Andrea L'Hommedieu

November 4, 2011

(Also some questions asked by Tom's nephew, Freddie McConnell)

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview for the South Caroliniana Library at USC. The date is November 4, 2011. This is Andrea L'Hommedieu and I'm here today, are we actually in Winnsboro? Where are we? What community is this?

Tom McConnell: This is Fairfield County. It's Shelton. Well, it's Blair. It's Shelton but we're on the Blair [postal] route.

AL: Okay.

TM: It's Shelton but see we're on the Blair route. We ain't got no post office.

AL: Okay.

TM: We're on the Blair route so everybody call it Blair on account we're on the Blair route but this is Shelton here.

AL: Okay and your name is [Tom] McConnell?

TM: Tom McConnell.

AL: Tom McConnell.

TM: Tom McConnell, yeah.

AL: Oh, okay, I had that wrong.

TM: Yeah, well, I don't use all of my name. My name is Tom Jason McConnell.

AL: Okay.

TM: Junior.

AL: And is it Tom or Thomas?

TM: Thomas.

AL: Thomas.

TM: Yeah, but I just use Tom for short.

AL: Right. Okay, well tell me, Tom, where and when were you born?

TM: I was born in 1926, the 7th day of May.

AL: And where, right in this community?

TM: About a half of mile from where I was born at, across the hill over there.

AL: Okay, is that where you grew up too?

TM: I grew up here and I ain't never left. I say: "I was going to sing a song, pray a little prayer; I wasn't leaving home to go nowhere." And so that's the way it happened.

AL: Right. So can you tell me what this community was like when you were growing up in the '20s and '30s?

TM: We ain't had no lights. See we lived a long time back in this part of the section, didn't even have power, no power or nothing. We lived back there. Well, everybody lived happy you know. And so we lived back there, didn't have no lights or nothing, got our lesson, got our school lesson by the fireplace and lamplight. And so then here come a man come along he said y'all ought to have some lights. He come along from Columbia. He used to be our pastor, Reverend Nelson. He used to be our pastor at Sweet Mary Church and he had the contract and that's when we got lights back in here.

AL: And do you remember what year that was?

TM: I just remember, let me see. Louise, when was Reverend Nelson down there?

Louise, Mr. McConnell's wife: I don't know.

TM: Yeah, it's been many years though. I think I was about twelve or fourteen years old.

AL: Okay, so the late '30s maybe.

TM: That's right, when we got lights.

AL: That would make sense. How big a family did you grow up in? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

TM: I had eight. There was eight of us. It was four girls and four boys. Yeah, and all of them dead but us two. That's my oldest brother and myself. Yeah, so we had that streak of cancer that carried all of the rest of them out of here and it's got me down now. But I thank the good Lord I'm where I am now.

AL: And what did your parents do for work?

TM: My daddy worked at the same plant I did, and farmed. We was on the farm, on the farm back in here. I plowed that mule a many a day, picked cotton and spent many days back in here. Then I started to work at the plant when I was fourteen years old. They paid me, see back then you had to be sixteen years old to get a social security card, and they paid me under the desk until I got sixteen. And when I got sixteen years old I went straight out to working for them, for the plant, and I worked there fourteen years.

And then I start, the boys went to Aiken. They showed me the check stub said, "Boy, look what I knocked down today, this week." They showed me the check stub. I went straight to the office. I told them I wanted to get a leave of absence. I wasn't no carpenter then. I told them I wanted a leave of absence.

And one thing what made that, I always believed in myself. I believe if you put your heart and mind to things you could do things. So I went down to Aiken and started working at the bomb plant, but the first week I went down there you had to join the union. They wasn't taking nothing, but a man hollering out over the loud speaker wanted eight book men. Well, I had to come back home. I said, "I'm going back next week." I borrowed the money from my daddy. I'm going back the next week.

I went back the next week and an old, old man was setting round on the steps, he wasn't even trying to get a job or anything. And he told me, he said, "I'll tell you what you do," said, "you live a pretty good piece away from here?" I told him, "Yeah, I lived about fifty miles beyond Columbia." And he said, "I'll tell you what you do," he said, "when he holler for book men," said, "you just set here." He said, "When everybody else leaves," said, "you go tap on the window." And he said, "One question you ask him," said, "what you rather have, a fifty-eight dollar or the eight dollars?" See the book men didn't have to pay for the eight dollars. And I told him and tapped on the window with a pencil. He opened the door said, "Come on inside." I went inside there and he give me a job.

He asked me what my transportation was. I told him it was already down on the job; them boys was already down on the job. He said, "Well, you got to go about twenty miles before you get hired in." And another fellah from Orangeburg, I'll never forget him, by the name of Jennings and he had done passed the union test and he was going down on the job. And I hollered at him and he said, I asked him, what way was he going? I was going to hobo down there. I asked him what way was he going and he said, "I'm going down on the job, going to the old administration building they're sending me to" and that was about twenty miles away from the union hall. I told him, I said, "Can I hobo a ride? I'd done spent all my money." I said, "Can I hobo a ride?" He said, "Oh, yeah, you can ride. You're going to the same place I am?" I told him yeah.

I went down there; it was just like you were going into the Army. You had to go through so many doctors for tests, you know, and I got to the last one. He asked me, said, "You're supposed to have five years' experience in carpentry," but I told him the truth. I told him, no, I was born and raised on a farm. I said my daddy, we build barns, chicken houses. And he said, "Well, that's the kind of people we want here. That's right, what don't know too much," said, "you get more work out them fellahs what don't know too much."

And so he told me, I wanted to go to the hundred P, the area hundred P, but he sent me to the four hundred area. He said, "Let me tell you, about a hundred cars are going back." Said, "Where you born at?" I told him at New Ellenton. I didn't have to go all the way back in to Aiken you see. I told him I'm born at New Ellenton. He said, "About a hundred cars going out on that job to Aiken, going right through New Ellenton." He said, "You ought to have enough getup to get yourself there." Said, "They allow you to find your transportation and everything on the job when they hire you." Said, "If it take you a day to find it you just walk around and try to find a way back home," and so I took the four hundred area.

Verge and all of them and my brother, they was in the hundred P. That's where I wanted to go. That's where the transportation was you know, yeah. So he sent me to the four hundred area, said they was filled up at a hundred P; he sent me to the four hundred area. I got down there, didn't know nobody on the job. They talked to me, carried me in a little

old building, they talked to me, talked to me and everything. I never was scared you know or nothing. They talked to me. I done said on the way down there, well, if I don't, if they turn me down down there, down there, I know the way back home. That's what I said to myself, I said, 'I know the way back home'. And so I had done told Verge and them where I was going be at, Johnson Crossroad. That's where you go into Augusta, Georgia you know, on up there and so that's where I was when Verge and them come along. Look like that was the longest wait I ever did in my life. I said I don't reckon they gone.

And so that's about the life at the bomb plant, but I went with a fella down there, John Thompson. He could teach me how to carpenter but see, the union take you by seniority [and] they lay you off by that. He could teach me carpentry and he was the last one went down there and come in and they laid him off before they did me and he was a sure enough carpenter and I wasn't even a carpenter helper. That's right. But I told the man, he asked me was I hard to learn or easy to learn or would I obey the rules and everything. Well, I had common sense to tell him that, but a lot of rules, you know, after you get on the job you can cheat around on you see, and I knew that, you see. And the more people on a job the better you could escape with all that, you know, not knowing.

