**Oral History Interview**

**with**

**Edith Hicks**

Interview Conducted by

Tanya Finchum

August 4, 2016

Spotlighting Oklahoma

Oral History Project

**Oklahoma Oral History Research Program**

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**Interview History**

Interviewer: Tanya Finchum

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The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

**Project Detail**

The purpose of the *Spotlighting Oklahoma Oral History Project* is to document the development of the state by recording its cultural and intellectual history.

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on April 15, 2009.

**Legal Status**

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Edith Hicks is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on August 4, 2016.

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**About Edith Hicks…**

Edith Martin Hicks was born in 1939 in Strang, Oklahoma. Her family moved to Vinita, Oklahoma, when Edith was two years old and she has lived there ever since. Edith attended Attucks School, for African Americans, beginning with the first grade and going through the tenth. Due to school integration, Edith attended Vinita High School for the eleventh and twelfth grades, graduating in 1957.

As a teenager Edith began working in order to help her family. She initially worked in private homes. While still in high school Edith was hired by Annabell Southern, with the Glass House Restaurant, to bus tables initially. Edith then transitioned to being a cook there. In addition to being a cook, Edith would also work in the gift shop when needed.

Not long after graduating from high school, Edith accepted a position with REC (Rural Electric Co-op) in Vinita and remained there until she retired at the age of sixty-two. Edith has a son and a daughter and enjoys spending time with family.

**About the Glass House…**

At the half-way point on the Will Rogers Turnpike near Vinita, Oklahoma, stands an iconic landmark. The arched building opened in 1957 and was the first restaurant built over a U.S. public highway. Conoco (Continental Oil Company) commissioned the building with an aim to serve the needs of motorists passing in both directions. The building housed the Glass House Restaurant, dedicated in 1958, and included a cafeteria, snack bar, and sit-down restaurant. On each side of the building, motorists enjoyed full-service gas stations, operated by Conoco initially. Over the years other restaurants and fuel facilities have operated at the service plaza. Host International, Interstate Hosts and Howard Johnson’s have operated the plaza at different times. The Glass House and the Conoco stations employed many of the area’s youth through the years and served many, many travelers. Renovation began on the service plaza in 2012 and in 2014 it re-opened with a new name, the Will Rogers Archway.

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| **Edith Hicks**  Oral History Interview  Interviewed by Tanya Finchum  August 4, 2016  Vinita, Oklahoma |  |

**Finchum** *Today is August 4, 2016. My name is Tanya Finchum. I’m with Oklahoma State University, and today I am in Vinita, Oklahoma, to speak with Edith Hicks. Did I get that correct?*

**Hicks** Believe you did

**Finchum** *And this is regarding our Glass House Project, so thank you for coming today. Let’s start with having you tell us when and where you were born.*

**Hicks** I was born in Strang, Oklahoma. My parents moved to Vinita when I was age two and so from there on I lived here and still live here in Vinita, Oklahoma.

**Finchum** *It’s home, huh?*

**Hicks** It’s home.

**Finchum** *And how many brothers and sisters did you have?*

**Hicks** I have… there’s eleven of us. Ten and I’m the eleventh one. I’m the first child of eleven.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hicks** And I have two deceased and the rest of them are still living.

**Finchum** *That’s pretty good!*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *And what year were you born?*

**Hicks** Nineteen thirty-nine.

**Finchum** *In 1939 and you graduated from high school?*

**Hicks** Uh huh, at Vinita High School.

**Finchum**  *In 19…*

**Hicks** Uh… ’50…

**Finchum** *Seven, ’58, something like that?*

**Hicks** Yeah, yeah. You might have to add that up. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *I’ll add that up! And what month were you born?*

**Hicks** December.

**Finchum** *So we can figure that out then, okay.*

**Hicks** December the 15th.

**Finchum** *Well where did you go to elementary school?*

**Hicks** I went to Attucks School, Attucks High School I mean. Well yeah, it was called Attucks High School, from first grade until the tenth grade. Then I went to Vinita High School the eleventh and the twelfth, two years.

**Finchum** *Is that when they were integrated?*

**Hicks** Uh huh.

**Finchum** *Yeah. Was a difficult time?*

**Hicks** It was, yeah. Yeah, it was.

**Finchum** *Do you want to talk about, we don’t have to if you don’t.*

**Hicks** No. I mean, it was difficult, but for us it’s black and for them it’s white, you know. It was just a change.

**Finchum** *Sure.*

**Hicks** Mmhm. I can recall they had a back-to-school dance, and we thought we would go, at Teen Town, but it wasn’t affiliated with the school so we couldn’t go, you know. We went up there and they turned us away. We couldn’t understand that, you know, but through it all, things went fairly well, you know, being accepted because, you know. I keep saying ‘they’ because the whites didn’t know nothing about us, and we didn’t know too much about them, because this was a segregated town, you know. We had to go in the backdoor of restaurants and everything. We could wash dishes and cook but we couldn’t sit in the restaurants.

**Finchum** *Just wrong, wasn’t it? Just completely wrong.*

**Hicks** Yes, but anyway, we made it and thank god we’re still here. (Laughs) Some of us are still here anyway. A lot of the older ones have passed on, you know.

**Finchum** *Did you have a favorite subject while you were in school?*

**Hicks** Well my favorite subject was math. Yeah, I liked math.

**Finchum** *Did you have a favorite teacher?*

**Hicks** Well, I can’t remember her name now but she was, she was good. And then another thing we had to get adjusted to was when we went to Attucks, S.A. Blye was our teacher. He taught everything, you know, not everything, but he taught math mostly. Anyway, he was a superintendent and, no, he was the principal, not the superintendent. You going to have a lot of editing to do. (Laughs) And then when he give us problems he said like, “Eight, nine plus fourteen” and then he said, “Add.” That mean draw the line, you know, and add it. But they didn’t do that up there. They just give you the problem and then you just, you know, on the blackboard. They would never say, you know. If they was to say “Add,” they never, they would never announce “Add” or “Subtract.” And that was kind of different, you know. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well, did your grades change? Did you do as well there as you did at Attucks?*

**Hicks** Yeah, I did, I did.

**Finchum** *Self-motivated and determined.*

**Hicks** Yeah, cause you know, we had to take our stuff home and our mother— when I was in high school, Mama looked at my stuff and see if I had it done. And when we got home from school we had to change our clothes and do our homework before we did anything else. Then we’d eat supper and we get to go play a little while. (Laughs) That was the order we had in the house and all of us at home at one time, you know. Well, not all of ’em. Our last year—we all was at home cause I didn’t leave til I was up in age. So, yeah, and we had a small house so we had to have order.

**Finchum** *You all sat around the around the table to do your homework?*

**Hicks** Yes. And we sat around a table to eat. We all ate the same time, it wasn’t like come and get a plate and, you know…

**Finchum** *Go in front of the TV?*

**Hicks** No. We didn’t have a TV at the time. When we finally did—my grandmother lived right across the alley from us and she had a TV. We’d go down there and watch. Her daughter got her a TV, my dad’s sister. We’d go down there and look at the little ol’ black and white, but that look good to us! (Laughs) Think about now we got a great big ol’ TV.

