

190929_1503 Transcription

NOTE: I did my best to tell the two sister's voices apart, but I mostly had to guess.

Interviewer: This is Justin Hawkins, 2019 History Harvest, interview number 12. And who do I have here today?

Participant 1: Julia Boatman

Participant 2: And Loretta Taylor. We were the Hickmans.

Interviewer: And you're sisters, correct?

Participant 2: Yes, uhuh.

Interviewer: Why don't you just tell me a little about your childhood, your family...

Participant 1: Well, we ended up here because my, my mother married, her mother I'm sorry. My mother's mother, sorry.

Interviewer: Your grandmother.

Participant 1: Yeah, my grandmother was from Detroit and she married a gentleman named Clifford Epps. And, she then, those two moved out here. So, that's how we ended up out here because when my mom and dad got married, they rented one of their houses on their property.

Interviewer: And what was their profession?

Participant 1: Farmers.

Interviewer: And what do you... do you have a favorite memory? Maybe not a... do you have a memory? Does that...

Participant 2: My grandparents lived on Ross Road, large farm, house and several farm buildings, and that was my father's father...

Participant 1: Right, it was his...

Participant 2: Always loved to go to their house, their huge house.

Interviewer: What did you like to do over at your grandparents house?

Participant 1: I was known as the “Epps Pets,” and I got to go over there quite a bit. Just, being around them. At that time our grandmother would have us do ironing and stuff like that. Yeah, that was probably when I was 8, 9, 10 years old.

Participant 2: One summer my grandmother would help us to earn money. She would hire us to iron her pillow slips and sheets, that’s what people did back then. And, we cleaned her house for her because she had a lot of wood. We’d dust for her, and that’s what our jobs were in the summertime. Working for her and helping her keep the house up. Um, I liked to be outside, so my grandfather did have a couple of horses a long time ago. I was really too small to ride them, but I remember his horses and, uh, we have a lot of cows and sheep, so we like the animals too. And then he had pigs. Oh, he raised a special pig. I don’t remember what kind it was, but every year at the fair, a long long time ago at the Darke County Fair, he actually entered these pigs into the, uh, the, whatever, the...

Interviewer: The contest?

Participant 2: The contest. They were supposedly really good pigs, they were huge. We do have pictures of them at home, of this pig that he helped, you know, raise and stuff like that. They were really a good pig that a lot of farmers wanted to buy and stuff,

Interviewer: Now, did they ever tell you any stories that stick out to you in your memory?

Participant 1: [??] lot’s of stories, but age has taken it. So, yeah. But, my aunt out in Colorado has a lot of information [??].

Participant 2: I remember coming here to church a lot, [???], being involved in vacation bible school, [????]. The kids, we'd all get together. So, we knew each other from school and then we all went to the Palestine school down the road here.

Interviewer: And was that... what ages was that for?

Participant 2: Oh, that was, oh gosh. That was, we went to school and started in 1957, okay.

Interviewer: Oh I meant more like, uh, was it like first grade through twelfth grade, or...

Participant 2: Oh yeah, first through...

Participant 1: Kindergarten, a month-long kindergarten [?????????].

Interviewer: And that went, right, did you ever go to any other schools for like primary education, or?

Participant 2: We went to, let's see, after that, that was first grade through eighth, and then we had Westmont which was our high school. And, uh, we went there for four years. But then we consolidated with another community, because the schools were, you know, [????]. So, we consolidated in Madison High School. And they, they made that the Tri-Village High School, so I graduated there. I was after the consolidation. So, Westmont was before consolidating, and Tri-Village was after.

Interviewer: Now, did your parents farm as well, like your grandparents? Or what did they do?

Participant 2: Dad farmed for *Cliff* cuz my grandfather had about 500 acres of property, so my dad was a mechanic here in Greenville. At night he would come home and also farm with my grandfather. Some nights he would be out in the field for him too. But my grandfather had a few other men farming for him too. It was sort of like, I don't know. They all helped him farm the land, he had about three or four farmers that helped him farm his land.

Participant 1: I think he rented it...

Participant 2: Rented it out to them or something. Uh, what else.

Participant 1: We just lived, they lived up on Ross Road, we lived on Holmes [???], which was probably about a half a mile South. In a farmhouse. That was our grandfather's also, until my mom and dad bought it years later.

Interviewer: So what did you two do for your careers, or?

Participant 1: Uh, as an adult, I became a nurse, back in, oh, I think it was [????]

Interviewer: And where did you study?

Participant 1: I went to [????] School for LPD and then Edison State for my RN. And I [????].

Interviewer: And so, because I'm not familiar with the area, is that close to here?

Participant 1: Uh, pretty close

Interviewer: Yeah, so that's right across the border?

[????????????????????]

