

November 2007

Interview with Madison McClung Sterrett, Jr.

By Isabelle Chewning and Aggie Sterrett

[Items enclosed in brackets [] are editorial notes inserted for clarification.]

Isabelle Chewning: Today is November the 10th, 2007, and it's Daddy's 82th birthday, and we're going to ask him questions. So, have you lived here your whole entire life?

Mc Sterrett: No, not my entire life, but we moved here when I was about 18 months old or something like that.

Aggie Sterrett: So all of your memories are from here.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. I don't remember the move even, but I do remember going back there to the sale.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, do you? What's your first memory of here?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, I guess I was quite interested in what the farm did, and it would probably be something about Trixie or Dude [Haliburton].

Aggie Sterrett: Who was Trixie?

Mc Sterrett: That was the pony we had.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, okay. So what memories do you have of Trixie?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, Trixie ran off with me one time.

Isabelle Chewning: How far did he go?

Mc Sterrett: I went up to the Dice place [2081 Sterrett Road], up there at Mrs. Dice's, and Trixie was -- I believe Dude's [Haliburton] expression was "he had frost on his nose." [Laugh] And he -- I came out the lane and I had to show off a little bit. Some men were working up there. And I kicked him, or I did something, and he ran off and came all the way down the road. And I fell off when he went around this turn going down the lane [beside 2249 Sterrett Road]. [Laugh]

Aggie Sterrett: How old do you think you were?

Mc Sterrett: I expect I was nine, eight, something like that. [Laugh] But everybody seemed to think I was very lucky, 'cause he ran into the stable when he got down there. That would've clipped my head. [Laugh] But I was very, very lucky to have gotten off.

Aggie Sterrett: Now, is that the same barn that's still there now?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: The old log barn or...

Mc Sterrett: No, not the old log one, but the other barn was there.

Isabelle Chewning: The calf barn.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And that was the stable?

Mc Sterrett: That's where we kept the horses, yeah. And I think he was staying in this box stall at the door on the upper corner.

Aggie Sterrett: Where we used to keep Missy when she would --

Isabelle Chewning: Founder.

Aggie Sterrett: Yeah. So how many horses would you keep in there?

Mc Sterrett: We kept something-- we usually kept a riding horse, and worked him part time. Evidently we kept around three teams or six horses. He might have counted, I don't know for sure.

Aggie Sterrett: And did you have a car then or truck or...?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, we had a car. Daddy had a car when we first moved here; it was a Model T.

Aggie Sterrett: Now, tell me the story about the Model T. What happened when the brakes would wear out.

Mc Sterrett: When the brakes would wear out, you would use low gear, I guess. What would happen, you'd push the pedal for low gear, and you pushed the pedal for reverse, and you used low gear until that wore out, and then you'd use reverse to stop it with.

Aggie Sterrett: I thought that was kind of funny.

Mc Sterrett: There were three pedals in the floor of the Model T. And then we got a Model A after that. It was open, and Mother patched -- had to put isinglass curtains on it in the wintertime.

Aggie Sterrett: What do you mean open, was it a convertible?

Mc Sterrett: No, it was like a Model T. It had the top, but it didn't have the curtains on the side. We had to put curtains on every -- well, you put them on in the fall and they stayed on through winter. But they had some kind of stuff you could see through, isinglass, I think they called it. And that was how you saw what was going on.

Isabelle Chewning: Huh. And did you work the horse teams?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, we had horses up until oh, in the 40's sometime.

Isabelle Chewning: I remember Jack, he just plowed the gardens, I guess.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, that's about all he did. Maybe it was around -- well, I think we got the tractor around 1940, and I think we had horses up until that time, and then they started dwindling down a little bit.

Aggie Sterrett: Now, did Granddaddy train the horses or did he buy them already [trained]?

Mc Sterrett: Most of them were already broken when you got them. But they had one old horse named Bill, and he had been a logging horse, worked in the woods. And if you ever hooked him to anything, and it hung in the woods, and he was going to break something. [laughing] That was his main thing, was to work in the woods. But our uncle, Uncle Steve [Wallace Stephens], who was Graham's daddy, they lived here for one summer. And I remember Dude [Haliburton] talking about if he harrowed all day, harrowed about an acre, I think. Anyway, he came in one day and the horses were going down -- you had to bring your horses in to get water, and they were going down to water, I think. And he walked up behind the horse and hooked up a trace or did something, and a horse kicked him. Broke a rib or two, I think. [Laugh] I mean, the horse thought it was another horse doing something to him.

Isabelle Chewning: You said he harrowed all day and only got an acre done?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And what would a normal person get done?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, five or six acres, probably. He just went over the same place--

Aggie Sterrett: Was he particular?

Mc Sterrett: He went over the same ground, I think. He was riding a horse was the way I understood it. I didn't know too much about it. But I remember when Graham and Bruce were here, we'd go out the back road after the Boggies. [Laugh]

Aggie Sterrett: After the what?

Mc Sterrett: Boggies. I guess that's what we called cows.

Isabelle Chewning: How old were you then?

Mc Sterrett: I was probably five, or six, four or five.

Aggie Sterrett: And they're younger than you.

Mc Sterrett: They were a little younger, yeah. They were, well -- I remember when they -- I don't know whether they were living here, or were going to Michigan to see some of the grandparents. Graham and I were fooling around in the car doing something, in their car. And his two front teeth were real loose. And he bit me on the elbow and I gave him a little chunk, and the two teeth came out. [Laughter] And his mother was very disappointed that he didn't keep the teeth until they got to Michigan to see the other grandparents.

Aggie Sterrett: Michigan, hmmm.

Mc Sterrett: He [Uncle Steve, Wallace Stephens] was in the Marine Corps down in Quantico, I think, was how they met.

Aggie Sterrett: That's how they met?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Uncle Steve, do you remember him at all?

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, yes. He either called me-- what did he call me? Or I called him -- not Huckabilly but, kinda like that. Hootenanny, that's what it was! Yeah, tell about that. How they met and...

Mc Sterrett: Well, I really don't know too much about that, that was all before my time, of course. But I think he was in the Marine Corps during World War I, and he was down at Quantico. And Aunt Nannie -- I guess they must have entertained some of the marines from Quantico. I don't know much -- any more about that.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, wasn't it a little bit of a family -- because he was a yankee, it was...

Mc Sterrett: Well, yeah, it was very, very--

Isabelle Chewning: Well they eloped.

Aggie Sterrett: Yes.

Mc Sterrett: I didn't know that.

Isabelle Chewning: That's what Aunt Mary said, they eloped.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, get us back to Brownsburg and the farm, I guess. So who were your neighbors when you were living here?

Mc Sterrett: Ummmmmm...

Aggie Sterrett: You talk about Mrs. Dice a lot.

Mc Sterrett: Mrs. Dice was living up there, and Mrs. Cummings will be at Kendal, who was the first cousin of Margaret Dice-- Margaret [Dice] Updike. Margaret got married finally. And then the Dunaways lived down here in this house [2297 Sterrett Road]. They had a daughter that was about the same -- that was in school with Mary, I think.

Isabelle Chewning: Did they own that piece of land there, the Dunaways's did?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Are they the same Dunaway's who lived up above Miss Mattie and Miss Mealie [Amelia] Wade [1727 Sterrett Road]?

Mc Sterrett: Not the same ones, but they were brothers. The Dunaways had Carl and Erskine and -- they had three sons and the oldest son was in the same class in Brownsburg as Funny [Frances "Funny" Bosserman] was, I think. And I don't remember too much about it, but [laugh] the main thing I remember about that was we had a johnnie house down beside the smokehouse [at 2249 Sterrett Road], behind the smoke house. And I was sitting in there singing away, and Rudolph [Dunaway] came up behind and hit on the johnnie house with a stick. And I realized that something-- anyway, I went back to singing, and he hit again. With that, I took off and left my pants lying in there! [Laugh] I just remember that, now that happened when I was real small, I expect.

Isabelle Chewning: And Rudolph was a Dunaway?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, he was one. She had two older sons and then two younger ones, and they had real red hair. Mother said that -- they had a lot of freckles and red hair, and one morning she was in bed for some reason or other, and Mrs. Dunaway came up the road with those two. She took them back to the back place, back the back road [the farm road that runs beside 2244 Sterrett Road]. She had heard that if you washed your face in the dew that was on wheat, it would take freckles off. [Laugh] So that's what they were doing.

Aggie Sterrett: And who were we talking about earlier that lived in the house where Bruce [Thorne lives – 2166 Sterrett Road]. The Stricklers?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. The Stricklers lived there and Tuck Smiley -- do you remember Tuck?

Aggie Sterrett: It's familiar, yeah.

Mc Sterrett: They lived in the house up on the turn where Harold [Thorne] lives [2113 Sterrett Road].

Aggie Sterrett: Where Harold lives.

Isabelle Chewning: And was that house on the farm? Was Harold's house on the Dice –

Mc Sterrett: No, that was on the Dice place, yeah. Tuck walked across there to [Walter] Rees's [52 West Airlie Lane] and worked. And you could almost set up a pole to see if he was moving when he went to work.

Isabelle Chewning: He walked slow?

Mc Sterrett: How he ever got there, I don't know.

Isabelle Chewning: So he worked for Mr. Walter Rees?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And did Mrs. Dice farm? Did she rent the farm, or did she--

Mc Sterrett: She rented the farm. We rented it for awhile, for a long time, then we quit renting it. And she rented it to Shulls and Pitt Pleasants; he was a black man. Shulls lived over at the place, I think. [She rented] to several different people. And I'm not sure that Ed's [Patterson] parents didn't rent for awhile; his father. I don't know whether his mother was dead then or not. But, anyway, they-- it's always been rented. And I told you about the lady that was going to be at Kendal, Mrs. Cummings. [She's] a first cousin of-- I think they were both Whitmores to start with. But Mrs. Dice was a Whitmore.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, okay. All right, now I've got it.

Aggie Sterrett: How big was the farm when Granddaddy [Madison McClung Sterrett, Sr.] bought it?

Mc Sterrett: 236 acres.

Aggie Sterrett: And does that include on this side of the road [the north side of Sterrett Road]?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, both sides of the road. This was a public road [the farm lane that runs beside 2244 Sterrett Road].

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, the one that goes over to Goose Creek Road now?

Isabelle Chewning: So how much did he pay?

Mc Sterrett: \$12,000, I think was what he--

Isabelle Chewning: Did he have to take a loan?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yeah, he borrowed some money from Aunt Alice [Sterrett Davidson]. I think maybe -- I don't know where that money came from, whether she had just saved it or what it was. But he borrowed some money from her, and some from the Federal Land Bank. And then the Depression came along, and he had to go to work in the CCC's [Civilian Conservation Corps] to get enough money to pay for the farm.

Aggie Sterrett: So how did you run the farm while he was away?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I think Dude [Haliburton] more or less ran the farm. Mother was kind of the boss, I reckon. I don't know who decided what they were gonna do each day, but Stricklers were living here then. They had the father and two sons to--

Isabelle Chewning: And Johnnie and Ollie [Strickler] were older than you were?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, they were-- Ollie was 21 years older than I am, and he was 21 years younger than Dude. I don't know why you remember those kinds of things, but that was sort of the -- But anyway, I don't know who the boss was. [Section deleted]. He was here on the farm when Daddy bought it.

Aggie Sterrett: Where did he live?

Mc Sterrett: He lived in the house across from the cinderblock house [1981 Sterrett Road]. He owned that house. I think it's been torn down now.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, now, who-- Mother used to take me up there to visit the two ladies that lived there when I was little. They had a piano, I think, didn't they?

Isabelle Chewning: An organ.

Mc Sterrett: I think they had an organ.

Aggie Sterrett: I think she would take us up there and I would play, maybe.

Mc Sterrett: Well, that was after Dude died, wasn't it?

Aggie Sterrett: Was it his daughters or was it...

Mc Sterrett: No, one of them was his wife. Maggie was his wife, and then the other one was her aunt, I think.

Isabelle Chewning: Aunt Laura.

Mc Sterrett: Aunt Laura, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: When did Dude die?

Mc Sterrett: I guess in 50-- How old were you [asking Isabelle]? Do you remember?

Isabelle Chewning: I remember him, but I don't remember when he died.

Mc Sterrett: I think '56 or something, '55, or somewhere right along—[Per the Asbury Cemetery Records, William Haliburton died in August 1955 at age 69]

Isabelle Chewning: How old was he?

Mc Sterrett: 72 or something like that.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he have a heart attack and just die suddenly?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, and he was very-- well, one night he just went to bed and didn't wake up the next morning. We went up there-- Daddy-- somehow or other they got word down here and we went up there. He was very -- you know, he was dead then; had been dead for a long time.

Isabelle Chewning: Had he worked that day?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. The day that he died, or the day before he died, we were milking in the dairy barn. And he had a -- anyway, Dr. Leach had just died before that, and been buried a day or two. And Dude said something about you never know when you're gonna die, or something to that effect, and the next morning he was dead.

Aggie Sterrett: So you were 30 when he was -- if he was 42 years older than you, so you were in your 30's, you weren't--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. I was -- We were building that concrete silo next to the dairy barn when he died. We hadn't put all that big silos in--

Aggie Sterrett: Tell us a little bit about when you built all the barns and--

Mc Sterrett: Well, let's see. The barn up on the hill [no longer there, but it was behind 2244 Sterrett Road], we built about '46 or '47 --

Aggie Sterrett: That's the one that blew down?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, I didn't realize you had built that, I thought that was--

Isabelle Chewning: Was it primarily hay storage?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. That was all we ever used it for. I think we threshed in it for one time, and that didn't work out too well. I've forgotten why the reason was that it didn't. Maybe we quit putting in wheat, got a combine right about that time, too, I expect. But, anyway, we-- then the dairy barn was built in '47. We started milking in it in October of '47, or something like that. And then we built this house [2244 Sterrett Road] in '52.

Aggie Sterrett: Now, did Mr. [Earl] Withrow build all -- did he build the barn on the hill?

Mc Sterrett: No, he didn't have anything to do with that one up on the hill, but he did build the dairy barn, and he built this house. And, then, the other barns, the calf barn, and the log barn were already there. But we built the shed onto it with the feeders.

Isabelle Chewning: And the granary was there?

Mc Sterrett: The granary was there, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: How about this little barn down there [beside the farm road near 2460 Sterrett Road] that burned down.

Mc Sterrett: Well, that was with the Patterson place [the main house on the Patterson farm was Sleepy Hollow at 2645 Sterrett Road].