**Finchum** *And maybe one or two channels at the time.*

**Hicks** Yeah. And two or three TVs, or we do at my house. Everybody got his own TV. So we’ve come a long way.

**Finchum** *And you were the oldest.*

**Hicks** I was the oldest.

**Finchum** *Did you get to boss the other ones?*

**Hicks** Well, I babysitted sometimes. There wasn’t too much bossing.

**Finchum** *Your mother did that?*

**Hicks** Yeah. All we had to do was give a report. Then she would…. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well, who would discipline? If you got into trouble, who would discipline?*

**Hicks** My mom did most of it, yeah. My dad he let us get away with murder, as we used to say. My dad was…one time we had whopping cough and you know ice cream and all that kind of stuff is not good, I mean when you got the whooping cough. My mother went somewhere, probably to church or choir practice, and my dad wasn’t very much of a churchgoer but he stay around there. We just cried and cried and cried for some ice cream. Well the ice cream truck came by and my dad got us some. When Mama came home, what were we doing? Making a mess, you know, just everywhere. “What’s going on here?” And then she’d jump on him and us too you know, but anyway. (Laughs) But she was the one, she was the one with the long switch.

**Finchum** *Did she use a switch?*

**Hicks** Well yeah. She’d have us go get our own. And if it broke you was in trouble again.

**Finchum** *I had to do that too.*

**Hicks** Did you have to go cut your own switch?

**Finchum** *I sure did. And if it wasn’t big enough you had to go get another one.*

**Hicks** Right, yeah. Better not break, boy. You’d start all over! (Laughs) In other words, you know, but anyway.

**Finchum** *Was church an important part of your growing up?*

**Hicks** Yeah, yeah, we went to—and still it is, you know. We go to, we went to, it was then Sunrise Baptist Church, now it’s Serenity with the same address. So I grew up there from when I was big enough to go to Sunday school and I’m still going there. We had moved, you know. We had united with another church and came back. That’s where I’m going right now, 345 North First in Vinita. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *And do you sing in the choir?*

**Hicks** I used to sing. I can’t carry a tune in a sack. (Laughs) I don’t sing anymore. Passed that on to the younger generations.

**Finchum** *Well when you did, did you have a favorite?*

**Hicks** What? A song?

**Finchum** *Song.*

**Hicks** Well yeah. It was, I would say a favorite as a kid we always sung “Love Lifted Me.” Didn’t know what the meaning of it is but now I do, you know, that I’m older. Cause of what Christ did for us, you know, what God did for us through his son. We sang that quite a bit. And then we had a lot of old hymns they sang, “Amazing Grace” and we still sing that. At the time we didn’t know it, just to be in the choir to sing.

**Finchum** I liked “I’ll Fly Away.” Do you remember that?

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *That’s pretty too.*

**Hicks** Yeah. We sang those kind of songs and we still do. They got some new songs that they sing that’s got a lot of, I don’t know what the heck to call it, but they had a—we in the process of our association this week so it’s been a tired, long week for somebody my age, you know. They had a musical Sunday night down there and, course they bring the instruments you know, they had a guitar and a keyboard and the drums and all that. All we had was the piano and it’d go ding-ding, and we’d start singing! (Laughs) And now, they got it going, you know. And they, I think it’s a … what am I trying to say? It draws a crowd when you have music, people come. They don’t know what to—if it got a beat to it, they don’t listen to the words like we did when we was a kid, you know. But now that you’re older you can hear, listen to the words.

**Finchum** *There’s usually a story to it if you listen.*

**Hicks** Yeah, yeah, mmhm. There is a story behind every song.

**Finchum** *Did you learn to play the piano or anything like that?*

**Hicks** No, I can’t play no piano. I did sing but I’m a follower and I can’t lead, you know. Right now if you asked me to start “Amazing Grace” I probably couldn’t even get through the first stanza, we sung it forever and forever, because I followed, you know! When I had to lead, I just, you know, don’t lead. I’ll leave. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well at Attucks did they have a choir or chorus, I guess?*

**Hicks** No, didn’t, no. I can’t remember if they did. Did they have one?

**Finchum** *Well music and math usually goes together so I thought I’d ask*.

**Hicks** No, I don’t. I can’t recall singing and math but when I went to… singing and math, singing. But when I went to high school, Vinita High, we had to take some of them. You had to be in math, and you had to have math and English and science. Then you had to either be in music or athletics or something. You had to take one or the other so I chose music. My first day there you had to sing to see what, whether you sang soprano or alto or whatever. Well, I had to do that a couple times. They finally put me in alto but I can do bass better now. (Laughs). No, I’m just kidding. I sung alto and so I sung in there. And then I got out the first semester. It was too stressful for me. (Laughs) You’d try to sing and the one you’re sitting or standing beside, you know kinda like, “What in the world?” “I can’t get in tune cause she’s not in tune” And da da da da da, so I just got out of there. The same way with the choir, I used to have to do that too.

**Finchum** *Just enjoy it then.*

**Hicks** Yes.

**Finchum** *So you didn’t do sports, if you switched, if you chose music.*

**Hicks** No. I didn’t do no sports, nuh uh. I just took music, and I don’t know what I took after that. I can’t remember, but you know, that first year it was a struggle so I got out of that cause I couldn’t, I just couldn’t do it, you know.

**Finchum** *Well how would you get to school?*

**Hicks** We had to walk.

**Finchum** *Both? When you went to Vinita as well?*

**Hicks** Walked every step of the way.

**Finchum** *About how far was it?*

**Hicks** Well I live right now—I always lived in the north end of town, and you know where the Attucks School is down there on the south end of town. That’s how far we walked. And didn’t miss too many days either, rain, snow, sleet, whatever. We just bundled up and go. And then when we started going to high school out here, I starting walking, me and a friend of mine, Joanne. Then she found out she got a car and so sometime I’d catch her and ride with her, you know. Wouldn’t ride the buses, I don’t know why. You can ride the buses now but we didn’t, we had to walk.

**Finchum** *You were in good shape.*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Well would your mother make your clothes? Sew your clothes?*

**Hicks** No, um. I had an aunt that lived in, she lived in Tennessee at the time and she would always, for Christmas time, she’d always send us a box of stuff for school like the long johns and all the stuff we’d need, you know. I don’t want to exaggerate but we didn’t, you know, you weren’t gonna go to the closet and say, “Well let me see what I’m gonna put on today.” Like we wore the same dress to school, and we wore dresses then, the same dress to school. We’d wear it Sunday, put it off and you wear on Monday and Tuesday and then we’d get to change on Wednesday and wear it Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The same dress. Then we had stuff, we had to change to keep ’em good so we had play clothes. So we put on whatever we wore out, we’d put those things on and play in on Saturday.