I got on that job and got with an old, old man. His name was Herman Killebrew. I got with him, he jumped up on a little scaffold just about high as that there and everything he wanted. He said, "What your name?", so I told him. I told him my name Tom McConnell. He said, "You don't mind if I call you Mac do you?" I told him, "No, you can call me anything." And he said, "Well, I'm going to call you Mac." And he said, "Mac, I want you to go over yonder and bring me about 2 eight-foot two-by-fours. But they didn't allow you to tote them by yourself on account if you put them on your shoulder it was so crowded down there when you turn you might hit somebody. Two men had to tote it. He said it will be somebody sent out with you. And so I went and got the eight two-by-fours every time.

How he really found out I wasn't no carpenter and didn't know nothing about it, he said, "Mac." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "I want you to cut me a two-by-four a foot long." I said, "Yes, sir." I got my old ruler out and measured it off, you know, and I went to cut it with the little old trial square but he said, "No, I want you to cut it with the big framing square," and I had the wrong leaf on it, you know. I was supposed to had the little leaf across the two by four. I had the old long leaf across there. He laughed. He said, "Mac," I said, "Yes, sir?" He said, "You ain't no carpenter." I said, "How you know?" He said, "I can tell how you handle your tools." (*Laughter*) "I can tell how you handle your tools but," he said, "now I'll tell you what to do. If you listen at me and ain't hard headed," said, "I'll make a carpenter out of you."

Now he was a sure enough carpenter and said, "I'll make a carpenter out of you." I told him, "Yes, sir, I'll do what you tell me." He didn't say nothing a long time and he said, "Hey, Mac," he said, "I'll tell you I ain't through talking," he said, "but I'll tell you while making a carpenter out of you what you're going to do." I asked him, "What's that?" He said, "You're going to do your work and mine too." He told me just like that there. That old man liked to worked me to death. But you see, I was so glad to be on the job I was just working at a fast speed. He said, "Whoa, un-uh," he said, "slow down." I asked him, what'd he mean? I said, "You told me to work." And he said, "But slow down," he said,

“I’m going to learn you something.” He said, “Always start off with the speed that you’re going to work all day in,” he said, “because you take the boss man come around here and see you ripping and running and rushing, he’ll want you to do that all the time and you can’t stand to do that all day long.” That’s what he told me said you just start off with the speed you have.

And he said, “I’ll tell you another thing. Don’t you try to measure off nothing while the boss man there talking or something. You get that, see that rake over there,” he said, “the area we’re working in, get that rake and rake it off while he’s there.” He said, “That counts as good standing on your time, how you keep your area up too.” So I got that little old rake, you know, I raked all the sawdust and everything back out the way and everything. And he says.... and then they didn’t allow us to saw. They had a saw man. They didn’t allow us to just, I could go on the job there and they had a saw man. He did all the sawing but if he wasn’t there you did it with the hand saw, with a hand saw. They didn’t allow a fellah, they had certain men run the skill saws and everything and so they didn’t want no man to grab a skill saw and get cut up and they have to pay out a whole lot of money. And so it was pretty tough the first two weeks but it was alright.

I found out what they was doing, wasn’t building nothing but little old boxes and setting anchor bolts in there for buildings to go down on that (*unintelligible*). And so I learned how to do that. The foreman says if you cut something a half inch short said nail it, nail it up. He said they’re going to pour concrete against it anyway and said nail it up just long as that box where them anchor bolts is sealed up, so I caught on pretty good. One day there, I reckon it was about four weeks, Killebrew told me, he says, “Hey, Mac.” I said, “Yes sir.” He said, “Go over yonder and get me a couple of two-by-fours. Get me four two-by-fours.” I told him, “You better jump down there and get them yourself.” I had done learned what they were doing then you see. (*Laughter*) I told him, “You better go get them yourself.” He said, “I been looking for you to say that.”

So that’s the way it happened. Then I moved down to Aiken. I was paying twelve dollars a week. That was back when things was cheap. I wasn’t paying but twelve dollars a week for board; a week per board, paying twelve dollars a week. I saw a man building a little old house, little old five-room house. And his name was Lawson Bush and boarding close to him, you know, and a little old joint was down there we used to go to, I used to go there near about every evening. And so I go down there, I learn a lot of people you know by setting around talking, playing checks.

And so he told me, said, “I’m building this house here for rent, that’s right.” I said, “You’re building it for rent?” I said, “How much rent you want?” He said, “Twenty-four dollars.” I told him, I jumped at it, I said, “You want me to pay you now?” That’s right, I jumped at it, I jumped at it. And so I took in Verge and my brother, Reid, and they paying me board to stay in it and I didn’t have nothing to pay. (*Laughter*) So I charged them and they stayed with me.

I think three of my children were born in there. Jesse James, now he’s the baby. He’s the baby. I come down there and my daddy-in-law, my daddy-in-law, she come and stayed with me and my daddy-in-law he took it pretty hard. He didn’t want to see her go. That’s right, but she went on with me and I stayed till the job was over with. I went back to the plant. I come back from down there and went back to the plant.

AL: What do you mean when you say plant?

Louise, Mr. McConnell's wife: Shivar Springs.

AL: Oh, Shivar Springs?

TM: Shivar Springs, yeah. You see that plant went through a heap of hands that a lot of people didn't know about. You take old man Shivar, that's how you get to be Shivar's. Old man Shivar was the first hand. The plant was right above, the plant you see all that junk down there in a hole out from the plant that way, a hole on the left hand side.

Freddie McConnell: Which plant, the one by the railroad track?

TM: No, the one on the railroad track.

FM: We just left from down there.

TM: Yeah, and that's where old man Shivar was at. Okay, he sold the plant. He sold that plant to Mr. Zimmerman Moore from Rock Hill. He sold that plant to Mr. Zimmerman Moore and then it went in that hand. Okay, Mr. Mac come in there from Saluda, Mr. McDowell, man that got it out of his hand come in there as a little old bookkeeper. And then when old man Zimmerman Moore went out of business he left Mr. Roy Hudson. You might of known Mr. Roy Hudson, he left and Mr. Roy Hudson married his daughter, and he left Mr. Roy Hudson stock in the plant. He wouldn't sell all the stock.

He left Mr. Roy Hudson a stock [in the company], but Mr. Mac didn't catch that in the deal you see and so Mr. Mac was talking kind of rough to Mr. Roy Hudson. Mr. Roy Hudson was sales manager. He was talking kind of rough and Mr. Roy said, "Well, Mr. Mac," he said, "you've been good to me so far," he said, "but I got something I want you to know." Said, "I thought you already knowed it." He said, "I own just as big a stock in this plant as you do," that what he told Mr. Mac. But Mr. Roy didn't want to, he didn't like to set at no desk all day; he liked to be out among people and he got to be the sales manager over all the trucks. So he got it so Mr. McDowell got it, and everybody wanted to know what kind of drinks that they made there. Oh, they made, they started, Mr. Zimmerman Moore he started with the RC, RC drinks. He started with that.

AL: Oh, really?

TM: Yeah.

AL: Really, okay.

TM: Yeah, he started with that. Well, that had done gone out before I started to work there. Then he started off with the ginger ale. They made about the best ginger ale, everybody said, around here.