Isabelle Chewning: And it was there?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. They always called the barn over back of Kevin's [2297 Sterrett Road] the Leach barn, and this one down here [the one that burned] the McCormick barn. Now, why, I don't know.

Isabelle Chewning: Which one was the McCormick barn?

Mc Sterrett: The one that burned.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, that little--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And then the Patterson barn is in Brownsburg?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And it's made out of an old barn, I think. They must've torn an old barn down, because there are big logs in under the upstairs floor that were taken out of an old barn.

Isabelle Chewning: So what was the original 236 acres?

Mc Sterrett: Well, it came—there was the line that is pretty straight with-- it's real straight with the outside of the Dunaway lot or the Poole lot [the fence between 2249 Sterrett Road and 2297 Sterrett Road]. It's straight up over the hill and went into the woods back here. And that then came back down by Bruce's-- a little bit the other side of Bruce's house [2166 Sterrett Road]. And what was on the other side was Mrs. Dice's. But it cut in up there takes in that field that's sort of on top of the hill. I think they used to farm that field.

Isabelle Chewning: Which field?

Mc Sterrett: It's the field next to Lou's [Martin Doyle Sterrett at 1913 Sterrett Road].

Isabelle Chewning: Okay.

Mc Sterrett: But it belonged to this place. And Mrs. [Ellabell Gibbs] Moore had sold Mr. Ervine the field that Lou and I traded for here not long ago.

Isabelle Chewning: Was the pumpkin patch [the field between the dairy and 2113 Sterrett Road] part of the farm?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. The pumpkin patch was part of this farm, and Mrs. Dice had a garden that came right down to the next sharp point. That was the tenant house [2113 Sterrett Road], and she had a truck patch up on top of the-- they called it a truck patch, up on top of the hill [across the road from 2081 Sterrett Road] that they dug a ditch out through the other day.

Isabelle Chewning: Way up there where the persimmon tree is? No, that's not where the persimmon tree is.

Mc Sterrett: No, where the well is.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, where the well is?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And they, I don't know how they-- what they raised up there, but she had a garden at the house, and another garden in this patch up here.

Aggie Sterrett: Now, I remember, did we have a big potato patch someplace in the back when I was a kid?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. We used to put a potato patch every year. We used to have corn fields, with a potato patch in it, and the men [farm workers] got some potatoes. And we did, we got some. I'm ready for more of the questions.

Isabelle Chewning: Back to buying the farm, didn't Granddaddy actually buy it from two of your uncles?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. This place when it was sold-- when Mrs. Moore sold it, it was sold at public auction. And Uncle John [Davidson] and Aunt Isabel's husband [Alden Anderson] – Aunt Alice's [Davidson] husband and Uncle Alden [Anderson] bought it at the sale, but it never had been deeded to them. I think Mrs. Moore deeded-- those kind of things seemed to be a little more-- people would buy things and couldn't pay for them. And then I don't think it was ever deeded to them, but I think they sold it to Daddy, and then Mrs. Moore deeded it to him. I'm not sure about that, but I think. Maybe Mary [Mc's sister Mary Sterrett Lispcomb] could tell you.

Isabelle Chewning: What did Dude say about him, didn't he say something about one poor horse and --

Mc Sterrett: Well, Uncle John [Davidson] used to carry the mail by here from Fairfield, I think. And he said one day he was working back in the field--

Isabelle Chewning: He, Uncle John?

Mc Sterrett: Uncle John carried the mail. He came by carrying the mail and [he said], "Gather up all the gas cans you can and I'm gonna get a tractor to put in there, do all this work with." [Laugh] And he [Dude] said, "Never anything came of it." Then Granddaddy [Mc's father, Madison McClung Sterrett, Sr.] came down here with all those old poor horses.

Isabelle Chewning: And a pair of red gum boots, right?

Mc Sterrett: Yep.

Isabelle Chewning: Poor horses and--

Mc Sterrett: Tar strings. Old worn out harnesses.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, now who had Dude -- he had worked for Mrs. Moore?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. They had worked for the Moores. And Mrs. Moore had a son by the name of Frank, who was-- anyway, he was pretty much an alcoholic, I think. He seemed to, well, people around here told me that he would plan when he was going to get drunk, [laugh] which was a little different from what most of them do. He married one the Wades from up there where Bennie [Fauber] lived [783 Swope Lane]. I think she lived here for a while, but, maybe Frank died before she—But Lou [Sterrett] in her Daughters of the Confederacy has run into this Wade girl, Margaret Harris, who was named after Mrs. Moore. She later married Mr.-- what was that man's name, Kinnear, I reckon.

Isabelle Chewning: Who married Mr. Kinnear?

Mc Sterrett: Frank Moore's wife. I mean, after he died, she married again. And, then, I think Otis Mead was selling real estate for him. He was the real estate person in Rockbridge

County for--

Isabelle Chewning: Frank Moore was?

Mc Sterrett: No. Kinnear was. The second husband. I can't remember exactly what his name was, but I think it was Kinnear. Anyway, that's getting off the subject.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, talk about the alcohol. Now, was that during Prohibition and...

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, I imagine it was, because that came before Roosevelt, and that's when Daddy was working in the CC Camp, after Roosevelt--

Aggie Sterrett: Well, where were people getting their alcohol?

Mc Sterrett: Well, they were making it. [Laugh]

Aggie Sterrett: Did everybody know, what it kind of a common knowledge thing or..

Mc Sterrett: I think so. And, well, everybody had some apple trees. This farm used to be an orchard, and I think when Daddy bought it, there was a lot of apple trees in that lot over there [currently the pumpkin patch], and he took them all out. I think that was the main thing. That water line that used to come to y'all's house [2249 Sterrett Road] and go on down here somewhere, went to a thing that you made – a distillery, I guess. Talking about the alcohol. I remember, he was an educated man, I think, and he taught school for awhile.

Isabelle Chewning: Frank Moore?

Mc Sterrett: Frank Moore. And he went over to Irish Creek somewhere and taught school. "Frank, how'd you get along with all those people over there?" "Well, I just drank along with them!" [Laugh]

Isabelle Chewning: So he still lived around here?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, he lived here until he died.

Isabelle Chewning: Where did he live?

Mc Sterrett: Over there where y'all live [2249 Sterrett Road]. He had a brother, Carl Moore, who came back here and bought the Gibbs place, I think, in Raphine. And he was a great friend of Dr. Wilson. Did you ever go to Dr. Wilson? You all never did go to Dr. Wilson, did you?

Aggie Sterrett: You went to Dr. Wilson all your life, didn't you? Well, I mean all his life, I guess.

Isabelle Chewning: You didn't go to any of the Brownsburg doctors, like Dr. Bailey or Dr.--

Mc Sterrett: Well, Dr. Bailey wasn't a dentist.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, that's right, he [Dr. Wilson] was a dentist.

Mc Sterrett: Dr. Bailey and Dr. Taylor. Of course, occasionally we went to Dr. Kennan over at Raphine who lived right across from the winery.

Aggie Sterrett: Did you just like to go to everybody so you kept all your options open?

Mc Sterrett: No, no, no, just in emergencies.

Aggie Sterrett: Okay.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you go see Dr. Wilson when your teeth got kicked out?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Well, I went to Dr. Kennan first, who lived across from the winery. And then he called Dr. Wilson. It was late -- by that time it had gotten pretty late in the afternoon.

Isabelle Chewning: How did it happen?

Mc Sterrett: I was fixing to go get the cows with Charlie, and I just put the reins over one of those palings, and I set the bucket down, and it rolled down under his feet, and he reared up, of course.

Isabelle Chewning: So he got you with his front feet?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. But, you know, it was my fault as much as anything.

Isabelle Chewning: Mr. [Wallace] Beckner told me that he had Charlie after that.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: He said that Charlie was a very spirited, but nice horse.

Mc Sterrett: He had him jumping and everything else.

Isabelle Chewning: He said he was really-- I think he said he could drive him, or ride him, or work him.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: But that he was very spirited.

Mc Sterrett: Bennie [Fauber] and I used to-- Bennie had a riding horse, and we had a riding horse. We'd hook them to the surry and go to Rockbridge Baths or somewhere.

Isabelle Chewning: Just you and Bennie?

Mc Sterrett: No, the whole crowd.

Isabelle Chewning: The whole crowd. So your horse could work with his horse?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. One day it got its foot hung. A Model A had a bumper on the back; they had two bumpers on the back, one on each fender, I reckon. And it sort of circled around like that. Well, Charlie got his foot in that bumper, and we-- Bennie was doing the driving so he just took the reins and lashed Charlie right good, and he ran forward and got his foot out of there. What he was doing was just pulling back all the time.

Isabelle Chewning: So, you got your teeth kicked out, and what happened?

Mc Sterrett: Well, we went over to-- well, first thing, I think Daddy was in the CC Camp at the time, and maybe Mother called him, I guess, because he came home the next day. And we went to Dr. Kennan's, and then we went to Dr. Wilson.

Aggie Sterrett: Was there more damage than just getting your teeth kicked out.

Mc Sterrett: Oh, my lip swelled up, just turned the wrong side out. But, anyway, he x-rayed it and said there was a root in there that would have to come out. Well, I went back a week or two weeks later or something to get the root out, and the he x-rayed it again and couldn't find the root. I was very glad of that. Anyway, I got bone out of this thing for a year afterwards, little slivers of it, whatever was left.

Isabelle Chewning: Yes. How old were you?

Mc Sterrett: 12.

Isabelle Chewning: Were you laid up pretty good for awhile?

Mc Sterrett: Not very long.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it during school?

Mc Sterrett: No, it was in the summer, I think. And then I remember -- I don't know what grade I was in -- it would be in the fifth grade or the sixth grade, I expect. Of course, when I got my [false] teeth, I had to go out and eat all by myself, so I could take the teeth out. They were kind of hard to handle right at first. And I remember one of the teachers, she was showing the other teacher, "Oh, come in here, come in here." Of course, I had to do whatever I was told to do. And she was showing that other teacher. I don't know who, I don't remember who it was. I just remember that happening. And then, I don't know, we kept Charlie several years. We used to work him and work him with the third horse and the plow. And you had to put a whole backstrap on him all the time to keep him from pulling the whole thing. He was very spirited. Daddy, finally, they had some sort of a trade for two cows, I think. Traded a horse for a cow or two.

Isabelle Chewning: Is that how you got the horses, mostly, just trading for them?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I think they bought Charlie from Mr. Harris over here at Spottswood. Lived right down there on that road going from the winery over to Spottswood, over to the church [Old Providence Road]. And there's sort of a curve in the road down there where they lived. I don't think the house is there now. But, anyway, that's how we -- And then one time, he bought another team of horses from a fellow -- what was that man's name? Youell. He lived over beyond Spottswood. He brought them as far as Spottswood, then there was snow on the ground. I went over -- he took me over there, and I rode the horses the rest of the way home.

Isabelle Chewning: How were they hooked up together? They were hooked up together and you rode one of them?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, rode one, led one.

Isabelle Chewning: And they were hooked up to some kind of harness?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know whether they had a harness on them or not. I don't know whether he bought the harness with them or whether--

Isabelle Chewning: So did you just ride it bareback?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: All the way from Spottswood?

Aggie Sterrett: I'm impressed.

Isabelle Chewning: That's a pretty long way.

Aggie Sterrett: How old do you think you were then?

Mc Sterrett: Well, everybody-- well, probably 17 or 15 or something like that. I don't even remember what those two horses' names were. But I do remember riding home. When we first started in the dairy business, too, there was man in Raphine that dealt in cattle and Daddy would buy some cows from them and we'd drive them down Raphine hill to the Wade place [Castle Carbury at 34 Beard Lane].

Isabelle Chewning: Wow.

Mc Sterrett: And then bring them home, maybe. We did a lot of driving cattle backwards and forwards, from here to the Wade place.

Isabelle Chewning: Down through Brownsburg or some other way?

Mc Sterrett: No, up this road [farm road that runs beside 2244 Sterrett Road].

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, that's right, that's right, through Goose Creek. So this road would hit Goose Creek [Road], then you'd drive them down to Goose Creek and then get on the [Route] 252?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Wow.

Mc Sterrett: And everybody had fences then, fences along the road, except for the gates. And you had to have one [person] in front and one behind [to open and close gates].

Aggie Sterrett: Were they pretty manageable or did you have to--

Mc Sterrett: Oh, sometimes you'd start out, and the old cows would get away and come back home. [Laugh]

Isabelle Chewning: So were you walking or were you riding a horse?

Mc Sterrett: I think some of both, but I don't remember that too well. Rode sideways when I was kid.

Isabelle Chewning: Do you mean sidesaddle?

Mc Sterrett: No, you didn't have a saddle; you just held on to the hanes [reins??] but you rode, instead of riding straddling the horse you rode -- just riding backwards and forwards through the field -- you rode sideways.

Isabelle Chewning: How'd you get up there?

Mc Sterrett: Well, you could jump up there usually.

Isabelle Chewning: Like this?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, and you'd catch hold of the hane [reins, mane??] for one thing, and that would help you up a little bit, kind of jump up on the horse and then turn around sideways. But you don't see too much of that anymore.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you ever see one of the Wilbourn saddles?

Mc Sterrett: No. Well, we had an old saddle here that we used all the time if you were working four horses and somebody was riding the horse.

Isabelle Chewning: That must have been a good job, being a rider.

Mc Sterrett: Well, you had right much responsibility.

Isabelle Chewning: What did you use four horses for?

Mc Sterrett: Sometimes we used four horses to the wagon when we were going way back down over the hill.

Isabelle Chewning: And what were you putting on the wagon?

Mc Sterrett: Wheat. Or barley or rye or some of those small grains.

Isabelle Chewning: And was it cut by hand?

Mc Sterrett: No, it was cut with the binder. I don't remember any of the cutting by hand.

Isabelle Chewning: It was cut by a binder, and then what happened? I don't remember how that worked.

Mc Sterrett: We tied it up in sheaves, and then you went through and shocked it.

Isabelle Chewning: I don't know what that means.

Mc Sterrett: You put about a dozen sheaves all together and made a shock, and then--

Isabelle Chewning: And then tied it with a string?

Mc Sterrett: No, you didn't tie it at all. It made a hover [??] which you put over top, a hood sort of top. You just took one sheaf and spread it out and broke it over a little bit, and laid it on top. And, then, some people would thresh right out of the field. We did that for quite a bit, but most of the time we hauled it in, and would fill up that log barn with it.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it all dry? It had been out there long enough to dry?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Well, it had dried more in the shock, but-- the grain did.