**Finchum** *Being the oldest you didn’t have to worry about hand-me-downs.*

**Hicks** No. But my sister and I, which is Charles’ [Kirkendoll] wife, that’s coming up here after me, they thought we were twins, though, we were so close together. They still say we look alike. But we always had the same dresses, mine was pink, hers would be blue. (Laughs) The same dress, we just wore the same dresses to school, dressed alike. That’s what my aunt did. She had ’em made out of, I’m not sure what, some kind of sacks they’d get, flour...

**Finchum** *Flour or feed sacks or something.*

**Hicks** Yeah, and they’d make ’em out of that.

**Finchum** *Cotton.*

**Hicks** Yeah. Yes Ma’am. And my mother would iron our clothes, though. Now it wasn’t those, you know—we didn’t have our own washing machine. She’d wash ’em and hang ’em on the clothesline. Cause there was a bunch of us, she’d hang ’em on the clothesline, on the fences, and everywhere, to wash ’em. And like our socks we had to wash ’em out on the weekend because, you know, we didn’t have enough to last all week, so we’d wash ’em out on the rubboard on the weekend, and hang ’em up.

My sister used to lay in bed and we’d dream and we’d say “When I get grown, I’m gonna....” She also wanted to work at a restaurant and so she did, but she’s a nurse now, a registered nurse, but she’s retired too. She’d always say, “When I get grown, I’m gonna work at Scotty’s Café,” you know. I don’t know if you know about Scotty’s Café, used to be here, and she’d say, “I’m gonna work at Scotty’s Café. And my kids ain’t gonna have to do this and they ain’t gonna have to that.” Cause you know, we just didn’t have that much, and she’d always make that a goal. And I think that’s when the generation started changing, cause we’d imagine when we get grown how our kids are gonna be and we done ruined ’em. (Laughs) And ourselves too, you know. Right now I can’t get in my closet for the shoes and that is not necessary. Can’t decide which pair cause I got so much junk piled up in there. I say junk, but clothes. But it was just rough, and so—I started doing housework after school.

**Finchum** *While you were still in high school?*

**Hicks** Yeah, while I was still in school, I worked for O.B. Campbell, if you remember him. I worked for the Hartley’s. I don’t know if you heard of them or not, Jot and Clay Hartley. Well I worked for them, Jot Hartley. I worked for them, and then—well I’ve had several of them. Them is two jobs I worked for. That’s when I started learning how to iron. I didn’t even know how to iron, cause Mama’d do the ironing. We had them irons you put on the stove and heat, but they had them electric irons that you plug in the wall. (Laughs) And I don’t like to iron now but I’d get to go out there and iron for O.B. Campbell and he wore white shirts. He worked at the *Journal*. And I’d iron for them. I would clean house.

And this is what’s so sad about when I was doing that. I know you all are gonna edit this. We’re just visiting now so you gonna take out what you wanna take out. Anyway, when I started working for them—well when I worked for all of ’em, I had to eat after they got done. But they dogs would come and lean on the table and they’d eat with one hand and put food in the dog’s mouth. So I was worse, I was less than a dog. Because they wouldn’t let, I didn’t, I ate when they got done. I’d sit down and eat and then I’d get up and clean up the kitchen and stuff, after they got through hand feeding the dog. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *That’s wrong too.*

**Hicks** And you know I can tell it and laugh about it now, you know.

**Finchum** *But you were aware?*

**Hicks** Uh huh, but I had to. What do you do? We can’t say we’re not gonna work or not gonna do anything cause then we gonna, you know, gonna starve to death. My mama she didn’t, my mother didn’t start working until she was older because she usually had a kid. There was eleven of us. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *She worked at home.*

**Hicks** Yeah. Plenty of work at home.

**Finchum** *Well would you get to spend the money that you earned yourself or…*

**Hicks** Well I did, but what I did I—this is me. I’m always, I won’t say, not bragging, but we lived in a small house so when I got my job, I dunno how I done it but it worked, I did it. I had a room, we built a room and a bathroom on my house, on my mom and dad’s house and I paid for it, with my little bit of money. Money go a long, you know. I just did it. So I, you know, it wasn’t that I, you know, I didn’t really work to have a lot of stuff for myself. I just worked to help my family.

**Finchum** *More convenient.*

**Hicks** Yeah and all us had done, my sister, we all had done that you know. Worked to help them. Cause it, it was like, so they could have better. I worked and then my sister she worked until the ones after us, so they could have better.

**Finchum** *Sure. So and then high school came along and you graduated. Had you planned a career at that point, what you might want to do?*

**Hicks** No. I never—you know at that time college, we never, they—well I guess they did know it. It wasn’t in my head. I just wanted to hurry up and get grown and get on my own. That was a mistake. (Laughs) The growner you get, you’re on your own, and I have two children the responsibility of, you know. I thought, “Boy I want my own.” You know we were so crowed, never had too much privacy. “Boy when I get my own house, I’ll have my own bedroom. I’ll have my own this and own that.” And so, college, after I got out of—I just wanted to hurry up and graduate, and I thought I could get a good job after I graduated. But I don’t have—that’s the only degree I have.

But I have been blessed, because I did work for Annabell Southern at the Glass House. And I waited tables—I started out there as a bus girl cleaning tables and stuff, and then I moved up to doing uh, I used to, not be a waitress but I did work for them. Waitresses had to have their coffee and their drinks and so when they’d come by I’d fix those things for them on the tray and they’d take them out. You know, it’s like they’d tell me what they need and then I’d fix their desserts. You know we had this strawberry shortcake we did that’s so, like, wow. And then we also had a mile-high lemon pie.

**Finchum** *Oh, sounds good!*

**Hicks** Yes, and so we served that. And then after that I started, I went to the kitchen and to cooking. That was a giant change. I didn’t like it but I did it, you know. I always wanted to be behind the scenes. Of course cooking was—them waitresses count on it really. How you cook their food depends on what kind of tip they got, you know.

**Finchum** *Yeah.*

**Hicks** And so, if they come back, they want two eggs over easy, one of ’em’s busted, they have to… “Ah, can I get another two?” I said, “Okay, okay.” Not that nice of a tone all of the time, cause you know. (Laughs) And then in the summertime on that turnpike it was always busy.

**Finchum** *I wondered about that. I’m assuming it would be.*

**Hicks** Yeah, they have a busy time and then a slow time but like the holidays, people are traveling, whew! And then if a school bus came through going somewhere, they always would stop there, because there was a place to take pictures, you know, of the restaurant over the turnpike. Wasn’t too many, nobody hardly saw one of those nowhere, you know. It was something for them to stop. I wouldn’t say nowhere, cause I hadn’t been too far but anyway. It was a highlight of coming through Oklahoma, stopping in Vinita and taking that picture of that Glass House. After it opened up, they started catering a lot of banquets and weddings and prom dinners out there, and so we’d have to work those.