And so when I started I didn't want nobody to know how I started. I started at fourteen years old unloading a car of coal with a shovel, that's right, unloading a car of coal. And Uncle Milt Meadow, he had the job of unloading the coal, and Mr. Grady Wright, he was the manager of the plant, he put me in with Uncle Milt.

AL: Your uncle?

TM: No, he was an old man, we just called him uncle.

AL: Okay.

TM: Yeah and so he shoveled, just shoveling. I was shoveling two shovels to his one. He'd shovel a shovel. He had an old knack --- he'd shovel one shovel before he'd get another he'd blow and then he'd shovel another shovel full. And I was working myself to death out there. I weren't but fourteen years old. And so when I got through with the carload of coal, got through with the carload of coal, Mr. Grady Wright told my daddy, he said, "That boy look like he in pretty good shape." You know I was kind of built up strong for my age, you know.

And so he said, "I can use him," said, "if you don't mind it," said, "I can use him," told my daddy said, "I can use him here at the plant, inside the plant." And so he put me in there, put me under a fellah by the name of Clarence Worship. We used to call him Doc Worship. They lived right up on 215. And he told me, "Long as you know how to feed the soaker and operate the soaker." I didn't know that was going to be my lifetime job but everybody come there they wanted that job on account of you can put so many bottles in there and then you go walk around a half hour at the time. That sterilized the bottles.

AL: Right, okay.

TM: Yeah and so that's what I, I fed that soaker. I fed that soaker I say about twelve years. Ain't nobody been able, wasn't nobody able to move. Mr. McDowell used to go out there. I could put thirty-two seven ounce, that's what the ginger ale went out in, the seven ounce bottles and the soaker hold thirty-two cases. I could put thirty-two cases by handling two bottles at the time, thirty-two cases in there in one round, fill the whole thing up and that'll run four (*unintelligible---sounds like: dixies*) what you put the drinks in. Yeah, I put thirty-two cases in there in twelve minutes. And so Mr. Mac was out there, I was feeding the soaker one day, I had them bottles clacking, clacking. Mr. Mac said "Junior." I said yes sir, that's the man owned the plant. He said, "You know one thing, you can tap dance by that music you playing there, can't you."

And so I got along with everybody on the job okay so I moved up in a position. They'd send me to the bank to carry the money every Monday morning. I was driving an old red Chevrolet truck. Yeah, that's what they'd send me in and said, "Don't you pick up nobody." They'd sack it up in bags, sugar bags, five pound sugar bags and I'd carry it to the bank. All I had to do was carry it in the bank, didn't have to stay there. They'd be done called. I didn't have to stay there till they count it or nothing. I could leave then and then they give me, I didn't have no driver's license, driver's license then. They catch you without driver's license then it wasn't but twelve dollars and fifty cents. They give me the twelve dollars and fifty cents to put in my pocket.

Okay, send me over to Greenville in one of the big trucks. They bought a Grapette [bottling] plant over there. Send me over there, I ain't knowed where the plant was or nothing, I ain't have a drivers license. They give me twenty-four dollars, twenty-five dollars in case a patrolman catch me going and then one catch me coming back, you know? Okay, I got on, he told me to go all the way to Main Street in Greenville, hadn't never been there in my life. He told me to go all the way to Main Street in Greenville, turn right, and I saw, that's the first time I saw the lights on the corner, on posts on the corner. All I drove, the lights was in the middle of the street, and I said 'good God, there ain't no light, ain't no red lights or nothing here'. I's just driving, police stopped me. I

was nearby to the Grapette plant. He stopped me and he laughed at me. He said, "That's my job out here, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt." He said they moved them out the middle of the street and put them on the posts. And I was so glad he said that I didn't know what to do. He said, "Whenever you go down the street said you just look to your right all the time. If you coming back, coming back said you just look for that light on the corner." And so I made it through that thatta way.

I made like I was so tired you know when I got to the Grapette plant, you know. The fellahs was there to load the bottles out and so I made like I was so tired. The boss man over there told me, said, "You go over there and lay down and rest." I told the man a lie. I told him, "Man, I come in from Charleston and they sent me straight on over here; I ain't had no rest or nothing." He said, "Well, you go over there and set down and rest, I'll put somebody to load the truck," (I was supposed to load my own truck) "I'll put somebody to loading the truck." And so I got by with that.

I come back by, we had starting housekeeping, me and her, start the housekeeping, and so I bought a cook stove, a wooden cook stove. I stopped in Miss Viola's in Union. I stopped there, had the old truck there you know and everything and I bought a cook stove there. The stove wasn't but about thirty-five dollars and I got a cook stove and they brought it out, brought it out. I got a cook stove and a dining room table. And so that's what I started off with. Back then it was pretty rough you know. That's what I started off with and I started off in that little house what them two children got burnt up that time then but I had done moved out over on the road then.

AL: I didn't understand that.

TM: I started off with a cook stove and already had a bed that her mother had done give us and a table, dining room table.

AL: Okay.

TM: That's right and so that's what I started off with. First child was born was Martha Ellen. You know Jebo, and so that's the first child was born. I got in the house down there, the house you could look up through the loft there and see the stars you know, and everything, had holes in it and everything.

AL: And this is like in the early '40s? Where are we at this point? Do you know what year it was about, like 1940?

TM: I married in 1941 and it was about, how long did I stay with Miss Lena and them? I don't know. I think I married about '43 I believe it was. I stayed with my daddy a while too, me and her. So we went in the house, house there and started housekeeping and that's about the story of that.

All but the inside of the plant, inside of the plant from your spring down there, it went right straight with the pipes, you may not be done find them, they went right straight through the ball diamond. That's right, for the new plant up on the hill. They did that and what way and everywhere they went I don't know because I was in the new plant up there feeding the soaker then but that's where the pipes went, straight up that road.

FM: They're still there.

TM: They're still there, yeah, and so down to the mineral spring, Verge, Charlie Anderson and Mr. Huey Dixon, they used to run the pump, the pump down to the old plant. And we dug all that pipe all the way from that mineral spring to the old plant down on the railroad. We dug that with a tractor and picks and shovels, all the way from there down to the old plant. But you see we didn't stay with the road. We went shortcuts through the woods and everything and so that's how they got down there.

FM: That's how the pipes from—

TM: Yeah, from your spring down there all the way down there to the plant on there. And so we dug them out and so that's when they started using the mineral water.

AL: And you go ahead, what did you want to say?

FM: Okay, from that mineral spring y'all did your piping all the way down to the old plant?

TC: Yeah?

FM: Y'all filled up the cisterns down there? There's about five or six cisterns. Did y'all pump the mineral water into those cisterns?

TM: We had, yeah, that's where they pumped it. They pumped it and saved it in there till they got ready to, got a order for the five-gallon jugs. That's what they shipped. They shipped that on the train.

FM: That's the mineral water?

TM: Mineral water, yeah, they used to ship that on trains. It went to Florida, every which a way and so most use for that was for hospitals. They sold most of that to the hospitals. It come in five-gallon jugs, nothing but the big jugs and they loaded them on a car box and shipped them every which a way.

AL: How come you had six of them?

TM: Talking about them six cisterns, them big cisterns?

FM: Yeah.

TM: Well, they had some of them for storage, storage tank. You see what a heap of people didn't know, what was washing the bottles come out of the river, out of Broad River. Heap of people didn't know that was coming out of Broad River what you wash the bottles with.