Isabelle Chewning: So how long did you leave it sitting out there to dry?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, probably a week. You had to wait until you got ready to haul it in or until the threshing machine came.

Isabelle Chewning: And was it bad if it got rained on?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Well, no, that didn't ruin it, but-- we were still doing that when Ed [Patterson] was farming up here, up at Back Draft.

Isabelle Chewning: What time of year did you do the wheat?

Mc Sterrett: Cut it in July, June or July. The latter part of June. You tried to be done by the 4th of July.

Isabelle Chewning: So it was a winter crop, planted in the fall?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, it was planted in the fall and it stayed green all winter and came out the next spring.

Isabelle Chewning: So you'd put all the shocks on the wagon with four horses?

Mc Sterrett: Sometimes we'd use five horses to the binder, but sometimes four. And the person who would drive, would have reins and drive the binder. But if you had five horses, then somebody rode one of the other horses and drove the two in front.

Isabelle Chewning: And how did the binder work?

Mc Sterrett: It had a reel for one thing, and it was a sickle bar, a sickle thing. And you know, it was invented right over here in Raphine.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, the reaper?

Mc Sterrett: Reaper, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: A reaper and a binder are the same thing?

Mc Sterrett: Same thing except they put a knotter on it afterwards, and it made sheaves, kicked them in sheaves.

Isabelle Chewning: So it would cut the hay with the--

Mc Sterrett: Cut the wheat.

Isabelle Chewning: I mean the wheat.

Mc Sterrett: And you had a bundle carrier that would carry six or eight sheaves. And then you'd trip that thing, and it would go down and people would have these rows of sheaves. And you'd make shocks of it.

Isabelle Chewning: So who got to ride the horse?

Mc Sterrett: Well, Dude [Haliburton], I think, rode most of the time or drove the horses. But then, I think we-- they had cut some wheat, I think, with three horses. But most times you had four to deal with and drove with the check lines, or the regular lines. The line would come up here and go-- one would go to this side of this horse's mouth, and the other line would go through a ring and over to this horse's. And if you pulled on that line then everything would go this way, and the other line had hooked to this, and crossed and hooked to this horse, on the other side. If you pulled that line, it'd go that way. If you were driving five horse, three at the wheel, and two out in front, well, you would most likely-- when we did it, we used a single line and the horse would have to-- you'd pull one way to go haw – to go left. And you'd sort of jerk it a little bit, then the horse would usually go right.

Isabelle Chewning: And did the horses gee [right] and haw [left]?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: So you would say that, too [as you pulled on the reins]?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, I think so. What it meant, I don't know. I wondered why.

Aggie Sterrett: Now, when you would put two horses together as a team, was one of them always the left horse and one of them always the right horse, or did you kind of switch it up to--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, usually the right horse was -- well, if you were working four together, you called these two back here the wheel horses, and those two out in front were the leaders. I've driven four horses a little bit, not a great deal, just mainly from one shock to the next in the field.

Aggie Sterrett: But that was Dude usually did, he drove the--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, he drove the horses.

Aggie Sterrett: Was he big? Was he a big guy?

Mc Sterrett: No, he was smaller than I am. I don't remember whether -- I think he had hair, he wasn't bald. But I would say he was average size, about the size Sam Patterson was, or something like that.

Isabelle Chewning: I don't know if I've made this up, but I have this memory of being down at the barn and hearing him singing when he was milking.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, he would-- one of his jobs was to wash all the cans that came back from the dairy, and he'd sing a lot. I don't remember. Usually he sang, oh, I don't know what.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he sing hymns, or did he sing other stuff?

Mc Sterrett: He'd sing other things. "If there's a preacher in the church and they didn't do right, kick him out and let the church roll on!" [Laugh] He'd go through a dozen verses of that, I reckon. "A woman in the church"; and "a man in the church".

Aggie Sterrett: Kinda like "The Wheels on the Bus". Did they go down to Brownsburg to Asbury [United Methodist Church]?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, yeah. I think he was the Treasurer of Asbury Church, and they were always, I think, kinda on a [shoe] string.

Aggie Sterrett: What was his last name?

Mc Sterrett: Haliburton.

Aggie Sterrett: And how are the Haliburtons and the Pleasants related?

Isabelle Chewning: Maggie [Haliburton] was a Pleasants, wasn't she?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. She was a Pleasants and Pitt was a Pleasants, and he married a Haliburton.

Isabelle Chewning: Were Pitt and Maggie brother and sister?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Mr. Letcher Pleasants lived in the little log house right beside the Whitesells up there. Right where his [Whitesell's] parking lot is [at 2664 Brownsburg Turnpike]. That was-- they drove cattle out to the Strain place [3191 Brownsburg Turnpike] –

[phone rings, tape stops momentarily]

Isabelle Chewning: We were talking about the Pleasants.

Mc Sterrett: Pitt rented the Pleasants -- that's the son of Letcher.

Isabelle Chewning: Pitt was Letcher's son?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And Maggie was Letcher's daughter?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And how is Willie Howard hooked in?

Mc Sterrett: Well, his father was one of Pitt's brothers, too, I think. Hodge Pleasants. And they used to drive the cows backwards and forwards, and one of the children drove cows out to the Strain place and back. And then drove them back in there to milk. Kept them, I guess, all night, and then drove them back out there in the daytime.

Isabelle Chewning: So the cows were in Brownsburg for milking?

Mc Sterrett: No, I think the cows would stay out there in the daytime, and were driven into Brownsburg at night. I don't know whether they kept them there all night or whether they drove them back. But that was that one child's -- what was that boy's name? Dick, I believe.

Isabelle Chewning: He was Pitt's son?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Did you ever run into of them in Lexington? Some of the girls cooked at Camp Maxwellton after it moved out there where it is now, I think.

Isabelle Chewning: Where was it before it was out there, Maxwellton?

Mc Sterrett: Well, [Camp] Briar Hills was down here. And then it went to Pisgah first. That was Sam's [McLaughlin] -- what did they call it? Briarwood. And, then Lee [McLaughlin] had one [a camp] out at Maxwellton.

Isabelle Chewning: Okay. So Maxwellton was always where it is now.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. But I think other people had cows that they just let eat along the road.

Isabelle Chewning: How did they know whose was who's?

Mc Sterrett: Well, they always went and got them at milking time.

Isabelle Chewning: So where did they milk?

Mc Sterrett: I guess-- oh, you mean the Pleasants? I don't know -- down that lane that goes down towards somewhere. Pitt lived down in there. He had a whole bunch of children, then got a job at VMI, I guess, and then they moved to Lexington.

Isabelle Chewning: Is there a Dr. Pleasants in Lexington?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, there used to be.

Isabelle Chewning: Is he related to them?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know. He wasn't a brother or anything. He was a Dr. Pleasants. I think his wife is still living.

Aggie Sterrett: Who were some of the other-- well, if you kinda go down the road here, who lived in the McManama's house when you were growing up [2580 Sterrett Road]?

Mc Sterrett: Mr. John Berry and Miss [Mrs.] Hattie [Berry]. And Miss Hattie worked in the soup kitchen up at school.

Aggie Sterrett: The soup kitchen?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, it was the lunchroom, but it was known as the soup kitchen.

Aggie Sterrett: Did you usually take your lunch or did you--

Mc Sterrett: I remember eating in there a few times, sometimes. But I don't know whether I usually—what was usual or not. But Mr. John Berry and Mr. Charlie Berry were brothers. Mr. Charlie was the one that lived across from Ag [Patterson] at [what is now] the Post Office. In the Post Office building [2741 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And his wife just had one limb, one leg. And she used to come out on the porch and sort of direct everybody that was going up and down the street. [Laugh] Miss Hattie. No, Miss Pet. Miss Hattie was the one with that lived over here where McManamas live. And then Boyd Stuart built that house up on top of the hill [2460 Sterrett Road] where--

Isabelle Chewning: Mrs. Cash's house.

Mc Sterrett: Cash. And between that, Lum Brown raised a family and -- what was that old lady's name that lived there? Mother used to take us down there occasionally. I'll think of it later. I think she was a Shultz. That's what—I reckon Bob Shultz and all his family were—a lady I went to a funeral for the other day--

Isabelle Chewning: Who?

Mc Sterrett: Dorothy Bell [Shultz].

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, Dorothy Bell? Oh, I didn't know that.

Mc Sterrett: Randolph. It was in the Staunton paper and I went to--

Isabelle Chewning: She was Jimmy Shultz's mother, right?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Is he still living?

Mc Sterrett: No. He died several years ago. But she has-- I talked to that one of her sons that is still living -- he was a man, oh, it didn't look like he was more than 40 years old or something like that. And

he entered-- he said he was born in Brownsburg, but they didn't go down there [to Staunton] until after he was born. Didn't go to Staunton, I think. I don't know why, but Dorothy Bell always asked-- she always-- as long as Mother was living, she always asked about Mother when I would see her, and then she'd ask about Mary [Sterrett Lipscomb] in later days.

Isabelle Chewning: Did she ever help Mother? Or Grandmother?

Mc Sterrett: They came over here. She and her daddy would come over here for a—

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

Isabelle Chewning: We were talking about Aunt Alice [Davidson] coming out for Christmas.

Mc Sterrett: Several years they came out here at Christmas and Bob Shoultz and Dorothy Bell or somebody would come out here and help. I don't remember too much about that, but she always reminded me of it. [Laugh]

Isabelle Chewning: Is Frank [Shoultz] Dorothy Bell's brother?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Frank – they had – there was-- then there was another daughter. I don't know what her name is. But she came in the other day, and she looked just like Dorothy Bell. And she sat down in the pew right in front of us, in front of me. And I didn't speak to her, but I didn't realize she was a sister until later.

Isabelle Chewning: So Dorothy Bell grew up down on the hill?

Mc Sterrett: No, she grew up over in-- around behind Brownsburg, I think. I can't think of that lady's name.

Isabelle Chewning: Where the Gilmore's and the Stewart's lived? Around that part of Brownsburg?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Around back of-- on that road Wallace Beckner –

Isabelle Chewning: Dry Hollow [Road]?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: So there were a lot of black people then if they lived-- if the Pleasants and the Haliburtons lived out here, and then the Browns lived down on the hill and then more Pleasants lived in Brownsburg.

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yeah. Oscar Oliver, and Mariah Fisher, and all of them lived down between here and Brownsburg. Lived—Let's see. The first lot was the Browns, Lum Brown and Jim Brown were brothers and they both -- Lum had a family but Jim didn't have any. And--

Isabelle Chewning: They lived just below the Cash's or starting down at Mrs. McManama's and working up?

Mc Sterrett: Well, there was a house there, that when I was a kid the Snider's lived in, that's been torn down.

Isabelle Chewning: Where was it?

Mc Sterrett: It was just below the Cash's. It was part of that lot that belongs to them now. I think Dick [Cash] bought it after-- and then Miss Bessie Arehart lived there, too, for awhile. But that hasn't been too long, though.

Isabelle Chewning: I remember her. She had a goiter, right?

Aggie Sterrett: Is she the one that stayed here when I was born?

Isabelle Chewning: No.

Mc Sterrett: No.

Isabelle Chewning: She had a goiter or-- was she the one with the goiter and her head was turned sideways?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know. I don't think she had a--

Aggie Sterrett: Was she married to Buford [Swisher]?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. She walked with her head around this way. Evidently there was something wrong, but I don't think it was anything you could see. But anyway she was-- they lived right below the house that Dick [Cash] lived in. Then the Browns. Jim lived in a log house, and Lum lived behind it in another house. And his wife had arthritis real bad. You remember Hicks [Brown], I imagine, don't you?

Isabelle Chewning: Um hmm.

Mc Sterrett: He was one of Lum's children and-- Hicks and Jim and Carl and-- Carl, I guess is still living. I don't know. He lived up north somewhere. And I think they had one daughter. But anyway, then Mariah-- no, the next was Aunt Patience Shoultz, that's who that was. Patience. And she was Bob Shoultz's mother, I think. And then-- I never knew her husband. Mariah Fisher and Tom, and she was the midwife for all-- everybody around. She-- I know she-- well, I've heard Dude [Haliburton] talk about living out the Wade place and-- when he lived out there. But his father lived there on that farm and farmed it. And when Mary Wade was born, he had to go get the midwife. [Laugh]

Aggie Sterrett: Miss Mary [Wade] that I remember?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh.

Mc Sterrett: And she was the same age as Daddy [Madison McClung Sterrett, Sr. who was born in 1900].

Aggie Sterrett: Okay.

Mc Sterrett: And--

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, so Dude was older than Granddaddy, wasn't he?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, yeah. Somehow I always thought of him as being younger but--

Mc Sterrett: Then the Stevensons lived where you went up to the Camp Briar Hills old road. What was his name? Eddie's and Isabel's and Dora's daddy, I guess. And then there was another house right below them that some Oliver lived in. I don't know what-- Oscar Oliver. I just don't hardly remember him. But I remember one time that he came up here to do something and I think we were gone. And maybe Dude was separating the milk or milking the cows or doing something. And Oscar was helping him and Oscar said he'd never had enough milk to drink. And so he drank all the milk he could hold. [Laugh] And well, I reckon that -- then there was a vacant lot where that trailer is down there now. And then the McManama house [2580 Sterrett Road]. McManamas lived in-- no, well, Homer's [McManama] mother and father lived there, too, after the Berrys. But they-- the Berrys lived there, John Berry and Miss Hattie. And then there was Mr. Charlie Dice and his wife who lived on the other side where the Billings live [2597 Sterrett Road]. And Wades-- Mr. Hugh Wade lived in the next house [2613 Sterrett Road]. Those houses were all built along about 1910 to '20. And Fanny-- no, John Patterson lived in the next house, I reckon [2623 Sterrett Road]. That was -- he was the son of the person who owned the stone house [Sleepy Hollow at 2645 Sterrett Road] and owned the farm. And then Mr. and Mrs. R. L. [Patterson] lived in their-- his mother and father lived in the stone house.

Isabelle Chewning: Was she Rosenell Patterson? That Mrs. Patterson, the math teacher?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. She lived-- she was married to John. They had two boys. One of them was Stuart and one was John. And Stuart was an invalid. He dived in a swimming pool, I think, that didn't have enough water and broke his-- he was paralyzed from his-- I don't know whether from his waist down, or all the way down. But, you know, they-- there was--there used to be a bathroom on the back of that house that you could wheel a wheelchair in.