**Finchum** *Would they close part of it off to have those or was there a room?*

**Hicks** They had a room. They called it—see, I done forgot what the name of it now. They had a room.

**Finchum** *I’ve heard the Broiler Room. Is that what you’re talking about?*

**Hicks** Yeah, I think that’s what is was, the Broiler Room. I slept a night or two since, but they’d usually have it open and they had part of it they closed it off. We had to set it up and then worked—we called in overtime, making sixty-five cents an hour, I think. And then we had to prepare all that stuff, you know. They didn’t have too many places in Vinita. Hotel Vinita used to have them, but after they started out there we’d get a lot of people that’d call and they’d book. They’d have family reunions and things out there, you know. And we had to cook for the food for them and do that.

**Finchum** *Well when you were first hired out there, was it Annabell Southern that hired you?*

**Hicks** Uh huh, yeah, she did.

**Finchum** *Well did you get to pick where you wanted to start working or did she just assign you?*

**Hicks** No. She was kind of like a, I don’t want to say a mother hen, but she took a lot of kids out of school. Wasn’t too many places for them to work and so she had sent a lot of kids, by letting ’em out there, to college and graduation and make money. And then they’d come back and work during the holidays and stuff. She was a, I guess a youth program.

**Finchum** *Was she from Vinita?*

**Hicks** Yeah, she lived here.

**Finchum** *I’m assuming she’s not still living?*

**Hicks** No, she passed away [2005]. When I met her she was just with her mother. She had been married, I don’t know what happened to her husband. I think he got killed in the service, I’m not sure about that. But when she hired me, just her mother and they lived out there on North Thompson. The house is still there, but she passed.

**Finchum** *Did you have to wear a uniform?*

**Hicks** Yes.

**Finchum** *Can you describe it?*

**Hicks** Well, yeah. (Laughs) The first uniform I had, it was white, all white uniform. And it had a little old hat you put on your head. We had to be fully dressed, white shoes, pantyhose. It wasn’t no tight jeans and short skirts, we wore a dress. It had a little apron to go with it when I was bussing dishes, and when I went to kitchen, we wore white, but we had a little bigger apron to put on to not get so dirty. But you had to be fully dressed in whatever department you worked.

**Finchum** *Well would you have to keep it clean or would they do that?*

**Hicks** Yes. You wash ’em yourself.

**Finchum** *You would.*

**Hicks** I don’t recall having to buy them. I think they just issued them out when you started. I think we got three apiece when you got hired on.

**Finchum** *And you had to press them?*

**Hicks** No, these were the kind you’d just wash ’em. No, they were kind of, I don’t know what kind of material you call ’em. More like, kind of like your shirt.

**Finchum** *Probably had polyester in those days.*

**Hicks** Yeah. Thank God I didn’t have to iron ’em! (Laughs) I didn’t like to iron, no how. No, but we had to wear them hairnets and everything.

**Finchum** *Well could you have been a waitress or was that not something they wouldn’t have let you do?*

**Hicks** Well probably not, because even at that time people come through, they were just a little bit, they just didn’t understand. In that time, we were just prejudice.

**Finchum** *Right. That would have been the late ’50s, early ’60s.*

**Hicks** Yeah. Course I have been insulted. You don’t know their motivation. They’d kill you or shot you, but you know, we just took it and went on. People don’t take that, I think that’s bad. There’s a way to address things without taking a life.

**Finchum** *True.*

**Hicks** And so I just did. But what I was gonna say was, whenever we were busy and they come and say, “You clean off that table,” I’d go over there and be cleaning off the table. And this lady, one time, she said, “Are you gonna be our waitress?” I said, “No. I’m just cleaning off your table.” “Oh okay. I thought if you were we weren’t gonna stay here.”

**Finchum** *Well and you feel like saying, “Here’s the door.”*

**Hicks** Yeah. Like (spitting sound) in your face. But no I just, “No. I’m not gonna be your waitress.” I guess dumb and ignorant. I mean you’re dumb and ignorant. No, I don’t think that’s the word to use, but you know, you just accepted it. Just accepted it.

**Finchum** *Well the other people that were in the kitchen, were they mostly African American or were they a mix?*

**Hicks** No. They ain’t gonna hire but one or two. They aren’t gonna be all the same. But the dishwasher was always black. No, I take that back. We did have one guy that was white. They had a dishwasher. They had to wash pots and pans by hand over here in the sink. They finally got a, they had a thing they put dishes on. You had to rinse ’em, you stack ’em on this thing and go around and wash it and take ’em off and you stack ’em on this cart. And then, so they were most, they did have one white guy, I take that back, but most of ’em, you know. Then they had a butcher, but we did that too, but there were just not too many.

You know, and just being insulted. I was working one time, I thank God I worked there, and I thank God that I made it through there. I’m just telling you what I went through and not complaining, complaining in a sense that people don’t know. One day we were very busy and somebody said, “You all sure is busy” and this white lady was there. We was cooking together and she said “Yeah, we be working like two niggers in a woodpile.” But her face, it hurt her worse than it hurt me. Her face was red as them roses out there when she said that.

**Finchum** *It slipped out before she realized.*

**Hicks** Yeah, and that’s what she said. And then we had a guy that was working out there. He was just a student, he was just a young guy. I don’t know how old he was. He had never been raised around anybody. People that didn’t grow up around us, they didn’t know nothing about black people. They just didn’t know a thing about us, and people start you know. I’m sure they learn just like we do. I go to work out there and it doesn’t bother me none. I go right up there, I might be the only one with some color but I don’t pay it no attention and they don’t either. We’ve all learnt. But anyway, some people hasn’t and they never will.

We was taking a break or doing something. My name is Edith, I was Martin then, and he said, “How come you all can get mad at me if I call you a nigger?” I said, “I want to tell you something.” I said some ugly words. I said, “No. My name is Edith. If you can’t call me that don’t call me nothing else.” They trying to—I won’t say “they”—and it’s both ways, because we call one another those names but we don’t want anybody else to call us that. You know what I’m saying?

**Finchum** *Yes.*

**Hicks** We’ll call one another, “Nigga, please.” But if you said that to me I’d knock your head off. If you can’t do it to one another, just don’t do it. Just don’t do it. And I let him know, cause see, he was wanting to open the doors so he can yell across that big kitchen calling me, “Come here… whatever.” I set him straight right then and there.

**Finchum** *Did he follow it?*

**Hicks** He sure did.

**Finchum** *That’s good.*

**Hicks** I let him know, just don’t do it. And he and my husband used to ride motorbikes together, motorcycles, you know. But they thought that was the way to do it and vice versa.

**Finchum** *Well when you were a cook, did you have recipes that you followed or was it just all up here?*

**Hicks** No. Well, we didn’t really have recipes. You had training, by the menu. When we had dinners we’d order in stuff, and we’d have to fix it. Most of the time it’s just simple stuff. The pie we had a recipe to make that pie and what else? But in the kitchen, oh, hash browns, bacon and, you know.

**Finchum** *Yeah.*

**Hicks** Over easy, I had to learn what that was, and scramble. And do pancakes. And then dinner they had hamburgers and hotdogs. Then they had meals too, meatloaf and stuff like that, but lots of it came already prepared. We made *some* of it.