FM: And y'all put that water in some of them cisterns?

TM: Then you see that soaker had a rinser on it. Now that's when you used the regular well water but it wasn't out of the mineral spring now, used the regular well water for the, you know, to rinse the bottles then. And so you take those cisterns, when us moved to the plant, to the new plant up on the hill what you got up there now, that building up there now, when us moved there, see they stopped using the cisterns. Sometimes you didn't have cisterns was dry as a chip. I don't know how all that water get in there, got in there now, what you was telling me about.

FM: Stays about half full now.

TM: Yeah, I don't know how it got in there unless some of them houses, you know, they got a well right on the upper side where the office was, was a well there, unless they were stealing water or something and turned the well on or something and let that water got in there. But I don't even know how it got in there in those cisterns but down to the old, down to the mineral spring they had cisterns down there. See they'd pump it full too and the pump from the mineral spring it was in a little, you know, got high bank there, it was in a little building right side the bank there and that's what the motor, the pump in that. And see they couldn't pull it all the way from the plant down there so they had just like emerged well, had to push the water up there. That's right, emerged well, you see, the pump is down in the bottom of the well, near about to the bottom of the well.

FM: You mean there's a well, which well you talking about, at the mineral spring or on top of the hill?

TM: No, I ain't talking about that one, for the old plant down on the railroad.

FM: They had a well down there?

TM: Yeah, there's a well right on where the office was setting right beyond those cisterns.

AL: Okay, on the other side of the road?

TM: Yeah, the office was setting there. There's a well right on the side of the office but it's up the hill a little bit above the office. See it was a well up there.

AL: Okay, so near what we see as the foundation?

TM: It wasn't covered up with no building or nothing, just a well, old you know pumps and things was just open up there and so there was a well there.

FM: And they used that well water to fill up some of them cisterns?

TM: Yeah, they always kept one of those cisterns full of water for the plant down on the railroad and the other one was for the plant from the well to wash those bottles in up there. They started to pumping and had a fellah over there, he'd pump all day and then the next fellah he'd, down at the mineral spring, then the next fellah come there the next day he'd pump all day till they get everything smoothed off where they could run the amount of water that they needed down there and everything. See that well at one time, that mineral spring down there that's open, won't no house or nothing over it. It was just open, open down there, and that branch you see what running in there, that's the branch go down through our bottom. That's right, and it forwarded enough water to run all the time and slam to Broad River down there.

AL: How much were you bottling every day? Do you remember how much you bottled every day?

TM: Talking about the water or the drinks?

FM: The drinks.

AL: The drinks.

TM: Drinks, no, I wouldn't have an idea because they had four dixies there running and they have a order. They kept drinks on hand all the time but just like they get a

special order that's the onliest time we had to make any overtime, when they get a special order, just like they wanted a order for twelve o'clock the next day. Okay, down to the old plant we had to stay there half of the night. See down to the old plant wasn't as modern as the new plant up there on the hill was.

AL: Okay.

TM: See that ain't the whole plant. What you got up there ain't the whole plant up there then. That plant was way out here. Yeah, and so it was more modern plant than what was down on the river was and so it take less time and do twice the work than they did down on the river and so that's why we didn't make no overtime. Now I worked two jobs. I had five children in school at one time, one time, and you know how much I was getting an hour?

FM: How much?

TM: Seventy-five cent, that's all, back when everything was cheap. I was six years old in Hoover's time. See I was six years old. Hoover's time was in 1922, I was born in 1926. No, I was born in 1926 and Hoover come along. Hoover, I think, was in the '30s, yeah. So I was working at the plant. Reid and Ed went to the Army. I had to stop the plant to finish the farm out like that there but I went back. Every time I went back so the house I stayed in, Mr. McDowell's house, when I went to Aiken and he wouldn't rent nobody that house. He said, "Old Junior will be back." That's right, I got a leave from him you know. He said old Junior will be back. Just like if he wanted me to go somewhere or do something or go up to the house with him and do something around the house, I was right there. I was glad to make a little extra, you know, on account they wasn't paying nothing to start with. So the 'wage and hour' man come up there and made him pay a dollar a hour. Put it on the board. Made him pay a dollar a hour. He was shortchanging me, you see. And so he said he wasn't going to pay overtime.

And Mr. Grady Wright's brother told me, me and him used to talk about the ballgames. He was for the Yankees and I was for the Dodgers and me and him would get in some arguments about the ballgames when I'd go down to the store. He was running the post office and store then. And so he told me, he said, "Junior." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Y'all be a fool." He told me just like that there. He said, "Y'all workmen would be a fool to work overtime and he's talking about wait till you work a weekend in the wintertime and then you get that money then." But that was a trick, you see. He wasn't going to give you that money.

And we was working for him, there was three of us. There was Shelt Shelton, K.D. Feaster, and myself. That's right. I was running the soaker. When you knocked the soaker out, you knock the whole job out. When I got my forty hours, I knocked it out, okay? I thought it was going to be some trouble. I thought they were going to fire me you know, yeah, and so I took my card to Mr. Grady. He was running the plant. I took my card, "Hey, fellah, what's the matter, wait fellah, you got the whole job knocked off." Said, "What's the matter?" I told him I got my forty hours and that was nine o'clock that morning. I had my time in. I knocked it out and I thought I was going to have trouble. I hit my card, put it in my shirt pocket. He said, "Oh, Mr. Mac can't fire you about that." I was going to the labor, I didn't know nothing about no labor relations board till the man come up there and put the 'dollar an hour' on the board. That's right.

And I said, “Man, I ain’t giving nothing.” Mr. John B. Wright, his brother, told me said, “Y’all be a fool to give Mr. Mac that overtime. Y’all be giving Mr. Mac money. Y’all ain’t able to give him no money,” and so I wouldn’t do it. He said, “Oh, Mr. Mac can’t fire you, come on and work, I’ll pay you out of my pocket.” I told him, “No, I don’t want your money, I was working for Mr. Mac.” That’s right, I was trying to do that, get the hell off to get overtime, make him pay overtime. And so he wouldn’t pay no overtime.

I was messing around there and started working, started help loading out trucks that night, working eight hours in the daytime and then take an hour off and then load out trucks at night. But every truck there you’d be done load them out by twelve o’clock. That give me enough sleep. That’s right, I’d be up there listening at the radio then or something. We didn’t have no television back then. I remember when it wasn’t nothing but two televisions in Shelton by the black people. That was your daddy and Verge McConnell.

AL: So my question is can you talk about the area, the hillsides and such when you were younger and the spring was active? Was it like open fields or was there always a lot of trees?

TM: A lot of trees, gullies too, there was a lot of trees and gullies too. Now we owned a place back in here. It ain’t nothing but a few fields now since we stopped farming and a lot of gullies. That’s what it is.

AL: I found it surprising as did others how narrow that road is that goes into where the springhouse is and on both sides there are these very large drop offs.

TM: That’s right.

AL: Do you think it’s all rock in there?

TM: No, what happened, this road back in here it’s a private road where the dirt starts. But the other one over there the state took it over, the one where you turn off over there, turn off there. Now all of McConnell Road go to the last house on the hill where my brother stays, that’s where I was born at, and so you go to there, that’s a state road, but the dirt road start off here, that’s all private road. The county keeps this road up here.