Isabelle Chewning: The one where Phil Lunsford lives down [2623 Sterrett Road]?

Mc Sterrett: No, that's where John lived. Stuart lived with his mother and father.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh. In the stone house or--

Mc Sterrett: In the stone house.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh. And Hugh Wade, he ran the bank, right?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And Mary, I think, came in there and lived with him. He was brother to--

Aggie Sterrett: Now she was not an invalid when she--

Mc Sterrett: No. She was-- a brother to Mr. Hugh Wade and Mr. Ham Wade. Hamilton Wade, I guess, was the one that owned the farm out--

Aggie Sterrett: Castle --

Mc Sterrett: Castle Carbury.

Aggie Sterrett: Castle Carbury.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, and they were brothers. And--

Aggie Sterrett: Wasn't Hugh a little bit of a character? Was he not--

Mc Sterrett: No. Then-- I think when he first-- when we first moved here, his wife was probably living and John-- Jen [Wade Hefflefinger] and Eleanor [Wade Marchant] and all of those's brother worked in the bank, too. But he died very young with pneumonia or something. And--

Aggie Sterrett: So Hugh was their--

Mc Sterrett: Hugh was their uncle.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, okay. I thought he was a brother, too. No, he was their uncle.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: So John, I guess, is who I'm-- maybe I'm thinking about.

Mc Sterrett: I don't know whether he was much of a character or not but--

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, okay. I thought I heard some stories about him.

Mc Sterrett: But he lived -- let's see, he worked in the bank, and then when he died Jen [Heffelfinger] started working in the bank.

Aggie Sterrett: Now had they started the bank kind of or--

Mc Sterrett: I don't know who-- I think Mr. [David] Whipple was one of the main ones that started the bank. And, Dr. [Henry] McLaughlin gets credit for it, too.

Aggie Sterrett: Now is that-- was he Lee and--

Mc Sterrett: Lee and them's grandfather.

Aggie Sterrett: Sam's grandfather.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: No, Lee and Sam's father.

Mc Sterrett: Lee and Sam, yeah. Sam's father. I think there were, oh, seven or eight children of those. Mrs. [Margaret McLaughlin] Hogshead was one of them. She was teaching school when I went.

Aggie Sterrett: Is that Press's mother?

Mc Sterrett: No, Press's brother was married to Margaret [McLaughlin] and they lived down here, up on Camp Briar Hills in the wintertime; about to freeze to death, I think. But they lived there for awhile. And he was always known as Piggy Hogshead [laugh] and he was quite a baseball player, I think.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, now that you're talking about baseball, tell us about the softball teams that you guys used to have down in the--

Mc Sterrett: Well, now, we had baseball teams.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, baseball, sorry. [Laugh]

Mc Sterrett: Over here in this meadow?

Aggie Sterrett: Yeah.

Mc Sterrett: I don't remember too much about that. But--

Isabelle Chewning: Was it the high school team?

Mc Sterrett: No.

Aggie Sterrett: You were the first baseman, weren't you?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. We played-- I played several years. But--

Isabelle Chewning: How old were you?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I-- it was after we were married, I think, or while we-- I guess maybe I was 20 years old, or something like that.

Isabelle Chewning: But it was a Brownsburg team?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And you'd go around and play other teams?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Played other independent teams. [Laugh] Well, I think Bustleburg had a team, too. And we'd go clear up there and play the Effinger team. No, I reckon we played the boys camp out at Natural Bridge. That detention home all up--

Isabelle Chewning: Was your team pretty good?

Mc Sterrett: I thought it was very good -- Carl Reese was the catcher and--

Isabelle Chewning: Big Eye?

Mc Sterrett: Huh?

Isabelle Chewning: Big Eye?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Was the catcher?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And Carl Swope was on the team, and I even played a little bit with Mr. Harold Runkle. He was quite a pitcher. I think he played almost professional ball. But anyway, I've forgotten who all--

Isabelle Chewning: Was Uncle Ed [Patterson] on the team?

Mc Sterrett: I think he played for Bustleburg. It was after. He was playing--

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, 'cause he lived up at Back Draft?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: How about Sam [Patterson]?

Mc Sterrett: Sam didn't play, I don't think. I remember down here the -- I don't know whether it was the Waybrights or the Manly boys that used to open the gate to let people go through there.

Isabelle Chewning: So they'd drive their car across the creek?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And that's the way they got their spending money was-- in the summertime.

Aggie Sterrett: They charged?

Mc Sterrett: No, they didn't charge, but people would give a little bit for opening the gate. A nickel or a dime.

Isabelle Chewning: Were there cows on the field?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. [Laugh]

Isabelle Chewning: [Laugh] They just stayed away while you were playing?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Did the base—were the base lines all marked out and everything?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, they all--

Aggie Sterrett: How did you home run if there wasn't a fence?

Isabelle Chewning: Which direction did you hit?

Mc Sterrett: Huh?

Isabelle Chewning: Which direction did you hit?

Mc Sterrett: The home plate was back against the bank and you hit towards--

Isabelle Chewning: Towards the creek?

Mc Sterrett: No. Towards Kevin's house [2297 Sterrett Road] more. You batted towards his-- that house.

Aggie Sterrett: Did a lot of people come watch?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yeah, there'd be 50 people maybe, I don't know.

Aggie Sterrett: Was it on a Sunday afternoon or Saturday?

Mc Sterrett: No, Saturday. Saturday was the big day. We played Fairfield. I don't remember. Walker's Creek had a team, I think.

Aggie Sterrett: So they let you off milking that day so you could play?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I-- when we got busy milking, I think I had to quit. But that was, you know, it was sort of known fact that I wouldn't be there on Saturday evening.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, did the high school team ever play out there?

Mc Sterrett: They played over-- the high school team played over here [in the field between 2244 Sterrett Road and 2166 Sterrett Road].

Isabelle Chewning: In a cow field?

Aggie Sterrett: Two different fields? [Laugh]

Isabelle Chewning: You had a regular sports complex out here! [Laugh]

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, there was-- you batted down towards the road and the home plate was up there fairly close to where that dam is now. And you batted-- and every once in awhile somebody would knock one in the road. And they were really doing something when they knocked it out. I think some of the black people played up there, too, occasionally then. One of them knocked one clear across the road.

Isabelle Chewning: So it was segregated teams, though, the black --

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: -- the black people had their--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And the culvert wasn't there then was it or was it--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, the culvert was there.

Isabelle Chewning: It was there?

Mc Sterrett: The culvert was put there when we were very small. I don't know, the cows used to come down there and drink out the creek. And this field back in here was covered with broom sage.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, while we're on sports, you played on the football team at Brownsburg, too, didn't you?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, I played-- yeah, we played two years and scored one time. Jim Wade was the scorer.

Aggie Sterrett: So I guess you had a pretty losing--

Mc Sterrett: Well, I don't think we ever--

Aggie Sterrett: Or did nobody else score either?

Mc Sterrett: Well, no, nobody-- everybody beat us.

Aggie Sterrett: Now did you wear-- did you have helmets?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yeah, you had helmets and we played six-man football, I believe it was. And you had a center and two on the line, off of the-- and then three in the back field. And I don't think I played but one year.

Aggie Sterrett: What did you play?

Mc Sterrett: I don't think I played but one year.

Aggie Sterrett: So Jim Wade, was he a quarterback or a running back or--

Mc Sterrett: He was the center.

Aggie Sterrett: [Laugh] A little trick play in there!

Mc Sterrett: He caught a pass, I think, and went to the-- over the goal line. And that was not-- we were playing Milboro, and that wasn't a county team.

Aggie Sterrett: Did you win that game or--

Mc Sterrett: No. Didn't win that game either.

Aggie Sterrett: What other sports did you play in school?

Mc Sterrett: Played baseball for a year, or two years, I think. And then the war came along.

Aggie Sterrett: Did they have a basketball team, too?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: Had a basketball team.

Mc Sterrett: That was-- they played outside until the new building was built in '38.

Isabelle Chewning: Eight, I think, yeah.

Mc Sterrett: And then they played inside.

Isabelle Chewning: What year did you graduate?

Mc Sterrett: '43.

Isabelle Chewning: So you had all your high school years in the new building with the basketball.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. We started with-- in the seventh grade with-- in the new building.

Aggie Sterrett: So when the war came along it really affected everything.

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yeah everything. All you ever did was dance and-- at recess that was-- it was really-- affected it very much because all the male teachers were drafted, I think. And we had two or three.

Isabelle Chewning: What year did you graduate? You graduated in '43.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: So did you have a lot of paperwork to do to get a deferment?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. You had classes that you'd take, well, not classes that you'd take, but classes that-- 2C was a-- you were farming.

Isabelle Chewning: But was it a whole lot of paperwork or you just filled out a form and--

Mc Sterrett: I really don't know too much around that.

Isabelle Chewning: Was there a draft board here in Lexington or--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. I think so.

Isabelle Chewning: So you'd just go see them and--

Mc Sterrett: Well, you didn't go yourself too much. I think Daddy did most of it.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, tell us a little bit more about school at Brownsburg now that-- now was Miss [Ocie] Trimmer the principal the whole time you were there?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: And what did she make you do? She-- you would have to line up and--

Mc Sterrett: You would line up and came in to [the] beat [of] the drum. And you'd go left, left, left, right, left. And then you started out walking.

Aggie Sterrett: Now how old do you think she was?

Mc Sterrett: How old was she? She wasn't too old, I don't think. But she looked awful old to me with the--

Aggie Sterrett: She had red hair, too, didn't she?

Mc Sterrett: She had sort of blondish hair. I think she dyed her hair. Sort of golden hair.

Aggie Sterrett: Now where did she live? Did she live in the Hutcheson's or--

Mc Sterrett: She lived down there where the Hutchesons -- where Casey [Gwyn Campbell] lives [2766 Brownsburg Turnpike] some, and she lived up at the Bosworth's some [2703 Brownsburg Turnpike].

Aggie Sterrett: So she didn't have her own house. She lived with people.

Mc Sterrett: No, she was boarding. I don't think she ever lived out at the McNutts [3334 Brownsburg Turnpike]. They used to board some teachers, too.

Aggie Sterrett: But she ran a pretty tight ship, huh?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yeah. We were scared to death of her.

Aggie Sterrett: Did you ever have to go to the principal's office?

Mc Sterrett: We won't talk about that. [Laugh] Oh, I remember one day she whipped 13 or 14, but I was not one of them. The old building that I started to school in was right even with the new building -- with the-- well, the stucco building. The building that's still there. And it was set to the north of it, I guess. The toilets were up on the hill behind the thing, outside toilets. And if it rained then you couldn't get up the hill. [Laugh]

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, it got muddy and slippery? [Laugh]

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: And you took a-- did you always take the bus to school?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Well, no, the first year and the second year we just went half a day because we could -- the first grade had school in the morning, and the second grade in the afternoon. I don't know whether it was that way or not, but maybe it was vice versus. But some days I'd hitch the mail, sometimes I'd walk all the way. But--

Aggie Sterrett: By yourself. So--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: Six years old, walking a mile and--

Mc Sterrett: In the snow! [Laugh]

Aggie Sterrett: Barefoot? [Laugh] Did they cancel school for snow then or do--

Mc Sterrett: Occasionally they'd cancel if, you know -- but I remember one day Mr. [Tolerance J.] Wiseman was driving the bus even when I went. Was he still driving when you went?

Aggie Sterrett: I don't think so. Mr. [Carl] Reese is who I remember.

Mc Sterrett: Who? Mr. Reese? Mr. Wiseman owned his own bus. All of them were owned by the person that--

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, that's interesting. He used to bring the camp kids to church, too, didn't he.

Mc Sterrett: He ran a-- Mr. Wiseman ran a route up this road [Sterrett Road] and down Goose Creek Road and he'd get there, he'd have about 10 or 12 people on there.

Aggie Sterrett: Now did you pay him 'cause it was a private, 'cause he-- or did the school pay him?

Mc Sterrett: No, it-- I don't know whether some people paid him. We never did use it much. But other people rode. Well, it was people like Mrs. Dice who would ride it. She rode-- she has a horse and buggy. And we used to go to church out this back road and occasionally she'd come home in the car with Mother and Daddy and Bill Dunaway was living up there. And he lived in Brownsburg, and we'd lay the top back on the buggy, and come back through the back road, have a fine time!

Aggie Sterrett: So she had her own horse and she took care of it and--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Or-- let's see. The horse's name was Nell, I reckon. And I reckon Nell finally died, and then she had to get another horse and it walked around-- kept it in that meadow where Harold's [Thorne] cows are. Walked around and around and around for a year, I reckon. And it wore paths all around the fence. She--

Isabelle Chewning: Did Miss Dice die on the farm or had she sold it and moved somewhere else when she died?

Mc Sterrett: No. She hadn't sold it but she moved-- she had a daughter, lived over at Charlottesville, was a nurse in the hospital. And she came to see me while I was over in the hospital, Margaret [Dice] Updike she was. And Mrs. Dice went over there and she had several-- high blood pressure problems, and I don't know what all. And she went over there and stayed. She probably lived two years or something like that after she went over there. And she's the one that, Mrs. Updike is the one who's the first cousin to the ladies that-- one of the ladies at Kendal.

Isabelle Chewning: So Miss Dice never got a car?

Mc Sterrett: No. She said that-- she told Margaret after her husband died that they would either get a car, or she'd send her [Margaret] to school. And so she [Margaret] elected to go to school, I think.

Isabelle Chewning: So she went to nursing school.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: Now who was it, you told me a story before about somebody who rode around with a dog on the hood of his car.

Mc Sterrett: Oh, that was--

Aggie Sterrett: Who was that?

Mc Sterrett: That was Francis Houston over in Fairfield.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, I thought that was a Brownsburg person.

Mc Sterrett: No. Francis rode with that dog on the front of his car for years. And so the story goes, Pete Fix worked for him some, I think, and Pete used to tell all these tales. And cops stopped him one time and told him he'd have to get rid of that dog and he told the policeman, "Well, you take him off." And so the fellow went on, he kept on driving with the dog on there.

Aggie Sterrett: And when was that?

Mc Sterrett: I'd say in the '50s or '60s.

Aggie Sterrett: And who used to live in the building that the Brownsburg museum's going to be in?