**Finchum** *What about mashed potatoes?*

**Hicks** You had to mix ’em, but you don’t have to start...

**Finchum** *With the potato?*

**Hicks** Yeah. We had baked potatoes. We had to bake them you know. We had to bake so many, you know, keep an eye on them. Then we started doing homemade onion rings, had to make them from scratch. So we had to bread those and then, you know, we had a big freezer so you could bread stuff up and prepare stuff.

**Finchum** *Get ahead.*

**Hicks** Mmhm. When the breakfast cooks were cooking, ta couple others were getting ready, you know. We had to clean the produce and all that, wash the lettuce. We had the parsley we had to wash and put in jars for decoration. We had a walk-in freezer for the freezer stuff and then we had a walk-in refrigerator for the refrigerator stuff. We had to check that, like, broccoli and all that stuff. We had to make sure that we had some out there thawed. We had a stream table so you’d cook that up and put that in the stream table so it’d be ready to, you know. And onions and chopped onions and peel the onions. It was our prep work, but not anything that really—the really hard to do was them pies, you know. Course we did have bakery at one time. They had a bakery and had guys doing the bakery. And they’d make sweet rolls, bread. They made those pies at one time. They got our stuff in too, you just had to bake it, you know.

**Finchum** *Didn’t start from scratch?*

**Hicks** No, didn’t have to make anything from scratch, just had to go in there and you know.

**Finchum** *I wondered if they did the pie crust from scratch. People are wanting to get on the road too so they can’t take too awful long to do.*

**Hicks** And then they had different ones doing different stuff. My daughter, I was talking to her last night and she worked out there. I said, “I can’t remember you working out there.” They had those—we had the dining room and then they had like the snack shop part. The dining where you come and sit down and waitresses, and you get mostly meals, you know. But in the snack shop you get quick stuff, like you go through there and get quick things, like hot dogs, hamburgers and they set it up like a buffet.

**Finchum** *Kind of like a cafeteria?*

**Hicks** Yeah, that’s what it is, like a cafeteria. And you can go through there and get stuff, you know. Just go through the cafeteria and get what you want. And they cooked some stuff, too, but you know by the time you get to the end they’d holler and somebody’d have to bring it out. They’d holler at somebody, the bus girl or boy would get the hamburgers and take to that table, one that hadn’t got all their order.

**Finchum** *What was the most popular thing food wise? Do you know?*

**Hicks** No, I’m not sure what sold most. That’s what Lavon [Lewis] was asking me. I said, “I can’t remember what really sold the most.” They started grounding own meat for one thing, too.

**Finchum** *They had a butcher?*

**Hicks** Yeah, well they’d bring it in in slabs or whatever, and they grinded it up and make hamburgers, and cut streaks and all that stuff. I didn’t have no part in that cause I didn’t know nothing about it, but I just mostly cooked.

**Finchum** *Were you doing mostly the breakfast shift?*

**Hicks** No, I did both, but I did a lot of prep. I did some cleaning onion, washing, get the parsley, clean the celery and chop it up for whatever you’re going to make, you know.

**Finchum** *Would they let you eat some?*

**Hicks** Oh yeah, we got to eat.

**Finchum** *Could you eat?*

**Hicks** Yeah, we got to eat in the kitchen. And I don’t think we even had to pay, we just got to eat. Depending on what shift you were on, you could eat whatever you want to if you go and cook it yourself too, you know. You could back then, but you know.

**Finchum** *Yeah.*

**Hicks** Not steaks. I never did eat a steak, but just eat whatever.

**Finchum** *Well, was Vinita, the town, happy that they built that?*

**Hicks** Yeah, yeah.

**Finchum** *Were they?*

**Hicks** They say, you know. I’m not too much on politics, either. They said uh—what was I gonna say? I’m gonna lose my mind. No I’m not. Tax-wise, that they was a big asset, when they annexed it to the city or something like that.

**Finchum** *It didn’t take business away from the eateries here in town?*

**Hicks** Well yeah a little bit, yeah. Some of ’em had to close down. Clanton’s now it’s been here forever and a day so it’s still here. But they used to have one up on Main Street called Grand Café, it closed down. But, you know, we weren’t allowed to go up town too much so I’m not sure about what all they had as far as eating places.

**Finchum** *So you were at the Glass House a couple of years or a little bit longer?*

**Hicks** Oh longer, longer.

**Finchum** *Longer than that?*

**Hicks** A long time. Like I said, I graduated working at the Glass House. And then I went to REC, I’m not sure how long after that I went. Like I said, I was trying to think, but I stayed there until I retired at sixty-two.

**Finchum** *And what’s that stand for? REC?*

**Hicks** Rural Electric Co-op.

**Finchum** *Rural Electric, okay.*

**Hicks** I think it’s called Northeast [Oklahoma] Electric now. They have got a new name, too, because they had branched out and they doing like fiber optics, whatever that is, for computers and internet, and all that stuff. They doing all that stuff. It’s not electric now, it’s got more than just electric.

**Finchum** *Getting electricity in Vinita, I think Vinita was one of the first towns in the state to get it, if I remember correctly.*

**Hicks** Yeah, I don’t…

**Finchum** *I don’t know, I think it was.*

**Hicks** Through Public Service though I think. Wasn’t it?

**Finchum** *I think something like that.*

**Hicks** Yeah, it’s Public Service.

**Finchum** *Well, how would you get to and from work when you worked at the Glass House?*

**Hicks** Well, when I worked at the Glass House, my husband’s brother-in-law, well I guess he’d be my brother-in-law too. He worked out there in the warehouse. No, I’m backing up, yeah, I’m backing up now. I’m in the wrong place, now.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hicks** But I’d catch a ride. Robert Ramsey was the one that would come and pick me up and I’d ride to work with him at the Glass House. When I went to REC I rode with the other guy. So I always got a ride because I didn’t know how to drive forever. (Laughs) So I was grown before I started learning how to drive. But anyway, so then that’s how I’d get to work. Why Annabell would come and get me when we had parties, she’d come and pick me up. And I’d ride with Charles Kirkendoll. I just caught a ride, couldn’t walk way out there. And I finally learned how to drive so I could putt my little self right on out there. Right on to work. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well what were the uniforms like for the waitresses? The ones that were waitresses, were they the same?*

**Hicks** No, they had, as far as I can remember, they had yellow uniforms.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hicks** Lavon [Lewis] may be able to help you. She probably did some research so she can probably help you straighten out my mess. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Okay. That’s okay! Everybody’s story is going to come together so we’re fine.*

**Hicks** She can help straighten out my mess but anyway they had different uniforms. They wore yellow ones and we wore white ones.

**Finchum** *I’ve seen a picture where they had linen tablecloths, or it looked like linen tablecloths.*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Cotton, I guess, maybe.*

**Hicks** They could set them up, they had a closet back there. We had to set the tables when we had those banquets I was telling you about. Had linen tablecloths and then we’d fold the napkins and they’d stand up a certain way, make it really pretty.