FM: She’s trying to determine the landscape. You know the road that leads from the plant up here, that goes all the way down to the mineral spring.

TM: Oh.

FM: How was that road, was it a hillside like that or did y’all—

TM: Yeah, that was a hillside and right at the bottom is that branch there and it was a drop off. They didn’t use it. They stopped up there, right up there at that branch, right at the little drop off, right over in there, and that’s where everybody parked at. That’s right, it wasn’t there but when you went down there I think y’all did something, a little bridge.

FM: Little road to put a bridge in.

TM: Yeah, put a bridge in there. That’s right and so that’s where it was. But you see didn’t no trucks have to go down there all the way out to the well to get the pump in there to pump the water. Didn’t no trucks have to go in there that way, yeah. And then on that hill above the well, above the pump, that belongs to somebody else in there, you know,

for a long distance. I think it belongs to Miss Lottie Brown and them stayed in the house, last house coming out from in there from where Russell stayed at.

FM: Oh, yeah.

TM: And so that belongs to Mr. McDowell. That belongs to Mr. McDowell and he sold it. He sold that to, they sold it, Mr. Mac was dead. They sold that to Henrietta. They sold that to Henrietta, Henrietta Robertson. That's who she was before she married. I don't know who, what her last name was after she was married. Yeah, sold that to Henrietta Robertson, and then Isabel, Isabel Wright she was a Shed, she married a Shed down there at Jenkinsville, and then she got the bottom. She got the bottom part where Mr. Les and them stayed in the little house on the road. All that belongs to them. It belongs to her and they bought that when he was up in Union. His family almost give it to them you see. Yeah, that was all in the family you see.

FM: Okay, back to the mineral spring. Those two cisterns down at the new spring, the mineral spring, the water from the pump house, y'all pumped the water out of the spring how often into those cisterns? What was the flow like?

TM: What I mean they didn't stop, when they bottled all the water, bottled all the water at the plant, in the cisterns at the plant, then that's when they never stopped pumping until Roy Dixon, I said Huey Dixon but it's Roy Dixon. Roy Dixon helped run the pump down there Mr. Bunn Dixon's Roy, man used to live way back on the forest land, back up in there, and he was the pump. Verge and Charlie Anderson, they'd knock off at the plant, they'd knock off at the plant and go up there and pump. And Verge, that's how Verge got his name, your uncle got his name as "Pie Belly". *(Laughter)* He loved pie and see we're all first cousins and he used to go up on the hill and holler, holler from above the plant. We lived right across the hill there you know; he'd go up on the hill and holler hey, Aunt Martha; my mother was named Martha. Hey, Aunt Martha, you ain't cooking a pie for dinner, is you? *(Laughter)* He loved pie and my daddy named him Pie Belly, and that's what everybody called him, Pie Belly.

AL: Do you have a sense of how much water was coming out at a time, like how many gallons would come out a minute? We're trying to get an idea if the—

TM: I never did know the system of how the water was flowing, you know. See I never did fool with the pump or nothing at the plant pumping the water.

AL: Okay.

TM: That's right, I never did fool with that so that's one thing I didn't [know].

FM: Were you working for the plant when that new building was built over the spring? Were you working for the plant when the construction took place down there?

TM: Let me see. They didn't do that until after the plant was closed down.

FM: The old plant was closed down and y'all redone this plant?

TM: That's when the thing was built over it. They hulled it in. Boys got to going down there swimming in it.

FM: Okay.

TM: Yeah, you see, that's when they hulled it in. They were going down there swimming and so they hulled it in then.

AL: This is the upper area with the two cisterns?

FM: That's the one with the two cisterns.

TM: Yeah.

FM: He's saying they didn't build that cover until they started swimming—

TM: They didn't swim in the cistern. They filled in the spring.

AL: Right.

TM: The spring was open, yeah, all the time.

FM: Y'all was using that water at the same time to pump up the hill?

TM: Yeah.

FM: For the ginger ale, Shivar Springs Ginger Ale?

TM: No, it wasn't for the, that's for the mineral water in the five-gallon jugs.

FM: Okay.

TM: That's what it was for. We had to haul it from there down on the railroad to load the car boxes.

AL: Now how did you haul it?

TM: On a open truck. See with them five gallon, it was in crates.

FM: Wooden crates with five-gallon glass jugs.

TM: Built the crate to fit the five-gallon jug. They couldn't wiggle or wobble with nothing in them.

AL: And how many different drinks were there? You said ginger ale and you said RC, what else?

TM: Oh, we run a lot of drinks. We run ginger ale, orange, grape, Sun-Drop. We run Sun-Drop, lime cola.

AL: I saw that.

TM: Yeah, lime cola

AL: I saw a bottle.

TM: Yeah, we run root beer, root beer and all that, they run that. They started on a little Grapette, started to running Grapette.

FM: What is that?

TM: That's a little Grapette drink. See they bought a, Mr. Mac had a plant in Greenville too. Yeah, he had a plant in Greenville. He bought them out in Greenville. They sent me over there to set the soaker up, help get them started off on the soaker. I stayed over there one night. I stayed over there one night, and so a boy by the name Mr. Les Tim from Winnsboro, he was the manager and Allen Wright, Mr. Grady's boy, put

them to managing the plant over there. And had a boy named Foots. We called him Foots; [his] foots was about that long and we named him Foots. You know, we just nicknamed people, you know. Yeah, and so I went over there and they found me a board and Teet went over there to do a little carpenter work. I went over there to help set the soaker up and it was on the side of the mountain. Man, I was on the hillside of that mountain over there and cars way down yonder, way down yonder, and board up there. I don't think I slept that night. But what made me leave, the lady what we were boarding at she had collards for supper and so I wouldn't agree with having them for breakfast. Teet was crazy about them. First thing Teet hollered, "Yes'um" when she asked him, said, "yes'um, we'll eat them." I told her I don't want nothing but a cup of coffee. That's right.

But I had done thought my way out right then. Horace Dixon was coming over there, coming over there to bring a load of bottles, Grapette bottles, what they had to haul to the plant down here. He was coming over there and I had done, okay. Mr. Horace come over there and brought the bottles there I said hey, "How long you going be over here?" "No longer till I unload these bottles." I said, "Well, I want to ride back to the plant with you." I went back to the plant and Mr. Grady asked me, "Hey fellah, you done fixed that thing?" I told him, "No, I ain't even started on it good yet, ain't started on it good yet." "When are you...?" I told him, "I ain't going back." I told him just like that, I ain't going back, and so I didn't go back. He said, "Well," said, "you just rest up, come on back to work down here tomorrow, in the morning." I rest up there and got paid for the day and everything. And so I went to work the next morning and I worked at that plant ever since and help move that plant up on the hill, up there at your building up on the hill.

AL: You know how the basin, there's a basin in the springhouse? I want to ask a question.

TM: Talking about a casing?

FM: Yeah.

AL: Yeah.

FM: With dividers, those dividers inside?

TM: No, if it was a divider in there they must have did it after they moved up on the hill because there won't no divider in nothing. That's a open, that's a open place. Yeah, that's right.

AL: Okay, was there a level at which the water could go over something?

TM: Yeah, they had a drain. They had a drainpipe there. See they walls they was up high.

AL: Did the water ever go over?