Mc Sterrett: First person I remember living in there is Ollie Dunaway who ran a blacksmith shop around-- the blacksmith shop was still there, around towards Carwell's garage. If you make that turn [onto Hays Creek Road], it's the first-- between the garage and-- and he was--

Isabelle Chewning: I don't know where-- there's a building--

Mc Sterrett: There's a building between the store that Dick Barnes has [Old South Antiques] and the garage.

Aggie Sterrett: Is it little?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, real small. It has a little shed out on it.

Aggie Sterrett: You can have a blacksmith shop in something--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And then there was another blacksmith up-- Walter Potter, who was up there where the-- oh, I can't think of the name.

Isabelle Chewning: Ruby Beverage.

Mc Sterrett: Beverages live, yeah [2610 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And it was almost in the road.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you get all the horses shod?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: The work horses all had shoes?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. That was one of my jobs was to take the horses to the blacksmith shop.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, so you'd take them there. He didn't come to you, you--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. You took them in there.

Aggie Sterrett: Were they pretty good when you--

Mc Sterrett: Well, some of them were and some of them weren't. But then you had to stay there with a -- that little --

Aggie Sterrett: What's it called, a--

Mc Sterrett: -- bucket thing and keep flies off them so they wouldn't stomp.

Aggie Sterrett: What's the thing that you put on their --

Mc Sterrett: Twitch.

Aggie Sterrett: Yeah, twitch.

Mc Sterrett: You put on their lip.

Aggie Sterrett: Did you have one of those that you used to have to use?

Mc Sterrett: We never had one. I think maybe he had one.

Isabelle Chewning: What was it for?

Mc Sterrett: You'd put it on there and sort of twisted it and it--

Aggie Sterrett: It's a stick. It's got a little loop, little rope loop on the end of it. And you put it on their lip and you kind of twist it and it almost-- it didn't look like it really--

Mc Sterrett: Well, evidently a horse is very tender in that spot. That would sort of quiet them down and you--

Isabelle Chewning: So did you take them down there every time they lost a shoe or did you wait 'til they lost two or three to go?

Mc Sterrett: I really don't remember that, but I think we-- now that old horse that we had that used to be a logging horse, if you put your hand 'round behind him, he'd buck up a little bit behind. And-- behind you. And I used to take him to Brownsburg and, you know, had to show off a little bit going up through town. [Laugh] That's one of the tales I remember Dude talking about. A dog always followed you anywhere you went. And this dog followed us into Brownsburg and he -- the rest of the dogs in Brownsburg got after him, and he came down the road so fast he couldn't make the turn [at Sterrett Road] coming this way. [Laugh] And finally he did get it made, I think. Sort of slid around. And they chased him out of town.

Aggie Sterrett: Now were they working dogs? Did you--

Mc Sterrett: No, they were just dogs. [Laugh] Everybody had a dog that followed them around.

Isabelle Chewning: Which ponies were it that you took down to the camp [Briar Hills]?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, that was Trixie. That was-- he was a sort of half horse and half pony.

Isabelle Chewning: You had one and Aunt Mary had one, too, that you took to camp, right?

Mc Sterrett: No, that one that I was riding, or she was riding or something was the McLaughlin's pony, I think. Somebody else's pony. But we took -- used to take the pony down to Camp Briar Hills and camped all day 'til lunchtime until they finished the riding. And they'd ride up the back road and out through the field, and back through the woods and get down there some way.

Isabelle Chewning: So you'd take him down in the mornings, then walk home and then go back again at lunchtime?

Mc Sterrett: No, we wouldn't walk home. We'd be-- stay there.

Isabelle Chewning: You just hung out down there.

Mc Sterrett: We'd stay there all day.

Isabelle Chewning: Mary did, too?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. As far as I know, that's what happened.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you just interact with the other campers at all?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yeah. Yeah. You did whatever was going on.

Aggie Sterrett: The activity of the day. And she got to do it even though she was a girl?

Mc Sterrett: I don't, you know, I never went when she went. But--

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, only one of you would go at a time?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, I thought you both went.

Isabelle Chewning: So that picture is complete fiction.

Aggie Sterrett: I guess so. There's two pictures. There's one of both of you-- well, no, that wasn't a camp picture because you were real little in that picture where you're both on a-- and then there's the one of the two of you on the two different horses that we thought was--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: That Mr. [Andrew or Brainard] McClung took.

Mc Sterrett: No, that-- the one with-- two of us is taken down here at camp Briar Hills.

Isabelle Chewning: Mr. McClung took that picture, though, didn't he?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. I think the background of that picture has a picture of the old barn that used to be at Patterson's down there before this barn was built.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, that must have been pretty good fun, getting to hang out at camp.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, it was! [Laugh]

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have a lot of chores besides taking the horses in to the blacksmith?

Mc Sterrett: Well, you had to get the cows and that's what I was doing when the horse reared up. But I guess you milked and--

Isabelle Chewning: How many milk cows were there?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, five or six and--

Isabelle Chewning: Did you sell that milk or was that just enough for you all?

Mc Sterrett: No, that was after-- we had a separator and you sold the cream. And a man came out from Lexington. McCrumms' Creamery would buy the cream. And they paid so much for it if it was

sweet, and so much if it was sour. And if it was sour, I reckon they had to make butter out of it, and if it sweet they had made ice cream out of it.

Isabelle Chewning: So what kind of cows did you have if you had a lot of cream?

Mc Sterrett: Mostly shorthorns, I expect, because-- I don't remember too much about the cows, but I know Daddy went out to Bath, Highland County or wherever, but he bought a shorthorn bull from Uncle Tate [Sterrett].

Aggie Sterrett: You showed us that. We've-- when we've gone out to The Homestead, you showed us where you went, right?

Isabelle Chewning: Fassifern was the name of the farm.

Aggie Sterrett: Fassifern, that's right.

Mc Sterrett: I think that was the place but I don't know for sure. But I know when the bull came out of the barn, Granddaddy and Uncle Tate had a hold of it and Uncle Tate didn't last very long. Granddaddy had to hold him with a-- it had a halter on it.

Aggie Sterrett: That's all?

Mc Sterrett: Huh?

Aggie Sterrett: A halter? No--

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. No, just a halter. But if you kept his head bent around, he couldn't do much and so that's about all I remember about that. John Wade took us out there in the truck. We got the bull. Put the--

Isabelle Chewning: So then did you-- you sell the bull calves and keep the heifer calves like you did when you had the dairy, or did you sell all the calves or--

Mc Sterrett: For a while we milked and then for a while we raised veal calves. And I think mostly what we were doing when he [Mc's father] was gone was raising veal calves. But I don't know that for

sure. But we'd buy calves from other people. You didn't have dairies at that time. Everybody had two or three milk cows, and some of them would sell the calves, and some of them would just sell the calf and milk the cow. But our thing was that we'd put the cows in there and then let the calves come in the backside of that milking place. And they would suck maybe two cows -- one cow would nurse two calves.

Isabelle Chewning: So where did you milk? Which barn were you milking in?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, there was a-- down there where the free stalls are now, there was a place that had 12 stanchions. They all opened and shut at one time. And you had to get all 12 cows in there before you could shut the thing up. And that was a problem with a heifer, I think. I remember more about that --

Isabelle Chewning: So you were doing that, you and Dude were doing that while Granddaddy was off at CCC or--

Mc Sterrett: I remember doing it. I think Strickler's-- Old Man Strickler helped with that some.

Isabelle Chewning: Did the cows all have halters on them so you could handle them?

Mc Sterrett: No. Didn't any of them have halters on. But-- oh, I think we-- I remember that milking went on for-- the calf feeding several-- see there would be a straw stack down below. You-- between the place where we milked and the barn, old barn, there'd be a straw stack in there. And I think the cows stayed in there in the wintertime, or stayed around the straw stack. I remember pulling straw out of the stack so they could eat rather than having a fence around them. That's--

Isabelle Chewning: They ate the straw?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. They had to.

Isabelle Chewning: It wasn't for bedding.

Mc Sterrett: No. Well, he'd carry some of-- Dude would carry some of it up to their-- up there to put in for the horses. But then the rest of it was pulled out and fed to the cows, but they tromped down a lot of it.

Isabelle Chewning: It isn't very good feed, is it?

Mc Sterrett: Wasn't the best but it kept them alive. I don't know--

Isabelle Chewning: Did they eat the grain, or did the horses mostly eat the grain?

Mc Sterrett: Well, the horses would eat the good-- they kept the nubbins, the little short ears and things like that. And then you chopped them all up with a hatchet down into grain.

Isabelle Chewning: For the cows.

Mc Sterrett: For the cows, and that's what the cows would eat. And the horses would eat it. But there used to be a place that -- I think there's still a hole in the barn that you -- where we fed the calves. There was a, oh, what did we call it? A corn shoot, I think. And it -- they had boards sort of on a slope like that. And the corn would pile up when you put it in there when you filled it. But we'd feed that to the horses until after it ran out, and then you'd have to carry it from the granary.

Isabelle Chewning: And I guess you had enough to get through the winter most of the time? You didn't have to buy any feed?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, you kinda lay it out, I guess. We'd put hay in the upper part of that little -- in that calf barn.

Isabelle Chewning: What kind of hay was it? Grass?

Mc Sterrett: It was either clover or alfalfa that was put in there, I expect. And it was--

Isabelle Chewning: So you had alfalfa then?

Mc Sterrett: It was just loose hay, yeah, where this house is [2249 Sterrett Road] was in alfalfa, I think.

Isabelle Chewning: Had you -- had Granddaddy planted the alfalfa or was it here?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Alfalfa lasted quite a while at that time. Now it doesn't last but about two or three years, I don't think.

Isabelle Chewning: Because the soil's no good?

Mc Sterrett: Well, no, it's because it's got so many diseases, I think.

Isabelle Chewning: You mean the plant lasted a long time.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And you raked it up and put it up loose, and pulled it up with the hay fork.

Isabelle Chewning: How did you rake it?

Mc Sterrett: You had what you called a buggy rake, and you'd rake, oh, a swath as wide as this thing. Hello. How do?

[Barry Chewning enters the room]

Barry Chewning: Hi there.

Mc Sterrett: -- probably as wide as this room is. And you raked and then it had a dump on and you'd dump it. There's one, I don't know, there's one still sitting up there at Lou's [Martin Sterrett]. You called them, a dump rake I think. And you'd rake it up 'til that got pretty full and then dump it. And you'd have a windrow going all-- one side of the field. And you'd pull it between-- up-- somebody had to go in front and open the windrow a little bit and pull the wagon through there. And then you'd throw it on from both sides.

Isabelle Chewning: So it was a horse pulling this thing?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Two horses.

Isabelle Chewning: And they would be walking on either side of the windrow? The horses would be?

Mc Sterrett: No, the windrow was behind. Behind-- you'd make the windrow as you raked the hay.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, I see. And then-- but then you'd go back and pick it up?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. You had to take a fork and fork it on the wagon.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, okay. So you're just driving the wagon along beside it and taking a pitchfork and throwing it up on the wagon.

Mc Sterrett: Well, you'd drive through it and somebody had to open the windrow.

Isabelle Chewning: [to Aggie Sterrett]: Do you understand?

Aggie Sterrett: [Laugh] No.

Mc Sterrett: Oh, me-- and then you'd take it to the barn and pull around in front of that-- the horse would stand there. And you'd unhook one horse and take him around to pull the hay fork.

Aggie Sterrett: With a pulley?

Mc Sterrett: And that was my job, was to ride that horse and--

Aggie Sterrett: So you rode him instead of leading him?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. If you, you know, if you-- some people led them but-- or drove them. But I think I usually rode and then the single tree behind would bump on the horses's heels when you brought him back.

Isabelle Chewning: Back when you used to like to ride horses?

Mc Sterrett: [Laugh] Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Did Granddaddy ever ride for pleasure? Just put a saddle on a horse and ride just for fun?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, we used to ride some on Sundays, but --

Isabelle Chewning: All of you?

Mc Sterrett: No, not all of us together. We -- that riding horse, we used to ride him some.

Aggie Sterrett: Did Grandmother ride him?

Mc Sterrett: No. Not that I remember but she-- we have pictures of her riding a horse.

Aggie Sterrett: Now what are those-- there're a couple of pieces of equipment up--

Mc Sterrett: They're the teters [??] that you kicked up the hay with.

Isabelle Chewning: To dry it out?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Just kind of turn it over?

Mc Sterrett: Well, you just went over, and those forks would come down and go over and-- like that. It wasn't a very good tetter [??] but that's the way-- that's the only way we had to do it.

Isabelle Chewning: So when it was 236 acres how much of it was pasture and how much of it was crop and how much of it was--

Mc Sterrett: Oh, I'd say about half and half.

Isabelle Chewning: Half pasture, half--

Mc Sterrett: Well, it was 40 acres of wood. So that didn't leave but 220 acres to-- and you fed most of the hay to your horses. Of course, you had to keep them first. And what was left over you let the cows have.

Aggie Sterrett: You didn't keep the horses in the stable all the time, did you?

Mc Sterrett: No, they were turned out at night, but in the wintertime they stayed in the stable all--

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, they didn't get turned out to--

Mc Sterrett: No.

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, okay.

Isabelle Chewning: Because they'd worked all day, they were turned out at night in the summer.

Mc Sterrett: And if you went out there before seven o'clock to bring them in, you didn't have any trouble. But if you went in the middle of the day, then you had trouble getting the horses in.

Isabelle Chewning: Because they thought they were getting a day off and they didn't want to come in?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, I guess. Some were--

Isabelle Chewning: Did they like to work, for the most part?

Mc Sterrett: Well, it was a job that was to be done. I don't know whether they liked it or not. [Laugh]

Isabelle Chewning: But they didn't put up too much of a fight.

Mc Sterrett: No. No, they, you know, a well-broken horse would listen to you and-- but that word "broken" is, I guess, you would work them 'til they were broken.

Aggie Sterrett: And they were big – they were kind of draft --

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Aggie Sterrett: Big draft horses?

Mc Sterrett: Draft horses. I don't think they were as big as you'd think about a horse now but they were larger than a riding horse.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have any gray ones besides Jack? I just-- I remember Jack.

Mc Sterrett: I think we did have another gray one or two. But most of them were sort of brown.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, the one I-- there's a picture down, probably in your backyard [the backyard of 2249 Sterrett Road] of you and Aunt Mary when you were little, on a team of horses, sitting up on a--

Mc Sterrett: That was on the plow. That was when they were plowing the garden.

Aggie Sterrett: Weren't they both gray? Were they both grays?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know.