**Finchum** *Could you still do it if you had to?*

**Hicks** No, no, I couldn’t begin. (Laughs) I can’t even begin, you know. I worked in the gift shop down there. I used to be a relief, when I’d go down there and work. Just do whatever they wanted me to do but I didn’t really master none of it. (Laughs) They say jack of all trades and master of none. And I’d go down, relieve the girls to go to lunch. That’s when I started learning how to use the cash register.

**Finchum** *Your math came in handy a little bit. You probably could do it in your head.*

**Hicks** Well kind of, but anyway, I didn’t. You always wanted to make sure, the change making part, you know. But now the adding machine or whatever, they tell you how much change to give them back now. (Laughs) You don’t have to use your head for nothing. But you had to make your change and count it back.

**Finchum** *Did anybody famous ever come through?*

**Hicks** Yeah but, you see, I get to be thinking about that, but I can’t even remember now.

**Finchum** *But someone did?*

**Hicks** Huh?

**Finchum** *You recall some did?*

**Hicks** Yeah, they come through there ever now and then. They might say, “So-and-so’ coming through here” or somebody, you know. They’d always tell us or holler. And some of the girls would get a piece of—a napkin and get an autograph, and I don’t have any. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well Will Rogers, he was probably already gone by then, but his kids may have come through. I don’t know.*

**Hicks** Well I don’t, I can’t remember about that.

**Finchum** *There’s probably a lot of traffic though since it was…*

**Hicks** Both ways.

**Finchum** *Both ways, yeah. Did you hear comments about the uniqueness of the building?*

**Hicks** Yeah, uh huh. They was always talking about it. It was just the archway, I guess, the one that’s up there, where is that at? Oh, uh, you see it advertised on TV all the time.

**Finchum** *Are you talking about the St. Louis one?*

**Hicks** Yeah, so you know I guess it’s really, really, it’s taller, you know. But I think that you just—you don’t get to go in there do you or if you just look at it. I don’t know.

**Finchum** *You could go up but it’s not very big.*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *It’s kind of…*

**Hicks** A bit scary, huh. Not for me then. I don’t like elevators. (Laughs) Cause we had elevators, we had one elevator out there. We had to go down stairs to get the stuff, you know. I’d go down there and get my stuff and put it on my little cart, push the button and then I’d walk up the stairs. And I’d catch it when it got up there, help to get it off. Cause it had, you know…

**Finchum** *They had escalators too, didn’t it?*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *I’ve seen a picture and it looked like it had those too.*

**Hicks** Yeah they did. But it’s been a long time since I worked out there, I just can’t remember what all we did. But I know we had them white uniforms, I wore one, and they had yellow uniforms for the waitresses. I call ’em yellow. Even the men wore white.

**Finchum** *Well, were you there when it became a McDonald’s?*

**Hicks** No, no. See when I started working there it was called Howard Johnson’s.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hicks** Glass House. And then they changed it to just plain, hm.. ain’t that awful. Well you know, they shut it down and then they remodeled it and it just—have you been out there lately?

**Finchum** *Not lately.*

**Hicks** No, it’s different.

**Finchum** *We’re going to stop on our way back.*

**Hicks** Where’re you from?

**Finchum** *Stillwater.*

**Hicks** Oh. Well anyway, they got some of everything. They got a little old bitty—you know. We had a big nice gift shop, and then they got a little old bitty thing. They just downsized the inside of it. It’s just not pretty at all, in my opinion. Not pretty at all. But anyway, then you got the McDonald’s. They got two or three, McDonald’s—what do they have out there? Three different restaurants, three different places you can eat.

**Finchum** *A Subway, I saw—*

**Hicks** A Subway, McDonald’s, a Subway. I wanna say Braum’s, but I don’t know if it’s Braum’s or not. I only been out there once, went out there, and it’s kind of plain and bland on the inside. It was prettier before they did all that. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well when you worked there, would you go out and also eat there when you weren’t working?*

**Hicks** Yeah, when we had a break.

**Finchum** *No, but when you were off, if you weren’t working, if you were at home, would you go back in just to eat?*

**Hicks** No.

**Finchum** *Like you would go today to a restaurant.*

**Hicks** No. At that time, we had to cook at home. (Laughs) Did most of our cooking at home, but we did out there for our breaks out there, but I did, I cooked at home. We cooked at home. Didn’t do too much eating out. I eat out all the time now, not all the time but a lot. I went to Clanton’s yesterday. I told a friend of mine, I said “Donna, I went to Clanton’s. Aren’t you suppose to get me a cake like Clanton’s?” (Laughs) You know when you eat out so much, it just doesn’t have the same taste, you know. You know what it’s going to taste like when you get it. (Laughs) You know what it’s going to taste like when you get it.

**Finchum** *Well do you think people would come through the turnpike just to stop at the Glass House? I mean travel from Tulsa or somewhere just to come eat.*

**Hicks** Just to come eat?

**Finchum** *Yeah.*

**Hicks** I don’t know. Most of the time, when I worked out there, most times people are traveling so they had no option. They’d say, “We’ll stop at the midway.” They called it the midway. And they stopped there and take a break, and gas, they had gas stations, and get the gas, and come up and get something to eat, and go on their way.

**Finchum** *Mostly families, I would imagine.*

**Hicks** Yeah, mmhm. We had families, and like I said earlier we had buses that would come through and stuff. You know, football players would stop, and that’s you get really, really busy. We’d just be busy. I mean, you know, you get used to it. It’s just like up here at Braum’s, not Braum’s, but McDonald’s up there, you know. A lot of people come—right there on that corner [in Vinita], the parking space is so limited, you know. So they, you know… And I have heard people talking about going out there [to the turnpike] even now to eat, even though it’s just…

**Finchum** *Yeah, just fast food now.*

**Hicks** Yeah, everything’s fast food. We actually ate there today.

**Finchum** *And they actually had proms?*

**Hicks** Yeah, we had prom banquets out there. They’d come out there and eat and then have a little program in there. I think they would then dress up and go have a date, you know. They’d decorate it. The high school, they used to have dances out there. They had a lot of family reunions, cause families just get around and talk and visit and eat. Have no problem, they can all do it in the same setting and they can have someone to wait on them and clean up the tables. And then they’d do their little family get together.

**Finchum** *And get homemade rolls, probably.*

**Hicks** Yeah, homemade rolls and yeah.

**Finchum** *That’d be the best part I think.*

**Hicks** They had a special menu that they could order from and they’d order the stuff in like if they wanted a steak dinner or they were gonna to have prime rib, or any of that kind of stuff, they’d order it in. They’d have a request and then they’d cook it out there.

**Finchum** *Well, were you there when you had any major snow storms and travelers would get stranded or something like that?*

**Hicks** Mmhm.

**Finchum** *I think it would be a place people would try to get to if it was bad weather.*

**Hicks** Yeah, they’d stop there. Some of them would get off you know, go into town, go get them a motel, you know. You could exit at Big Cabin, and exit and go off just to go in and get you a room. The big truck stop is there at Big Cabin.