Participant 1: It's the county seat, Edison State is in Edgebrook, Ohio.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Participant 2: And, let's see, I went to [???] State after I left the village, I didn't graduate there, later on I went to Sinclair College and became an electronics engineer, technician. Did that for a few years, and then I went to school for massage therapy. So, I used to do that for a while. Now I'm retired.

Participant 1: And what do you do now?

Participant 2: What I do now? Oh, because of my love of horses from when my grandfather lived out here, at the age of 58, I ended up getting horses. I always wanted horses, all my life.

Participant 1: Rescue horses.

Participant 2: Yeah, and I ended up getting 4 rescue horses that I have now that I [???].

Interviewer: No kidding? That's great. It looped around,

Participant 2: It looped around, yeah. I never got over that. I did have a pony growing up, but I never got a horse. So, eventually my husband surprised me with a horse and then I ended up getting three more horses. So, yeah. My grandfather had sheep and cows and pigs, right?

Participant 1: And chickens.

Participant 2: He had them on our farm and his farm. So, he had quite a few animals that he raised. But when he got older, he got rid of the animals and just stuck with the crops, raising crops.

Interviewer: Do you know what he grew?

Participant 2: Oh, no.

Participant 1: I think he raised corn, soybeans mostly. That's the main crops around here.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense.

Participant 1: That was the major crops that he did, yeah.

Interviewer: And, uh, sorta, last big question is what does 'freedom' mean to you and your family?

Participant 2: Oh, that's an interesting question. Hmm. Well...

Interviewer: It's a big one!

Participant 1: One of the things I wanna say is our ancestors came over as slaves, and we were transpired from that, what would you [????]. My father lived in Virginia, his family was from Virginia. So, yeah.

Participant 2: I don't know, it's freedom. It means a lot to us now. Now I think growing up...

Interviewer: Like as adults?

Participant 2: As adults, we find out how rich our heritage is, but when we're young people, young kids, we weren't really taught how important it was. But now, we, we see how important it is and how proud we should be of it. And, uh, how proud we are of this humanity, although a lot of people have moved away and things, but it was, I think it was a great place to grow up because everybody knew each other, you know, we were close-knit, and there was safety I think, within the community, which was, good people. There was safety that, you know, you knew everybody and if you needed help, you could get help, and things like that. And so, it means a lot, and I think it's important for these projects like this to continue on. Because, sometimes you'll be reading somewhere and you'll read about this area, Longtown, you know. You're surprised that, wow, you know? Because we just thought that this was probably nowhere when we were growing up. But now, we find out it is an important piece of history, and the people that came from here.

Interviewer: So is there anything I didn't ask you about that you would like to share? Anything you can think of?

Participant 1: Do you want to share about our house?

Interviewer: That sounds enticing!

Participant 2: Well, I don't know what... My parents [??] what, back in the early 70's, in the 80's. My grandfather's property had, I'm sorry. My grandmother, after he died, she moved into Greenville and got a smaller house. And sold the property to another man. Now, we used to live down on the other property and, um, my dad and mom sold our land, which is about 10 or 15

acres I think, to a young couple, to a young caucasian couple. And, they gave them a break in the sale of the property and of the house and everything. And so, just recently we found out that the young couple split up. Well, they're older now, that's thirty-some years ago. They split up, and we found out the guy had all this memorabilia, guns, that he had collected. He had a lot of guns, he had, he had Ku Klux Klan memorabilia, and Nazi memorabilia. Okay?

Participant 1: And you know, this community was mainly black.

Participant 2: Although, it was always rumored there were Ku Klux Klan in the area, I mean that, we heard that, we didn't know names or anything. So, we find it interesting that my father, as a black man, sold this property to a white couple. But then years and years later, we find out this guy has got all this memorabilia he collected. I don't know if he was into it, or if he was just collecting it for the heck of it. If my dad knew that, he would have flipped I'm sure. Flipped in his grave. But, you know, they were willing to give the couple a chance to start a farm, or start out on their own and everything. And we did keep in contact with the family, through the years. We would go back up to the farm and "can we walk around here, we just wanna relive some memories." They would let us and stuff like that. But it was quite a shock to learn all the stuff he had collected over the years.

Interviewer: Would you have gone back if you had known?

Participant 2: Well...

Interviewer: Before he had moved out ?

Participant 1: That was our family's property in the beginning. So, my aunt and her family came from Colorado, and we did drive up there. Nobody was home at the time and we just kinda was walking around and remembering things. And, it was quite a shock when we found out.

Participant 2: Because we saw the bill of sale or whatever it's called, the bill of sale of stuff he was selling, we were shocked to say the least. So, we don't know if he was part of that or he just admired collecting that kind of stuff, but anyway, that was the deal.

Interviewer: Well, thank you so much for your time!

Participant 1: Thank you!

Participant 2: Thank you very much.