Aggie Sterrett: Well, we didn't get you to talk very much about school.

Isabelle Chewning: We want to save some for Mr. Anderson [who will be doing an oral history with Mc Sterrett later].

Aggie Sterrett: Oh, okay.

Isabelle Chewning: Are you going to repeat some of this for him?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, yes, I'm sure I will.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, this has been good practice. What else did you write down? Do you know anything about how the black people on the hill got those little lots and how big the lots are or how many of them there are?

Mc Sterrett: No, I-- they were big enough for a garden and that was about all.

Isabelle Chewning: A house and a garden.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And, well, Bob Shultz kept an old horse. But I don't know-- his name was Pete.

Isabelle Chewning: How did they [the black people] support themselves? Where were they working then? On the farms?

Mc Sterrett: You could go in to Brownsburg on the day that you were going to thresh and hire enough men to-- that would be loafing around Brownsburg to thresh.

Aggie Sterrett: Like the Seven-Eleven!

Isabelle Chewning: And what did they do the rest of the time?

Mc Sterrett: I really don't know too much. The, you know, that was during the Depression, and they just didn't have steady jobs.

Isabelle Chewning: And did they just have enough to eat out of their garden? Did people give them food or--

Mc Sterrett: Well, I expect they didn't eat too well a lot of them. You made an awful lot of flour gravy and that sort of thing. You fried a little meat if you had enough to -- well, Dude kept a hog, an old sow up there, and he'd have pigs to sell once in awhile, every-- twice a year, I guess and things of that sort.

Isabelle Chewning: How much did he make working here [on the farm]?

[Phone rings; tape stops temporarily.]

Aggie Sterrett: How much did he make?

Mc Sterrett: I remember-- I don't remember, but about a dollar a day was about what you paid men at that time. And he would just say, "I've gotta have-- I need so-and-so this week," and Daddy would pay him. Three dollars, five dollars, whatever that was.

Aggie Sterrett: How much do you think Granddaddy made doing the CCC?

Mc Sterrett: About a hundred dollars a month. And he thought that was pretty good.

Isabelle Chewning: How many years was he there?

Mc Sterrett: I think about ten years, and then he went to Norfolk when the CC's folded up when the war started. And worked down there and they were building a lot of houses. And Herman and Dolly [Straub], I think lived in one of the houses that he worked -- that-- where he was -- in that subdivision or whatever you call it now. I've forgotten what it's called.

Aggie Sterrett: Did he actually-- he was kind of a contractor? He-- is that what he--

Mc Sterrett: No, he was a grade foreman down there, I think. And then when he-- when that folded up, or when they finished that job, he went up to Ohio and-- but that was-- that job didn't--

Aggie Sterrett: Granddaddy?

Mc Sterrett: Huh?

Aggie Sterrett: I never heard this story.

Isabelle Chewning: I didn't know this 'til last week.

Mc Sterrett: Cincinnati, Ohio, I think is where he went. And-- but that job didn't turn out very good, so he came home and started to farm.

Isabelle Chewning: And that was still during the war?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. Yeah, I think so. I think -- what I understand was that he had to estimate how much iron was in a big pile. And, well, he, you know, he just didn't feel like he could do that. I think most of the people were engineers.

Isabelle Chewning: But he was still a government employee?

Mc Sterrett: No. No, he was working for a private company then.

Isabelle Chewning: Was he a government employee when he was in Norfolk?

Mc Sterrett: No.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh. So he was called a grade four foreman but it wasn't a government--

Mc Sterrett: A grade foreman.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, grade foreman.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: What does that mean?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know. I reckon he had to --

Isabelle Chewning: Level the ground?

Mc Sterrett: Make-- I think the housing development was in sort of a swamp. Or in wetlands. Which nowadays they'd frown on doing anything to them. But then it was-- I don't remember too much about what that was. But they drained this land, I think, and built houses on it.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

November 2007

Interview with Madison McClung Sterrett, Jr.

By Richard G. Anderson

[Items enclosed in brackets [] are editorial notes inserted for clarification]

Richard Anderson: Today's date is November 21st, 2007 and the time is approximately 2.30pm. This interview is being conducted 2671 Brownsburg Turnpike in Brownsburg, Virginia and my name is Richard G. Anderson. The interviewee is M.M. Sterrett Jr. and we will begin the questions at this point. Mr. Sterrett do you want to state your full name?

Mc Sterrett: Mc Sterrett, Madison McClung Sterrett, Jr.

Richard Anderson: Where do you live?

Mc Sterrett: We live 2244 Sterrett Road, about a mile out of Brownsburg.

Richard Anderson: Is that east of Brownsburg?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Were you born in Brownsburg?

Mc Sterrett: No, I was born in Stonewall Jackson Hospital in Lexington, in Rockbridge County.

Richard Anderson: What was the date of your birth?

Mc Sterrett: 11/10/25.

Richard Anderson: 1925?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: And your age now would be?

Mc Sterrett: 82.

Richard Anderson: 82, but you've lived all your life all 82 years in the Brownsburg area?

Mc Sterrett: Most of it yes, all except about one year.

Richard Anderson: One year?

Mc Sterrett: That was a little bit north of Lexington on [Route] 39.

Richard Anderson: When was that, approximately?

Mc Sterrett: That was the first year of my life.

Richard Anderson: What were your parents' names?

Mc Sterrett: Well his [my father's] full name was Madison McClung Sterrett and my mother's name was Edna Morton Sterrett.

Richard Anderson: Are there other family members, were there other children?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, I have one sister, Mary Thompson Sterrett [Lipscomb].

Richard Anderson: Is she younger than you or older?

Mc Sterrett: Older.

Richard Anderson: So how long have you lived, or did you live, in the house in which Isabelle Chewning and Barry Chewning now live [Mulberry Grove, 2249 Sterrett Road]?

Mc Sterrett: I lived there until I was married, approximately 26 years.

Richard Anderson: After you were married then you moved across the road [to 2244 Sterrett Road]?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: When were you married?

Mc Sterrett: The first time was the 28th of April, 1948; the second time was 26th June, 1995.

Richard Anderson: What was the name of your first wife?

Mc Sterrett: Anna [Annamarye] Lackey Sterrett.

Richard Anderson: And where did she grow up?

Mc Sterrett: She grew up in Timber Ridge.

Richard Anderson: She passed away, correct?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Your children from that marriage are whom?

Mc Sterrett: Isabelle Morton [Sterrett] Chewning and Agnes McClung Sterrett.

Richard Anderson: What is your first memory of living in Brownsburg?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I really don't remember because I was just a year old, a little over a year old when we moved here. I can't think of what my first memory was.

Richard Anderson: Prior to moving here when you were one year old, you lived on Route 39?

Mc Sterrett: Well not right on it but off it [Alms Croft Lane near Lazy Acres Lane].

Richard Anderson: Was that a farm also?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: How long had your parents been living there?

Mc Sterrett: I think since they had been married, which was in 1919, I guess.

Richard Anderson: So they moved over here because it was a bigger farm or better farm?

Mc Sterrett: Well, he bought the farm here and they moved here consequently.

Richard Anderson: Who were some of your early neighbors?

Mc Sterrett: Well, Mrs. Dice, who lived right above us [2081 Sterrett Road].

Richard Anderson: Spell that name.

Mc Sterrett: D I C E. She was -- at the time that we moved here, I assume she was a widow at that time. Her husband had died several years before and she had one daughter. Mr. and Mrs. Dunaway lived right down below our house toward Brownsburg (2297 Sterrett Road), and their property had come off of the farm.

Richard Anderson: Did you start attending school in Brownsburg when you went to school?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: And that's the school right here in Brownsburg?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: So did you go all the way from-- was that still a high school at that time?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: And so all 12 grades were there?

Mc Sterrett: 11 grades; we didn't have the 8th grade.

Richard Anderson: Didn't have an 8th grade?

Mc Sterrett: No, I assume because of the Depression.

Richard Anderson: So you attended all 11 grades at that school?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Do you recall the names of any of your teachers?

Mc Sterrett: Well, Miss Isabel Leech was our first grade teacher. The first grade -- I've forgotten which way it was, but we went half a day either in the morning or afternoon, then the second grade the same way and she taught both grades.

Richard Anderson: So you just went a half a day for the first grade?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: How many students were in a class, typical?

Mc Sterrett: I think it was something like 21 or 22, I expect.

Richard Anderson: Were most of those students from the Brownsburg area or elsewhere?

Mc Sterrett: Elsewhere.

Richard Anderson: Came from all over.

Mc Sterrett: Yes. And then in later years a whole lot of our class was one room schools that had closed, or they had finished all the grades that they had in those schools.

Richard Anderson: And then transferred to --

Mc Sterrett: Transferred to Brownsburg.

Richard Anderson: Any other teachers that you remember?

Mc Sterrett: I don't remember my 2nd grade teacher or 3rd grade teacher but the 4th grade teacher was a Miss Snider, 5th grade teacher was Miss Wade.

Richard Anderson: Which Miss Wade would that have been?

Mc Sterrett: Nobody from around here, she was from Staunton I think. The 6th grade teacher was Miss Amole, and 7th grade teacher was Miss Montgomery and by that time we had moved into the present, or to the new building. I started in the old academy building.

Richard Anderson: And the new building was that built in your memory?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: When was that built approximately?

Mc Sterrett: 1938.

Richard Anderson: And so the older students went into the newer building?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, and the old academy building was taken down at that time.

Richard Anderson: Did you attend the academy? Did you attend classes in the academy building?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes.

Richard Anderson: What was that like, what's your recollection of that building?

Mc Sterrett: Well you went in the front door, and straight up a pair of steps into the auditorium which was upstairs. I went to the 4th grade in the room right to the right, in the first grade and second grade into the room that was sort of on the backside of the building, and I think some of the high school used the other.

Richard Anderson: How did you get to school, did you walk, take a bus?

Mc Sterrett: Well the first 2 years I would walk one way either in the morning or afternoon, either I'd walk home, and then after that I rode the bus.

Richard Anderson: So there were buses?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: By the time you got up into the later grades?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Did you walk by yourself or did you walk with others?

Mc Sterrett: I think I walked by myself.

Richard Anderson: Did your sister go?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, I think she went to the same teacher [who] was there at both grades.

Richard Anderson: So how many years was she behind you?

Mc Sterrett: She was in front of me about two years.

Richard Anderson: So she was two years ahead of you?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Do you remember anything special, any special experiences that you had up there at school, anything that you remember?

Mc Sterrett: Well I remember in the boys' bathroom or toilet was up back of the building, you had to go up right much of a hill, and if it rained a little bit it was so slick you couldn't hardly get up there.

Richard Anderson: So it was tough getting to the bathroom?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Did you have meals up there?

Mc Sterrett: No, I think along about the 5th or 6th grade they put in what they called a soup kitchen and a lady in Brownsburg ran the soup kitchen and you were charged five cents for a bowl of soup, I think.

Richard Anderson: Did you take advantage of that?

Mc Sterrett: I don't remember taking advantage of it very often, but I do remember being in there.

Richard Anderson: So otherwise you'd bring your own lunch?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Did they have athletic events up there?

Mc Sterrett: They had athletic events up until the war started, until World War II. And at that time we had two, I think, men teachers and each of them left, went in the service probably, and after that we did not have athletic events.

Richard Anderson: So you attended the school from let's say what year did you start, would you have started?

Mc Sterrett: Oh '32 until '43 I think, I know I finished in '43.

Richard Anderson: And this was in the years of the Depression, do you have any recollection of how that affected the area?

Mc Sterrett: No, very little except that you paid five dollars for 5 gallons of gas – no, I mean one dollar for 5 gallons of gas and things of that nature. But the effects on the farmer's children did not register too much. I'm sure the farmers had a very big problem in paying for anything, but it was -- that time of the Depression didn't really register with the children, I don't think.

Richard Anderson: Was this the period of time or during that period of time that your dad worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: What years were those?

Mc Sterrett: I think he started in '32 or 3 [1932 or 1933] and ended up about the time of '41 or something like that when the war started.

Richard Anderson: Was he away a lot of that time?

Mc Sterrett: Yes he was.

Richard Anderson: So who did the farming, who took care of the farm?

Mc Sterrett: We had a black man by the name of William Haliburton, and everybody called him Dude. There was another family of Stricklers who lived on the farm.

Richard Anderson: Strickler?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Were these all black folks?

Mc Sterrett: No, the Stricklers were white.

Richard Anderson: Were there other people on the farm at that time?

Mc Sterrett: No.

Richard Anderson: What kind of farming was going on?

Mc Sterrett: Well it was general farming. We had sheep, hogs, chickens, some cows and horses. We farmed with horses.

Richard Anderson: Did you sell the milk from the cows at that point?

Mc Sterrett: We had a separator and sold cream somewhere along there but I don't think --

Richard Anderson: It wasn't a full scale dairy?

Mc Sterrett: No it wasn't.

Richard Anderson: Did you help out on the farm while you were going to school?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yeah, I was in the way a lot, I'm sure! But I called myself helping. [laugh]

Richard Anderson: When did mechanization first come to the farm?

Mc Sterrett: Oh we had a tractor, we bought a tractor when I was probably around the time of the Second World War started, which was around 1941.

Richard Anderson: So that was the first tractor?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, and from then on we used the tractor more to plow, and things of that nature and I think we mowed with it too, I think. But it was quite a-- you know, there were some tractors in the area, but not too many.

Richard Anderson: Did you all have automobiles at that time?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, we had an automobile when we moved to Brownsburg. I think it was probably a Model T, and then we got a Model A after that.

Richard Anderson: Were the roads, any of them paved at that time?

Mc Sterrett: The road by our house was not paved, maybe.

Richard Anderson: What is now Sterrett Road?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. But maybe the road in Brownsburg was paved.

Richard Anderson: What is now the Brownsburg Turnpike.

Mc Sterrett: Brownsburg, just from one end of Brownsburg to the other.

Richard Anderson: And then they became dirt roads?

Mc Sterrett: Then it became yeah, became dirt roads.

Richard Anderson: How did mechanization affect the farming operation?

Mc Sterrett: Well I think we started dairying in '47. Of course that was right much mechanized. But up until that time we had farmed with horses mostly

Richard Anderson: How many horses would you have had?

Mc Sterrett: I think we kept six horses, I'm not sure. We kept one riding horse and worked him some, and then we used horses to do most everything, you know.

Richard Anderson: What kind of horses were they, do you know?