**Finchum** *Okay. What prompted you to quit working there?*

**Hicks** I got a job offer at the REC.

**Finchum** *You got a job offer, okay.*

**Hicks** They were wanting somebody to be a member record keeper, and so I went out there and I applied and Deloris Lee hired me. And I had to start from scratch because I knew nothing about doing any of that kind of work. And so they did everything by hand, you know, you know typing. I had to set up the accounts, you know, make a folder for ’em. Put all their paperwork there, connects and disconnects, whatever kind of orders they had. If they didn’t pay their bill you had to go turn them off and give a notice. I did all that, and then when they’d go out and accept new members I had to type a meter card. I mean we had meter cards. That’s what signing would do, and then they’d give me the cards, and then I’d put the cards in, and I had to file in the drawers.

And then when they set that meter, I pulled that card out for that meter number and typed that person’s name on it and when they were connected, like today would be 8/4. Then if they wasn’t, a lot of people had homes on the lake, and they’d have the electric turned on, they have it there for thirty days, and then they want it turned off. They weren’t going to be there for a while so they had it turned off. That’s what I did out there and I liked it.

Then they went to computers. And so I went to school to learn how to do just a little bit of computer work, and they paid for me to go. If I didn’t pass the test I had to pay them back, but I passed the test so I didn’t have to pay them back. So then I started doing it on computers and it was much, much faster. And then they got a scanner, and then we’d just scan them, and then throw them in the trash, you know, once you scan ’em, that account number. When people come in to talk to the representatives up from about their service, and then they could look on the computer and pull up whatever they needed to pull up. They could pull up the connect, pull up the disconnect, and pull up twenty-four-hour notice and all that stuff. I had to scan it, I had to put it in order, you know, like the connects in an order, disconnects in another order, twenty-four-hour notices, and outages and whatever. And you scan ’em to those categories.

And then my heath started failing me, so I thought well, I said, “When I turn sixty-two, I’m going to the house.” And so when I turned sixty-two on December 15th—well, I’m seventy-eight now so however many years ago that was.

**Finchum** *Sixteen, yeah.*

**Hicks** I came home. Cause like right now, I still got lots of health issues, you know. Watching my blood pressure now that this has started. You don’t have to tell all this, but anyway, I’m just yapping, now.

**Finchum** *You’re doing fine.*

**Hicks** But anyway.

**Finchum** *So all that fast order cooking was practice for keeping these records. You had to be organized…*

**Hicks** Yeah, mmhm.

**Finchum** *And do things in sequence and stuff.*

**Hicks** Yeah, I just always wanted my own little chain. I’d work all week and whenever I got off I’m just as happy as, you know, cause I worked out there. I worked at REC for I don’t know how long. And if you don’t, some people are just not honest and fair with you. It’s like, if they think you’re content, well who knows you’re not, unless you go tell them, you know. So, they came out there, they had a survey out there at REC. They interviewed everybody and their position. You had to write all you did. Anyway, I did that with some help, like you’re helping me now, and so when the lady interviewed me, I got a raise. I got my title changed and a raise. So I was happy about that, you know. When I started I had to do, I worked cashier, I did answering the telephone, and you know, be a relief, you know, and I didn’t mind.

**Finchum** *Well we should back up then, you said you had two children?*

**Hicks** Uh huh.

**Finchum** *So you were married at some point?*

**Hicks** Yeah. Yeah, I got two, but I kind of had the cart before the horse. I had my children before I got married. But anyway, I have my daughter. I have to tell that every time I go out there and get her medicine. She’s uh, my first child. And then I have a son. So I have a boy and a girl. When I married my husband, Wilfred Hicks, I became pregnant with my son, Wayne, that’s his. My son is Wilfred’s son, went through an attorney, divorce court and paternity court, and then my daughter, he’s only dad she knows, so you know both of them are really his kids but she still goes by Martin.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hicks** That was my maiden name. And so out of them I got, my son he has six kids. And my daughter just has one. My daughter’s son is in the Air Force, and then my son, they all moved to Claremore [Oklahoma] but then they’re moving back so I don’t know. (Laughs) They told me that the other day, so that’s, yeah. And my husband, he passed, that’s when my daughter moved in with me, because it was just me and him. When he passed, she came over and stayed with me, and I said, “You can move in if you want to. You don’t have to, you know, I’ll be all right. If you don’t want to, you don’t have to.” But she thought it would be, it was an asset, you know, at times. But sometime two people in the same house don’t work out so well. Two grown people, but anyway.

**Finchum** *It gets really quiet if it’s just one.*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *And she worked at the Glass House for a while?*

**Hicks** Yeah, but now she works—she has kind of the same job I used to have at REC. She has out there, I call it Eastern State, but they don’t. It’s got a new name too.

**Finchum** *I know where you’re talking about. Correctional something or other.*

**Hicks** Yeah and there’s where she does. She works up there. They don’t call ’em members, I don’t know what they call ’em.

**Finchum** *And Vinita’s been home forever?*

**Hicks** Yeah, home forever.

**Finchum** *And it’s changed a lot in those years, too?*

**Hicks** Yeah, mmhm, mmhm.

**Finchum** *Now you can go in the front door in a restaurant.*

**Hicks** Right. (Laughs) Go wherever I want to go.

**Finchum** *Well, did it have a movie theater?*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Does it still?*

**Hicks** Yeah. It was the same way then, we had to sit one place, but you can go anywhere now. It’s in the same place. It shut down for a while but now it’s reopened again.

**Finchum** *Well, do you keep in touch with some of your co-workers from the Glass House days?*

**Hicks** Well, no, they live—a place that’s good at running into folks is Walmart. (Laughs) That’s where they’re at.

**Finchum** *That’s true!*

**Hicks** Ethel Bohannon, I run into her quite a bit. And then Lavon [Lewis], and she is a, she’s a go-getter. I ride her sometimes when I see her. I say, “Oh Lord, here comes Lavon,” cause she loves to talk. (Laughs) She loves to talk. And we have good visits, too.

**Finchum** *Good.*

**Hicks** And then she had a thing on—I don’t know how they do it. They have a prayer chain on the thing and she started that, you know. People that just need a prayer; they have that on there. She got that started. She’s a big church worker, I mean, obviously a Christian.

**Finchum** *It seems like Vinita’s a pretty tight-knit town now. Or at least it seems that way.*

**Hicks** Mmhm, it’s wherever you go you find in your own race some that don’t like you and you’re gonna find some other races that don’t like you. But they been, in the paper they been talking about unity and that’s what we need, unity. Even if the leaders are getting off, Trump (laughs) and you know, so I don’t know. I said, “Lord, just leave it.” He said something, but he can’t make up his mind from one day to the next, (laughs) so I don’t know where he’s heading, but anyway, that’s him and whoever. Some people just go Republican and Democrat and they don’t care who it is and what their qualification is. If they’re a Republican that’s what they gonna vote for.

**Finchum** *That’s true.*

**Hicks** Some people are Democrat and they don’t care who it is and what they stand for, they gonna vote for them. They vote for that denomination. Not denomination but whatever it is.