TM: That water until they put pipes there, hulled it in, it supposed to be a pipe that that water run out there. When they hulled it in you see that water just used to run over, run over that.

AL: It would run over wall?

TM: It used to run over the wall.

AL: Okay.

TM: That's right, and so when they hulled it in, you see, they closed that up and they had to have a drain where the water run out. But that spring it put out the water though.

FM: So in other words, right now we're getting one gallon a minute, but to your recollection—

TM: One gallon?

FM: One gallon a minute, but can you recall that you was getting more than one gallon a minute?

TM: Oh, yeah, man's five-gallon jugs up on the hill. That was my daddy's job to wash the jugs, the jugs, and they was way over there at the other end of the plant. That's where they bottled the water, jugged the water up. And so you had to handle, didn't no machine handle that; you had to handle that with your hand, by hand. My daddy, he's the one what washed the jugs and put them under a little spigot there and then full the jugs up, full the jugs up then he put the cork. They had cork stoppers. Then he'd put the cork stoppers in them and seal it up you see and slide that jug back down in a case, in that case, and it was ready for traveling.

FM: Can we try to get a clearer answer? From your recollection, before they hulled that spring in, the water was flowing much faster than a gallon a minute during that time?

TM: It had to be. It had to be because they run fifty and a hundred jugs of that water before they stopped running it and didn't have to use it out the cistern, didn't have to use it out of the cistern what they had for spare down there.

FM: So they were just pumping directly from the spring into the jugs?

TM: Yeah, but I don't know, I guess Mr. Grady and them knows what it was running a minute and all them fellahs dead now. But I can't put no I know all that. I didn't know that.

AL: Right.

TM: That's right, I didn't know that because my job—

AL: But you observed them being able to fill jugs at a faster rate than what we're describing?

TM: How's that?

AL: Faster than a jug a minute?

TM: Oh, yeah, that thing putting out the water there.

AL: Okay.

TM: I'll tell you what you do. See they used to go down there to try to clean it out but they never could get all the water out of it. Water would get in there fast as they could, two or three men could bale it out. Water was coming in there that fast. It had a big vein to it.

FM: So it must be clogged up now then.

TM: Well, I imagine if you started using it, I bet if you started using it it'll be more than a minute.

FM: Yeah, so they're going to have to vacuum it out.

TM: Yeah, that's right.

FM: Okay. That's what we want to get a general idea.

TM: Yeah, you vacuum it out. See where we lived at, we had spring water and it was open till they put a—

FM: A ()?

TM: Yeah, around it and so it just run out all the time. That's right. But won't nobody smart enough to take the minutes of how much was running back then. What I mean they didn't care you know. All they wanted was the water then, you know.

AL: Right. I have a question. You know where all the water was stored. We're calling them cisterns but is that what you called them then or were they called something else?

TM: That's what we called them, cisterns, that's right, we called them cisterns.

AL: Okay.

TM: That's right, that's what they were for, for water and they supposed to be brick and concrete walls. But now they've been there so long. See that concrete would finally get away from the inside. If it start on the inside there, it wasn't nothing but, that's a thin coat plastered on the outside and that's what make it leak through or on the outside when it get a certain full that's what make it lead outside, yeah.

FM: Okay, but water is still in those cisterns?

TM: Yeah, but I don't know how it get in there. Them cisterns was dry. Them cisterns was dry when we left from the plant. I believe before they cut the water off the well, the well there what's up there by the office, I believe somebody must have turned it on and pumped that water, let that water pump in there in those cisterns or something like that there. But it was dangerous; I said to myself it was dangerous how they left those cisterns. They left the top open and I always said it was dangerous. Somebody could crawl up there and fall in there and never get out. I always said that, you know. But you know, a lot of things you thought back then you couldn't say it. That's right, you couldn't say it. That's right.

AL: Because you couldn't say it to the boss or you'd get fired, is that what you mean?

TM: You don't know what might happen. You might get fired. Let me tell you something. Back then when I come along, you better not know more than the boss man but you was gone. That's right, you better not know more than the boss man know. But they'd come to the plant, different boss men come to the plant I could teach them how to run that plant. That's right, but you couldn't say it. That's right. The only way you could get on there Mr. Wright, or some of them, had to put you on the different jobs, over a different job. That was the only way. Now you could go around and tell somebody oh, that fellah don't know what he's doing, I could beat that. It'll get back to him. I don't care what it is, you had to learn how to hold this. That's right, it would get back to them.

But it was, what I mean it wasn't too rough on us right around here in Shelton because it wasn't no high populated place or nothing like that. White and black got along good, wasn't no incident whatsoever. That's right, we got along good. You know why? Because the people, it was less populated and the people knew what would happen if you didn't do what you're supposed to do. That's right, you had to know when to hold your tongue. That's right, you had to know. And then when you was speaking you had to know who you was speaking in front of. That's right, and so back in them days they wouldn't do it themselves, people wouldn't do it themselves but they'd have it done. That's right.

There's a man come in Shelton, man come in Shelton one time lived right above them, that was before I married. He come in Shelton there, he disappeared one night. He disappeared one night and ain't never been seen since but there was some sort of rope where he was hung. You see what I'm talking about? Yeah, that was back over there where you go to Mr. Lim (). John Thompson and them was rabbit hunting, they was rabbit hunting and run across, what's all them ropes doing up in that trees there? Well, that's where the man was hung at.

FM: For what? What did he do?

TM: He didn't do nothing. This here's where I'm supposed to hold the tongue. That's right, he didn't do anything. He didn't do anything. Okay, he come in here. He come in here. He was working for a white couple. See they moved in here. Didn't nobody know them. Okay, they moved in here and rented a house across the road from where Eula stay at now, used to be a house over there. So they moved in there and when they moved in there, he had done help raise the children. Had done helped raise them childrens all up that time. But you see, another crowd come in here, come into the area, and that's when he got missing. Yeah, that's when he got missing. And so a lot of times John Thompson and all of them they find the rope.

They went to Mr. Will Wright and asked him, he was a pretty fair man, you know. They told him about all the rope. He run the little store in Shelton and asked him, told him. And Mr. Will said they had to find out, said, "Just hush your mouth." Said, "You ain't saw nothing; just hush your mouth." That's right. And they tried to find out, you know, but they had the hanging knot and everything in it. That boy disappeared, that man disappeared ain't nobody ever heard from him or nothing and he used to visit people around in Shelton. Yeah, didn't hear nothing of him.

So back in them days people in the community was easy to get scared, you know, when anything like that happened, what never happened before, you see. And everybody, I set in this house here and talk about different things but you didn't carry it out because you didn't know who you was talking to when you was out and everything. So I think that's the way it ought to be now. That's right. People's too wide open now you see and everything, all this here demonstrating, all these marching on cities and everything, two or three people get killed they walk over them, don't pay it no attention. Nothing like that, wasn't nothing like that going on back then. Wasn't nothing like that going on back then. My grandmother lived in that house right up yonder, great-grandmother. She was a slave.

AL: Your great-grandmother?

TM: Yeah, my [great] grandmother was a slave and her and her husband lived in that house right up yonder. But all the slave houses they had the kitchen built off from the house, you see. So she was in there, and the north and south, she was a slave here when north and south. Okay, her master he got killed under that big oak tree out there. He was riding a horse named Sam. My grandmother tell us had a horse named Sam and say, they shot the horse out from under him and then they killed him. And all the mens had done run down in the hollers and got away. And so he laid up under that tree. That tree wasn't no big tree then and it was so hot that he laid there three days and said the grease had done started to running out him on the ground. He got shot, the master.