Mc Sterrett: They were just a general mixture of draft horses, all except the riding horse who was a-- I don't know exactly what breed he was, but he was quite a spirited horse. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: Who took care of the horses?

Mc Sterrett: The horses were taken care of on the farm. More or less everybody took care of them.

Richard Anderson: Did you help take care of them?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: After it became a dairy farm, did you become more involved?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, I think I gave my date of marriage right, it was in '48. We started milking in the dairy barn in '47, and then I was married pretty soon after that and took a very right responsible place in there [the dairy operation]. Before that we had milked several cows by hand in another barn that was made for milking.

Richard Anderson: You said you helped with the milking operations themselves after about '47?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: So you graduated from high school when?

Mc Sterrett: In '43.

Richard Anderson: Were you subject to military service, that type of thing?

Mc Sterrett: No. Well, we were milking cows, and I continued to milk cows [laugh].

Richard Anderson: So you didn't have to go into the military?

Mc Sterrett: No, I was not in the service.

Richard Anderson: Was your dad ever involved in the service?

Mc Sterrett: No, except for the Civilian Conservation Corps; part of their responsibility was the military but he didn't have anything to do with the military part.

Richard Anderson: What are your recollections of World War II?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, I remember I was going to school when the war first started. My recollections really - I mean, here we did certain things like blackouts and things of that kind. But I guess my recollections are fairly scarce as far as --

Richard Anderson: Did y'all listen to the radio reports?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes.

Richard Anderson: Were there any what I call "Minute Men Units" in this area?

Mc Sterrett: Not that I know of.

Richard Anderson: Or any civilian-type units?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know really.

Richard Anderson: Did you all have the effects of rationing and?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes. We had -- I think gas was rationed, tires were rationed, everything, sugar was rationed.

Richard Anderson: How did that kind of rationing, was it noticeable to you?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes.

Richard Anderson: To the family?

Mc Sterrett: It was very noticeable, particularly the sugar part! [laugh]

Richard Anderson: Were there local stores, grocery stores?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, there were five stores in Brownsburg I think.

Richard Anderson: Did you all patronize those stores?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Did they have pretty much everything you needed in the way of food?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, as far as I know they had-- oh you'd go to Staunton or Lexington two or three times a year probably, but other than that, it's not necessary.

Richard Anderson: In that period of time, during World War II, were there any German prisoners of war anywhere in the area working on farms?

Mc Sterrett: I don't remember of any that worked on farms. Sometime during my life the convicts had worked on farms some, and I knew that Hot Springs [The Homestead] was a prisoner of war camp and maybe White Sulfur [The Greenbrier in White Sulfur Springs, WV], too.

Richard Anderson: But not necessarily right in this area?

Mc Sterrett: Not any, no. Now Washington and Lee had what they called a School of Special Services, and they had veterans up there that were going into the specialties; things like plays, and that sort of thing.

Richard Anderson: Did you all attend any area churches?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, we went to New Providence [Presbyterian Church] all the time.

Richard Anderson: The whole time?

Mc Sterrett: The whole time.

Richard Anderson: And you remember any of the ministers there while you were growing up?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes, I remember.

Richard Anderson: Did you attend Sunday School?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. Dr. [C. Morton] Hanna was there when I joined the church.

Richard Anderson: Do you know how to spell that name?

Mc Sterrett: H – A – N – N – A

Richard Anderson: Hanna. He was the first one you remember well?

Mc Sterrett: Well I did remember slightly the man that was before him. But mainly it was because he came when Dr. McLaughlin was here. Until, I don't know, 1945 or 6 [1946], something like that, and then Dr. Walthall went into the service during the war.

Richard Anderson: He was the minister?

Mc Sterrett: He was the minister here.

Richard Anderson: At that time and went into the service.

Mc Sterrett: And he was the chaplain in the service. Then there was Dr. [Locke] White and I'd have to-- Dr. [Richard] Hutcheson came after him, maybe you remember him. Then there was Mr. [Donald] Campbell, Reverend Campbell, and Reverend [John] Boyd. I remember them all. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: A bunch of them! What type of activities were going on at the church that you participated in?

Mc Sterrett: Well we had a youth group at that time.

Richard Anderson: How many were in that?

Mc Sterrett: I expect there were probably 25, but I don't remember particulars.

Richard Anderson: The church was a pretty good size at that time?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, well before that, I think the church had been very much larger. And probably right after World War I was when television came along, and I think that --

Richard Anderson: You mean after World War II?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: And that affected attendance?

Mc Sterrett: That had very much of an effect on the church, and the size of the church. Everybody went to church. Maybe not for the right reasons; you went to visit as much as anything else.

Richard Anderson: Were there any other special activities that you remember going on at the church while you were growing up?

Mc Sterrett: Not that there weren't, but I don't remember right off hand, no.

Richard Anderson: I believe you said your family owned an automobile at the time they moved to the house on Sterrett Road [2249 Sterrett Road]. What kind of trips -- did you make any kind of trips in the automobile on a regular basis?

Mc Sterrett: Not really.

Richard Anderson: Or how often did you use the car?

Mc Sterrett: Oh we went to church on Sunday was the about main thing that I remember. And afterwards -- well, I mentioned Mrs. Dice, and she drove a buggy to church.

Richard Anderson: Horse drawn buggy?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, and we used to-- there was a road that turned off of our road and went right up over the hill, right by where I built the house [2244 Sterrett Road] and it came out on Goose Creek and that was the way we went to church.

Richard Anderson: So there was another road from Sterrett Road over to Goose Creek Road?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. I don't remember the number of it, but it had a number.

Richard Anderson: Did you all ever use the train that ran through Raphine and those places?

Mc Sterrett: I don't remember riding that train. I remember hearing it whistle. It used to be that fertilizer was unloaded at Mountain View [near Mountain View Farm on McClure Boulevard], which just had a side track. And the day that the car came in to be unloaded, you'd see lots of wagons going by. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: Is that where you all got your fertilizer?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: You had to go over to Mountain View to load it up?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, and it was in 200 pound sacks.

Richard Anderson: Did you use a horse drawn vehicle to get there?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: So going to either Lexington or Staunton was a pretty special occasion?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, it was very much a special occasion.

Richard Anderson: How often would you say you went to either of those places?

Mc Sterrett: I would see two or three, maybe four times to Lexington and a couple of times to Staunton [a year].

Richard Anderson: And what would you go to Lexington or Staunton for, what would be the purpose of going?

Mc Sterrett: I really don't remember too much about the trips, the first trips to Staunton, to Lexington. But when I was real small, they [my parents] had moved from a whole lot closer to Lexington, and so I think my father was on the jury some, and things of that kind. I don't remember too much about it, why we went, but we'd go every once in a while. I guess my mother bought material to make clothes out of, those sort of things.

Richard Anderson: Would you go to the movies in Lexington or Staunton?

Mc Sterrett: When I was a little older we would go to the movies but maybe not at that time.

Richard Anderson: Do you remember going to the movies as a child?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes. One time we went to some movie that was advertised pretty much and it was an adult movie. Well, not as we think of as an adult movie now, but it was -- they understood what was going on and I didn't.

Richard Anderson: Did you go for shopping purposes?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Were there a lot of stores?

Mc Sterrett: There were several stores in Lexington. Adair Hutton was the big department store to go to, I think, and there were lots of other stores. I think my father had lived around close to Lexington, and he knew some of the merchants that were there.

Richard Anderson: Now did you ever consider going on to college?

Mc Sterrett: I think it was considered, but when I got out of high school maybe the war was going on and Washington and Lee had more or less closed. They were taking in these special school students, and I really don't remember too much about that, but I think we did-- it was thought of. My sister went on to college.

Richard Anderson: I was going say your sister went to college didn't she?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: And where did she go, she went to?

Mc Sterrett: Longwood. I think it was at that time it was Farmville –

Richard Anderson: It was more of a teacher's college.

Mc Sterrett: Teacher's College. She taught school.

Richard Anderson: And was that her intention, pretty much?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Were you disappointed that you didn't go to college?

Mc Sterrett: No, not necessarily. I didn't know the advantages of it. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: How did you and the family keep up with what was going on in the county, in the state, United States, or the world in general during that period of time?

Mc Sterrett: With the radio. I think we took a paper, Richmond Times Dispatch. I don't remember when we started, but I do remember it being there for several years.

Richard Anderson: Was the local paper important, you had that I assume?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, we got the [Rockbridge] County News and the [Lexington] Gazette.

Richard Anderson: There were two newspapers at that time.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: What do you remember about listening to the radio?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I remember "The Lone Ranger".

Richard Anderson: Westerns. Did you listen to those serial programs?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes, I had to be at the house at exactly 4.30 or something like that to hear the radio!

Richard Anderson: What individuals, male or female, stand out in your memory from growing up or living in Brownsburg, and tell us why?

Mc Sterrett: Well, Mr. Bob Supinger was the store keeper, and his wife worked in the telephone office.

Richard Anderson: Where was their store?

Mc Sterrett: Their store was where Dick Barnes' is now.

Richard Anderson: His antique shop?

Mc Sterrett: His antique shop.

Richard Anderson: And where was the telephone company?

Mc Sterrett: And the telephone office was over the bank [2711 Brownsburg Turnpike].

Richard Anderson: Over the old bank building?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, there was a bank downstairs, and telephone upstairs.

Richard Anderson: I've heard that at one point that the telephone company was in the building that is going to be the Brownsburg Museum [2716 Brownsburg Turnpike].

Mc Sterrett: It may have started there, I don't recall that.

Richard Anderson: You don't remember that?

Mc Sterrett: No. But I think the bank even started there in that building, but later they built a new building and moved into it.

Richard Anderson: Was the bank an important ingredient in the community?

Mc Sterrett: I think so. It was there and if you had any money, you used it. [Laugh] But most farmers didn't have a lot of money at that time.

Richard Anderson: What other kind of businesses, if any, were in Brownsburg at that time or when you were growing up?

Mc Sterrett: Well, there were blacksmith shops that you brought the horses to, to have shoes put on.

Richard Anderson: Where were they located?

Mc Sterrett: One was located in the southern end of Brownsburg, where the Beverage's live [2610 Brownsburg Turnpike], and one was located around back of -- close to Carwell's Garage [immediately behind Old South Antiques], that was the two that I remember. Now there may have been others before that, or even at that time.

Richard Anderson: What else in the way of businesses were in town?

Mc Sterrett: I think there were four stores. There was Mr. Bosworth's store, which was where the-- it was right above the bank [2711 Brownsburg Turnpike]. Then there was Huffman's Filling Station [2712 Brownsburg Turnpike] -- I don't remember when it was started -- that was right across from the bank on the other side of the road. There was another store in the main part of Brownsburg at that time, which was where Dick Barnes' house is, but I don't remember who was running it at that time. Mr. Woody, I guess, of Woody Chevrolet, ran a store in Brownsburg. And then Whitesell's store.

Richard Anderson: When did Whitesell's open?

Mc Sterrett: Whitesells had had a store, I think for a while, and then they had an undertaker business and it was always been right across the street here [get address]. Then, I think when the other stores kind of either went out of business or nobody was running them -- the Farm Store had a store in Brownsburg for a while, the Rockbridge County Farm Store.

Richard Anderson: Rockbridge County Co-op?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Was that were Dick Barnes' house is?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. And then there was a black man that had a little bit of a store [2613 Brownsburg Turnpike] up here across from Potter's blacksmith shop. Will Gilmore was his name.

Richard Anderson: Were there any other individuals that you'd like to mention that you recall?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I remember most of the ladies that worked in the telephone office, because when Mother came to Brownsburg, that's where she usually went, was up to the telephone office. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: Why did she go up there?

Mc Sterrett: I guess to catch up on the news! And the two ladies that worked in there, [their] mother and father lived out our way. Miss Mattie Wade and Miss Mealie [Amelia] were two sisters, then Mrs. Osie [Supinger] was a sister, too, and they had one other sister. Those -- Miss Osie and Miss Mattie ran the telephone office, Miss Mealie live out here on the turn, right where you turn off to go to Goose Creek [1727 Sterrett Road].

Richard Anderson: When did you all first get telephone service?

Mc Sterrett: Had telephone service ever since I can remember; I think maybe telephone was here before we moved here.

Richard Anderson: So that goes back into the '30s then, there was telephone service.

Mc Sterrett: Or to the '20s.

Richard Anderson: Anybody else you want to mention that was in the neighborhood?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes, there were lots of folks in the neighborhood. A lot of the-- Mrs. Dunaway's husband worked on the road, on the highway, worked for the Highway Department and she was the custodian of the school. She had to start all the fires and do all the maintenance work I guess.

Richard Anderson: Did they use wood fires in the schools?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, particularly until they built the new brick building that was down in front of the old building. The older building was up on the level with the existing building that's there now, and it was just to the north of that building.

Richard Anderson: Well, we've covered the Depression years, I think unless there's something else you wish to mention, and we covered the World War II era pretty much unless there's something else you wish to say. Were you living here when rural electrification got started?

Mc Sterrett: Yes we got electricity in about somewhere around '36 or 7. And I think Brownsburg had already had electricity from VEPCO or Virginia Power, I think that's what the name of it was at that time. And then the rural electrification came about '37 or something like that.

Richard Anderson: How did that affect you all?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, it affected us, particularly when we started the dairy business that used automatic milkers.

Richard Anderson: So it was a big improvement?

Mc Sterrett: Very much, yes.

Richard Anderson: Prior to that time, what was it like to live without electricity?

Mc Sterrett: Well we had to live with lamps, of course.

Richard Anderson: Candles?

Mc Sterrett: No, lamps.

Richard Anderson: Gas lamps?

Mc Sterrett: Well kerosene.

Richard Anderson: Kerosene.

Mc Sterrett: Right. And they were -- well they were being improved, I guess, but they still weren't very good. I remember Daddy saying "Don't stand in my light" a lot of time.

Richard Anderson: Pretty dark a lot of the time wasn't it?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: I can't imagine what it was like to have to read things.

Mc Sterrett: Well, we did our homework by lamp light, what homework we had.

Richard Anderson: How did the schools operate without electricity?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I think the school had electricity at the time that I started, but I don't know that for sure. But I do remember in '36 or 7 or something like that we got electricity that turned all the lights on in the house. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: When was Sterrett Road paved?

Mc Sterrett: I would guess along about '40, 1940.

Richard Anderson: So at the beginning of World War II.