**Finchum** *The party.*

**Hicks** The party, there you go, the party. They don’t care who is running they just vote for him. So that’s the way the story goes.

**Finchum** *Has it been a pretty good life for the most part?*

**Hicks** Yeah, for the most part. Like I said, I was telling somebody, I said, “You know when I leave here, you know where I’m going? To Fairview.” I mean I don’t wanna leave Vinita. You know I couldn’t adjust. The traffic would be too much for me. Everything. I couldn’t deal with it.

**Finchum** *Well, and it all started with Annabell Southern getting you on the right track with working.*

**Hicks** Yeah, right, mmhm. When I started, I don’t know how I got started cleaning house, but somebody probably asked, you know.

**Finchum** *Well actually I should back up. It probably started with your mother keeping you in line with saying you do your homework, you do what needs to be done first.*

**Hicks** Yeah, and then I’d go to work. I started cleaning house, doing the best I could. I mean, you know, I’d sweep and mob and dust and iron.

**Finchum** *Do you cook for yourself today?*

**Hicks** Yeah, when I take a notion. I don’t have to cook now. (Laughs) Yeah I do, I cook.

**Finchum** *Do you have a specialty that your kids and grandkids like? Ask for?*

**Hicks** They like me to make sweets. I’m a pie maker.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hicks** And so they like me to make—I got this chocolate sheet cake I make. They just love that and they just can’t get enough. They eat too much sugar so I don’t… And then I make peach cobblers all the time. A lot, not all the time. I got this Amish bread I make, I just, you know. But then, that’s the sweet part of the thing, but I’ll cook a pot of beans, I cook some cabbage, I cook some greens, I cook some—I fix okra and potatoes and--

**Finchum** *That sounds good.*

**Hicks** Tomatoes and a little bit of hot pepper and mix that up. But I make a pan of cornbread with Jiffy, but whatever. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *That’s cheating!*

**Hicks** (Laughs) Now my sister—I always said, I cannot make, I’ve tried so many recipes on trying to make dumplings, and I cannot make dumplings for nothing. But anyway, so.

**Finchum** *Well, do you make your own pie crust or do you get the frozen?*

**Hicks** Yeah I do. I make my pie crust.

**Finchum** *Do you put vinegar in it?*

**Hicks** Sometime I do but I usually just—I got this recipe I use. It calls for two cups of flour, a cup of shortening and a half of cup of water and a teaspoon of salt. Well you know you do the shortening and the flour until it gets like pieces and crumbly. Then you add half cup of water and there you go.

**Finchum** *I’m going to try that. I’m not good at pie crust. Someone said use vinegar and it just*—I *put too much I think.*

**Hicks** Well you don’t put [much], well I don’t put—sometimes I do. It does make it a little bit flakier. Sometimes, if I got some handy, I just put a little bit in my half a cup of water. A little bit.

**Finchum** *Is it a drop or two or something?*

**Hicks** Yeah. In my half of water.

**Finchum** *Does the water have to be cold?*

**Hicks** Yeah, cold, yeah. Cold water.

**Finchum** *Cold, cold.*

**Hicks** Yeah but it’s a trick to making pie crust. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Uh huh, it is.*

**Hicks** I mean sometime you just, it is a trick. I like to make cobblers. And that’s when I—you know, if you don’t get it in that pan good, then you put your filler in there and then it leaks out in the bottom and burns the crust. (Laughs) But anyway, I like cobblers because I like juices, I guess you’d say, in my pie.

**Finchum** *So what was your favorite pie? What do you do for your pie filling? Peach?*

**Hicks** Yeah, peach.

**Finchum** *Peach cobbler I know, but peach [for your pie]?*

**Hicks** Peaches. And I buy the peaches that says “light syrup.” Because I put some more sugar in mine and nutmeg and cinnamon.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hicks** But then I like to slice my peaches. I buy the can you know. Fresh peaches in another chore. (Laughs) They’re good. Fresh peaches are really good but usually I buy the canned peaches and then I pour ’em in the bowl and then I slice ’em again so they won’t be so thick. I don’t like big old bites of peaches in my—I like crust and juice and ice cream on top of it.

**Finchum** *Well could you do the mile-high lemon pie now?*

**Hicks** No. We had a recipe for that, and I can’t remember but we had to beat it and beat it. There’s a trick to that too.

**Finchum** *To get the consistency right?*

**Hicks** Yeah and then you don’t want to over beat it, and you sure don’t want to under beat it. Cause if you over beat it—it’s got a lot of sugar in it and if you under beat it, it’s kind of little white …

**Finchum** *Crystalizes or …*

**Hicks** Yeah, it comes apart when it gets cold. That does the same thing when you make pies at home, you know. That’s why I like to make a cobbler, but I make a banana crème pie sometimes, too. But sometimes I can’t get that egg white to do right for me. I either under beat it or beat it. I say I’m not gonna beat this as long this time and I think it look so good and be all fluffed up and then when it gets cool those little old crystal things start coming up. (Laughs) But it don’t last long in my house.

**Finchum** *Yeah.*

**Hicks** I like peach cobbler and then blackberry. Oh wow. I finally got that down, but you gotta have a lot of sugar in them blackberries.

**Finchum** *Do cobbler?*

**Hicks** Yeah, I like cobblers. My sister makes pies. I like cobblers.

**Finchum** *So you use your biscuit dough to make your cobbler?*

**Hicks** I make that same old crust that I use [for the pies].

**Finchum** *Oh so you just put it on top and bottom.*

**Hicks** Mmhm.

**Finchum** *I’ll try your recipe.*

**Hicks** It does good, you don’t want to get it, you know. The working part is when you put the shortening and the flour in there, that’s when you do all the working. Now when you get to add your water, you don’t have to do all that working. You just gotta get it up mixed up really good and then you divide it up and then you knead it on your flour, and roll it out. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Alright, I’m going to try again. I was disappointed in my first one because of the vinegar. But this one…*

**Hicks** A little bit of vinegar in it, it don’t [take much].

**Finchum** *It doesn’t take much evidently.*

**Hicks** You don’t want to make it taste like vinegar.

**Finchum** *Smell the house like vinegar.*

**Hicks** Oh yeah, that was too much vinegar. I’ve got a box full of recipe books. I’m always trying to find something new to make and then I make it and I don’t like it, but then I just keep the book. I go to garage sales and buy a lot of—people sell books, recipes, and I just—I don’t know why, I’m addicted to buying recipe books. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Goes back to being a cook at…*

**Hicks** Yeah.

**Finchum**  *…a cook at the Glass House.*

**Hicks** Never was too good at making bread, either.

**Finchum** *I think there’s a trick to that, too.*

**Hicks** Don’t make bread too good. I have tried, and it just don’t come out all that good at times. (Coughs)

**Finchum** *Have some water there. I think we’ve covered a lot. Is there anything else you want to add before we close?*

**Hicks** I told you my life history, I don’t know about my working history, but anyway. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *You were great. I will say thank you for talking with me today.*

**Hicks** Mmhm.

**Finchum** *It’s been great.*

**------- *End of interview*** *-------*