But the Fosters out there, you know the Fosters out there. Okay, the Fosters and my granddaddy was sisters and brothers to the Fosters. They were white but they were sisters and brothers. That's right and so they were sisters and brothers but now didn't nobody mess with us. They were rich. Didn't nobody mess with us. One die in the family, they come and get you. And so I carried Dad and Uncle (Root?) to the funeral up there in Cool Branch Church. I carried Dad and Uncle (Root?) to the funeral up there and we was setting on the back seat. I saw Miss Julia and Miss Sissy get up and look back, you know. The service was going on, looked back, they got up and walked back there, got Dad and Uncle (Root?) --- I told them, "I'm alright," you know I wasn't fully dressed to be up there on the front --- and made room on the front seat and made them set in it, and give me the devil when they got out doors. Got out doors, said, "Let me tell you one thing," said, "we couldn't help what happened back yonder in them days." He said, "We kinfolks and we'll always be and you better not never forget it." See they tried to get me, I had a family, they tried to get me to come over there and live with them, that's right, in the house with them. And I told them I couldn't do that because I had a family, unless I bring my whole family, then I told them I couldn't do that.

Okay, now you take Miss Wright, the same way. She stays in that house down there by herself all them many years. The whole community around here helped take care of her. That's right. That's right, they helped take care of her. So her son tried to get her to move into Columbia with Allen, me and Allen played together. And tried to get her to move in with him and she told him no, said these people in Shelton they take care of me. They take care of me. She could go to any house in Shelton and the people taking care of her. And so they put her in a home. She wasn't ready to go to no home but they mess around there and fix up some papers and put her in a home over there near, in Newberry County, at down near Prosperity, somewhere down in there. They put her in a home down there and she didn't live long after then you know.

So they had a hunting club down there. The first hunting club was from Chapin and Miss Mary released it to them and she told them, see I used to love to hunt down there and her husband he used to love to hear the little beagles run, you know. He wouldn't even carry no gun. He followed me all over that place down there to hear the dogs run. And she told them said I'll release the place said but I got one man in Shelton here got hunting rights as long as we own the land. And the club down there, she told them, said, "Now if y'all want to know anything," everybody call me Junior, said, "you ask Junior." Said, "If you want to know anything about landmarks and things," see my daddy helped pull the chain on the land.

FM: Surveying.

TM: And so she said you ask Junior, said don't come back here asking me nothing, said ask Junior. They didn't recognize me you know. They went flying back to her. She told them said wait a minute, let me give you the balance of money what you left in the place. She sent them back to Chapin. That's right. Okay, so I got some posted signs. I wouldn't let her help pay for them. I put a few posted signs on her place to keep the other fellahs off to hunt, hunt, so I couldn't keep them off. That's when Ted come up from () you know over here, he hunted at night and every which a way, out of season and everything and I couldn't keep him off. And I went up to her, I wouldn't tell her who it was or nothing you see, because she might of would have worried herself to death, you see. And I wouldn't tell her, tell her who it was. I knew who it was but I wouldn't tell her who it was. I told her I said, "Miss Wright, ain't nothing to do but let's find a nice set of people and release your land to them." I said, "I ain't but one man, I can't do nothing by myself." I said, "Them fellahs night hunt and everything," and I always was scared to be out at night.

And so she released it. She released it to the Big Orange Club down there, yeah, released it to the Big Orange Club down there and the first thing they did they give me an honorary membership. They did. She had done told them that I had hunting privileges as long as I wanted, as long as I wanted, as long as they was living. And see right there where Uncle Jack stayed out, right out from it, when Mr. Grady was living he tried to get me if I build, to build down there. That's right, close to them, tried to get me to build close to them down there. But they was getting old, you see, and he wanted somebody what was accurate you know to live close to them so they could help them out. Yeah, so I told them my daddy had plenty of land over there, he over there raising sand, he wanted me to build close to him on his land. *(Laughter)* Yeah, you know, I smoothed it off, you know.

FM: You mentioned one of the children, Allen Wright, y'all played together.

TM: Oh, we played together.

FM: Next question is the deer hunters told me that he has a lot of photographs of those two plants when they was in operation.

TM: Well, he got a boy living.

FM: He's got a boy, what's his name?

TM: He got a boy. Ask some of the hunting club, somebody at the hunting club. They know his name. That's who is releasing the land now.

FM: Okay.

TM: Yeah, ask them. They're releasing the land down there and they're nice people. They'll tell you. Grady, me and him was the first two in the hunting club and he was up here the other day to see me. He stayed over here, he's a right religious guy and he stayed over here. Not Grady, Grady had been here a couple of months before. But Bill Camp, he come here, man, he stayed here about two hours. He said him and Grady had planned, said, "We're going to take off one day and go up to Junior's," up here and something happened. See Grady's wife, she's got Alzheimer's, she can't be by herself and he paying, twelve dollars, when he go hunting or anything he's got to pay twelve dollars a hour for somebody to set with her.

AL: I have a question about the ginger ale. Did you ever drink it or taste it?

TM: Oh, yeah.

AL: I'm trying to get an idea of what made it so good. People remember it.

TM: That ginger ale had that ginger in it and everything and so they mix it up. I help mix some of the syrup. Mr. Grady would get somebody to hold me down, Shelt, Shelt Shelton I learn him how to feed the soaker. He'd get him to hold me down and let me go over and help Mr. J.T. mix the syrup, Mr. J.T. Worship, mix the syrup. On account of that I could handle a hundred pound sack of sugar. I could put it above my head and pour it in the thing and Mr. Grady got me to help him mix the syrup. I even learned how to mix the syrup up and everything. I didn't care whether Mr. J.T. was there or not, the plant was running on. That's right.

FM: So you mixed the syrup for the ginger ale?

TM: Not for the ginger ale but for the orange, root beer and all the other drinks. But I think the ginger ale, it come in a five gallon bucket, no, in a keg already mixed. All you got to do is put it in the thing. It was good too. You could take it, you better not drink it too fast, it kind of cut your throat. *(Laughter)*

AL: Did you, were they bottling every day of the week?

TM: Yeah, they bottled every day, sometimes six days until, now what they would do, we worked twelve o'clock, some twelve o'clock on Saturdays, but Mr. Grady and them, they knew that I played baseball.

We had a baseball club and he let me off to play baseball. He let me off time enough in the evening to practice, to practice baseball and everything. And then June (Feaster?), my brother Reid and myself, we the one got the club up and Bubba Ed. We're the one got the club up and so we was playing with Brother Thompson's team. So we was playing with their team and so we decided, good God, we got all these here young boys in Shelton, said, how come we can't have a club up in Shelton? And so we got the club up here. We got so couldn't nobody handle us. Yeah, we got so, and so Mr. Plummer Young was working on the railroad, he stopped up to the house, was living in the fork of the road there. You remember when I was living in the little house?

FM: Yes.

TM: I was living in the little house at the fork of the road there. He stopped there trying to catch a way home, get off the train down to Shelton and he walk up there and so Reid, Ed and myself bought an old '42 Chevrolet, Fleet Line Chevrolet back then, and I told him, "Yeah, we'll carry you home Mr. Plummer." Dobie and Donald, Donald had a mitt; Dobie, he was pitcher. They was throwing balls down there at the house. We got way back in there near about to Willie Boyd's, I said, "Reid." He said, "What is it?" I said, "Them boys down there, them boys down there throwing that ball they looking good, they looking good." Reid said, "Yeah, you know I seen that." I said, "Let's turn around, we're going to practice this evening." I said, "let's turn around and go back there." Reid was driving, my brother Reid was driving, said, "Let's go back down there and see would they go on the field with us to practice."

But back then you had to ask the parents. The parents had to give you orders where to go. So Mr. Plummer told us, said, "Yeah, them boys can go with y'all. Y'all ain't never in no trouble, no devilment or nothing." No he said it just like that, said, "They can go with y'all" then they went to load up said, "but I'll tell y'all one thing," he said, "if they leave with y'all, I want them to come back home with y'all." That's right, we had to promise him that and so we did. Time we get through practicing we didn't go to no joint or no nothing, right straight back to his house.

Dobie, Dobie was the onliest man on the ball team, that's right, got to be a round ball player, could play any position on that team: he could pitch, he could catch, he could hold any base on there and then play the outfield and almost out run a ball. All them Youngs could run. Yeah, and so they made the team. The other boys started to grumbling. Y'all bring somebody in here. Just like the major league, we made them earn the positions when they were practicing. So they were good in the positions. Old Donald could hold that third base, yeah, and so we put Donald on third base, Dobie to pitching, and he pitched in a lot of games. See I was a pitcher. June Feaster and myself was the pitchers then, only two pitchers we had. June was the slow ball pitcher; I was the fast ball pitcher. Oh, we started to cutting them, cutting them you know, then our team started to growing, started to growing. And so we used to play every which a way.

Everybody... you can go to Jenkinsville, right now today, you can go to Jenkinsville, Boykin over there near Great Falls, all over in there. You go over there they'd tell you, yeah, Shelton had the best ball club that they ever run against. And so we had a ball club. And so the last year we played we lost three games, three straight in the first and hadn't won a game. You know where the boys were? They put that basketball court up there at A.L.'s store. Instead of on the field over there practicing they're out there shooting basketball. And so old Bubba had them on the bench. That's right, Bubba had them on the bench after then. Bubba was the manager. He had them on the bench after then. Then told them, "If you want to, y'all can go back to shooting basketball," said, "if we gets whooped." Don't you know we come back and won twenty-three games in a row? Lost the three first games. Them boys got interested then.

Speight(?) Young he was a good player. Okay, he was courting up (). Old Speight would let a ball go by him, made like he couldn't get it or nothing like that there. Bubba called him right the middle of the game Bubba called him, hey, Speight, come here. He's the manager. I'm going to send such-in-such in your, that's when Russell started playing. He sent Russell in Speight's place. He sent Russell in and Russell wasn't old enough but we made him a ballplayer. He sent Russell in then in Speight's place. How come you...? He said no, you go on out there and start to courting. Said we ain't courting now, we're playing baseball. (*Laughter*) He told Speight. Bubba he kept Speight on the bench three weeks. That's right. When Speight come back in there he was right too, boy. He had a good arm. He put him on third base. That was Donald's brother, put him on third base and that was the position he was playing. Put him back on third base, now he could get a ball, he could get a ball and look at the seam of it. I don't care if the man was running and he'd let the man get far as from here to Louise's and throw him out before he could touch the base. He had a arm on him too, boy.

AL: Now I just have a couple more questions for you about the spring.

TM: Yes, ma'am.

AL: And one of them is did you ever taste the mineral water and did it have a distinct taste? Did it taste different than regular water?

TM: Well, we was young and we didn't know, we didn't know the difference in the taste like that then but now it was different. It was different. It was smooth water, smooth tasting water like that there drinking water. Yeah, we used to go by the mineral spring. We used to go there going to school, walked through there going to school from the house over here. And so we'd stop and get us a drink of water and everything. I reckon snakes and everything was in it then and everything. But you could see, that water was so clear didn't care how full it got, you could see the bottom of the spring.

AL: Right.

TM: That's right, you could see the bottom of it and so we went down there when we went to school. We had to walk all the way on that road over there to the schoolhouse. Rain or shine we had to go.

AL: And how far a walk was it?

TM: About a mile or better than a mile, wasn't it?

FM: Yeah.

TM: It was well over a mile.

AL: Okay. How many springs, actual springs, were there?

TM: Well, there's another spring Freddie don't know nothing about. There was another spring. I used to live in an old big house over there Mattie Lee and them stayed in.

FM: Yeah.

TM: I used to live in that old big house. There was a spring down the holler there but it belonged to Mr. Mac. You had to come through the forest land to get to the plant. That's what they used a lot of that water at the spring. It was at the old spring. Mr. Mac hulled it in and we was using water out of it.

FM: Is it still there?

TM: Yeah, it's still there. It's still there if they ain't tore it up.

FM: It wouldn't be nobody there to tear it up.

TM: Jesse James and them ought to, I can't go down there. I can't get around.

AL: Do you know where he is though?

TM: Jesse James and them know where it's at. They used to tote water slam up to the house. They didn't have no well at the house.

FM: We'll get Jesse and them to show us where it's at.

TM: Yeah, get them to show you where it's at sometime. You know where Jesse's daughter used to stay at in Shelton, in that house where you go over the creek, right straight across there? It's right down the hill below it.

FM: We'll find it. I wouldn't even know about that one.

TM: Yeah, that's what his pipes are all the way up there. They used to use that water too. They used to use that water bottling ginger ale.

FM: They did?

TM: Yeah, bottling. That was a good spring. They used it for drinks and everything. That's the reason he hulled it in, hulled it in and they used that there and it was a good spring too. It kept springs running all the time too but it wasn't mineral water now. No, it wasn't mineral water.

FM: Good spring water?

TM: Yeah.

AL: I have one last question today because I've kept you a long time.

TM: Oh, that's alright. I ain't going nowhere and ain't got nothing to do.

AL: Was there any sort of stories that you heard of when you were young and working there about when and how that spring was discovered?

TM: No, I don't know how it was discovered. When I knowed anything that the pumps and the cisterns and things was already there. All I know it was there when we dug the pipe. See the spring was there. We dug the pipes in there before they even put the cisterns there see was it going work, see was it going work, all the way down to the plant on the railroad. They cut through on, went through, got started to go through people's land and everything. And we put that with a plow and a tractor and where the tractor couldn't get the plow was a pick and a shovel. *(Laughter)* That's right, was a pick and shovel. Back then we had to work. We had to work hard. You get on a man's job it start to raining you just didn't knock off on your own because it was raining, raining. The man say, "Hey, boss, you ain't going knock us off? You ain't going to knock us off? We're getting wet out here in the rain." "No," he'd tell you quick. He'd tell you quick, "The whistle ain't blowed to knock off, is it?" "No." He said, "If you don't like that, get your lunchbox and hit the road." That's what old John Newt, told them on the railroad, told John Newt to 'get your lunchbox and get up the road'. Old John Newt said, "I'll get my lunchbox but you don't tell me what way to go." *(Laughter)*

AL: That's a good one to end on and I want to thank you for all your recollections of Shivar Springs and growing up in this area. It's been wonderful. Thank you.

End of interview