Mc Sterrett: I'm not sure of that, but the road was paved out to where you turn off to go down Goose Creek. And from there on to Fairfield it stayed a dirt road for another several years, 10 years or something to that effect. And I don't remember when this road [Brownsburg Turnpike] was paved too much, from Brownsburg to the church. Well, I do remember there was some talk of cutting the maple trees down and putting in a paved road, and they finally decided they could put the road between the trees.

Richard Anderson: Those trees have been there a long time.

Mc Sterrett: Yes, they were there ever since I can remember, and I have heard other people talking about when they were planted. But I don't remember that at all. I expect they were probably planted 120 years ago.

Richard Anderson: Speaking of that road, did you all have any interchange with people in Rockbridge Baths and Goshen, that type?

Mc Sterrett: Not too much. I remember – well, our [county] supervisor was from Goshen for a long time. That was Mr. Hull, who was Mr. Fred Whipple's father-in-law, who was a supervisor. And before that I remember Mr. Slusser was. But I don't believe we had any particular-- except that Rockbridge Baths had a school and that closed down. There was a time it was closed, I think, and I don't know whether it reopened or what, but their children came here to school in about the 4th or 5th grade.

Richard Anderson: How many children from the Brownsburg area were going to school up at Brownsburg when you were there?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know, it seemed like there were a lot of boys! [Laugh] The Woody's had two boys, and the Wade's had four boys – that's the people that lived where Walter Lunsford lives [2651 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And there were several others, the Whipple boys that I remember slightly when they were going to school, and there were the Patterson boys.

Richard Anderson: Did you have much exchange with other children growing up in the area?

Mc Sterrett: Well, not too much until I was old enough to come to Brownsburg, riding my horse or riding my bicycle to Brownsburg or something..

Richard Anderson: Well, we just talked about the businesses. Where was the Brownsburg Post Office located when you were growing up?

Mc Sterrett: Let's see. I guess it was started in Mr. Jim Bosworth's store, that was the store right above the bank [2707 Brownsburg Turnpike]. Then after he died, Mrs. Bosworth was the post mistress, and they put a partition in the store and had it in the front of the store. When I remember he being the post master, it was quite the thing to go to the post office, I think. He had an old dog that he called "Ring," an old collie dog, and he didn't – he'd get out the whip and do this, that, and the other, but Ring didn't pay much attention to it. But anyway after the post office left, I believe Miss Mattie Wade was post mistress for several years, and stayed in that building and then it moved back to Whitesell's Store.

Richard Anderson: In your early days when you were growing up, did you have rural delivery of mail or did you have to come get your mail?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. When I started school – well, before that, I think -- they had had a mail carrier. I think maybe our address was Fairfield, right to start with. That wasn't very long after we moved here. It [our address] got to be Raphine because when I went in the first grade, I walked to school, I expect, at lunch time. And we had the first grade and the mail man would pick me up occasionally. [Laugh]

Richard Anderson: That was nice. We talked about the telephone company and the grocery stores and the banks and other businesses. Did you ever work in any of those businesses?

Mc Sterrett: The only thing I ever did in one of those was help take inventory a little bit when the Farm Store was in Brownsburg, and that was when I was 20 years old, probably.

Richard Anderson: What changes good or bad have you seen take place in the Brownsburg area during the time you've lived here?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I think one of the bad things is that the school moved away, and the bank moved away. But that's sort of with the modern times, I guess. The good things would be that it's more of a rural town now, more of a residence town.

Richard Anderson: A lot of the buildings that were formerly businesses have been converted to residences, including the bank building.

Mc Sterrett: And the service stations.

Richard Anderson: The service stations, yeah.

Mc Sterrett: I know the doctor's house --

Richard Anderson: I was going ask you about medical care, that's a good subject. Were there doctors living here?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. The community built the doctor's house, which is where Ag Patterson lives [2744 Brownsburg Turnpike].

Richard Anderson: When was that done?

Mc Sterrett: I expect it was built along in the teens somewhere, but I don't know that.

Richard Anderson: So when you were growing up, there was a doctor living there?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. I remember my sister [Mary Sterrett Lipscomb] being taken to the doctor. I don't know where the office was, but she had gotten something in her throat and had emergency treatment, and that was done before I can really remember. The doctors that I remember were Dr. Bailey; he was the first doctor that I really remember. And then Dr. Williams, who maybe you've heard of, and Dr. Taylor.

Richard Anderson: They all operated out of that same location?

Mc Sterrett: Dr. Williams did but I think Dr. Taylor had his-- he lived out at the Wade's -- Castle Carbury [34 Beard Lane] right across from the church. He had his office in the same building that Dick Barnes is in [8 Hays Creek Road]. He [Dick Barnes] tore down part of the store building and the part over top of it that was the doctor's office.

Richard Anderson: So was there more than one doctor here at one time?

Mc Sterrett: I think maybe there were, but that was before I can remember.

Richard Anderson: Did they see everybody pretty much?

Mc Sterrett: I think so, yes. And a lot of people came from Walkers Creek or Middlebrook and that area, a lot of people came to the doctor.

Richard Anderson: Did they make house visits?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, they visited quite a bit, I think. How in the world the doctor ever kept up with all those people, I don't know, but he seemed pretty busy.

Richard Anderson: Did the school have any medical care?

Mc Sterrett: No.

Richard Anderson: They didn't have nurses and things like that?

Mc Sterrett: If you cut your finger at the school, you had to go down to the doctor.

Richard Anderson: What stands out in your memory as the most significant or important event, or events, that occurred in Brownsburg during the time you have lived in the area? That's a hard question.

Mc Sterrett: Yes, it is, and that would take a lot of thought.

Richard Anderson: But is there anything that you recall that you particularly remember that was a big event?

Mc Sterrett: Well the Chrysanthemum Show at the church [New Providence] was a big event.

Richard Anderson: Tell us about that.

Mc Sterrett: I don't know why – I guess I do, too. I know why it was called the Chrysanthemum Show, because the ladies grew flowers all year, and showed them at the Chrysanthemum show. That was most-- a lot of people that were out of the community came here.

Richard Anderson: Participated in that. When was that usually held, in the spring?

Mc Sterrett: No, it was held around November, I expect. Chrysanthemums are late flowers more, and so many ladies raised the flowers just for the Chrysanthemum Show, and they'd have them to bloom right at that time.

Richard Anderson: Was that open to anybody, I mean anybody could participate in it?

Mc Sterrett: Mostly the black people couldn't, but most anybody else could.

Richard Anderson: Did your mother participate?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, and Daddy participated -- he had a job. I don't know what his job was, but well, I think he was one of the ones who carved the ham or did something.

Richard Anderson: So they served meals?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, they served meals.

Richard Anderson: When did that stop?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know, really. I expect in the '40s or '50s, but I don't know for sure. Then there was an ice cream supper that sort of followed that. It was sort of a mini show, I guess.

Richard Anderson: So those were big community events?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, that was a very big community event.

Richard Anderson: Am I correct in saying is more than just the church members who were involved?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes, a lot of people came from away from here to participate in the meal, and it was a money-making event.

Richard Anderson: Who was it designed to make money for?

Mc Sterrett: The church.

Richard Anderson: Any other things that you remember being significant?

Mc Sterrett: I don't remember too much about significant things, but --.

Richard Anderson: When did you get started with Ruritan Club?

Mc Sterrett: When did the Ruritan Club itself start? It started, I remember Dr. Walthall was here, so it must have started in the '30s, and I joined, I expect, I must have joined right out of high school, I think.

Richard Anderson: I think that the records show that you joined sometime in the early '40s.

Mc Sterrett: '43, I think.

Richard Anderson: Was your dad in the Ruritan Club?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: And so you're one of the longest members of the club at this point. Was that a significant event?

Mc Sterrett: Well it started out rather slowly. We did have Fred Whipple, and Dr. Williams and Graham McCray, and Dr. Walthall were the charter members that I remember. I think there's a list of all the names of the people that are charter members.

Richard Anderson: And is that when the Brownsburg Horse Show started?

Mc Sterrett: I think it started in the '50s.

Richard Anderson: So it came along later.

Mc Sterrett: I think it did, but there was a time that I thought that we did not have the show. Now maybe some members would disagree with me on that. But it used to be held up here at Brownsburg at the school.

Richard Anderson: At the school?

Mc Sterrett: At the school and then --

Richard Anderson: Where did they hold it at the school, where was it possible to hold it?

Mc Sterrett: Well there was a playground in the back at the side there.

Richard Anderson: And that was big enough to handle it?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. But I would think that it would have to be after they did quite a bit of work on the school grounds; I don't know when that was done.

Richard Anderson: Then later it was held over at [Camp] Maxwelton [1629 Walkers Creek Road].

Mc Sterrett: Over at Maxwelton.

Richard Anderson: What's your recollection of Camp Maxwelton and other camps that were in the area? Were there a lot of camps?

Mc Sterrett: Well, Camp Briar Hills was out here between here [Brownsburg] and home [2244 Sterrett Road].

Richard Anderson: Off of Sterrett Road?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah it was up, you went up a little lane [currently at 2508 Sterrett Road].

Richard Anderson: Did you have any involvement with it?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes, that was one of the things that Mary [Sterrett Lipscomb] and I did. We had a pony and we took the pony down there for the campers to ride, and we stayed, well, at least when I went, we stayed most of the morning and participated in anything that was going on.

Richard Anderson: When was this?

Mc Sterrett: This was probably in the '30s. It was quite a deal when they rode up by the house [2244 Sterrett Road]; it was a dirt road, and then up that back road that went over to the Goose Creek Road, around through the woods and came back out down at the camp somewhere.

Richard Anderson: Were they local people who attended?

Mc Sterrett: No, it was mostly boys from Richmond who attended the camp. And they all came to church every Sunday, and sat in the balcony.

Richard Anderson: How big a group was it?

Mc Sterrett: I expect there were 30, 35 of those, and then as the years went by, it grew.

Richard Anderson: When did it cease to operate?

Mc Sterrett: Well it moved out to Pisgah; from Briar Hills to Briarwood, and then Lee [McLaughlin Sr.] helped with it.

Richard Anderson: Lee McLaughlin?

Mc Sterrett: Lee McLaughlin. And then after Sam [McLaughlin] quit dealing with the camp, then he [Lee McLaughlin] started the one at Maxwelton.

Richard Anderson: So it kind of took over, Maxwelton sort of took over --

Mc Sterrett: Sort of grew into it.

Richard Anderson: Were there any other camps located in the area?

Mc Sterrett: I remember the Camp Okihawa's bringing children – girls, I think it was a girl's camp, to the horse show out at Maxwelton. That would have probably been in the '60s.

Richard Anderson: Going back, I'm sorry these questions are sort of out of order, but how did you meet Anna [Lackey Sterrett]?

Mc Sterrett: We went to a church Halloween party, I believe, over at Timber Ridge.

Richard Anderson: Is that where she went to church?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. And we went over there to a Halloween party and that's where we met.

Richard Anderson: Were you married at New Providence, or at Timber Ridge [Presbyterian Church]?

Mc Sterrett: Timber Ridge. My uncle was pastor in Buena Vista, Mother's sister's husband.

Richard Anderson: What was his name?

Mc Sterrett: His was Murray. His name was Murray. And he was a brother to the man that was in Lexington, Jim Murray [Dr. J. J. Murray], for a long time, and he helped with the ceremony.

Richard Anderson: Did you go on an elaborate honeymoon?

Mc Sterrett: No, we went to Niagara Falls, and we had to put oil in the car every time you'd put gas in.

Richard Anderson: This was in '48?

Mc Sterrett: '48 and we went in '39 Chevrolet, or something like that.

Richard Anderson: Was that your first car?

Mc Sterrett: That was the first car that the family had -- well no, not the first car my family had had, but I think we had it all during the war, and then kept it for a long time afterwards.

Richard Anderson: But it got you there and got back.

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes.

Richard Anderson: Are you aware of any humorous stories that you'd like to tell us about?

Mc Sterrett: I can't think of any of those. I'm sure I am, but maybe they wouldn't bear repeating.

Richard Anderson: If you wish, is there any family history or events that you'd like to share with us? Are you aware of any earlier family members? How long have the Sterretts lived in Rockbridge County?

Mc Sterrett: I expect – well, we started over in the Goshen area, and we had a great, great grandfather [Robert Sterrett] who lived in Bells Valley. His father [John Douglas Sterrett, immigrant from Ireland] was buried at the Lebanon Presbyterian Church over there, which is right on the line just between Augusta and Rockbridge [counties]. But then our great grandfather, James Reid [Sterrett] married one of the ladies who lived in-- Willson, her name was [Rebecca Alexander] Willson – who lived in the house where Isabelle and Barry [Chewning] live [Mulberry Grove, 2249 Sterrett Road], but it was out of the family for a long time. But up around Lexington particularly, they [the Sterrett family] had quite a large farm, Oakley was the name of it. It was where Meadowview is now; it's very close to that farm.

Richard Anderson: Are you aware of anybody in the family who either served in the Revolutionary War or the Civil War?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I remember the one man that lived where the Willsons lived [Mulberry Grove, 2249 Sterrett Road], he was a [James A.] Willson, and supposedly he was the last man killed over at Appomattox in the Civil War. It was after -- I don't know whether this is a true story or not, but he's buried at New Providence Cemetery, and I understood that he was flag bearer and didn't take the flag down in the time, and somebody shot him.

Richard Anderson: Too bad. Are there any other subjects or topics that you think we need to, or would be good to include in this interview?

Mc Sterrett: I don't remember too much about the, you know-- the dealings that we had with the black community.

Richard Anderson: Oh I was going to ask to that. What was the relationship with the black community?

Mc Sterrett: Well when I grew up, we didn't hardly know the difference, because I played with black children all the time.

Richard Anderson: So there were a fair number of black families?

Mc Sterrett: Oh, a lot of families around here have been-- during the Depression, I guess they, I don't know whether they had moved away and moved back, or just had large families. But a lot of folks, I mean you didn't realize how much better off we were than the black people.

Richard Anderson: Was there a separate black school?

Mc Sterrett: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Where was that located?

Mc Sterrett: That was right in Brownsburg down oh right across from Casey's [Gwyn Campbell at 2766 Brownsburg Turnpike] house I guess.

Richard Anderson: Across from Casey Campbell's house where the log building is?

Mc Sterrett: No it was --

Richard Anderson: Or was it a separate building?

Mc Sterrett: Separate, it was a --

Richard Anderson: There's a road -- isn't there a [Old] School Lane down there next to Janis Ayres?.

Mc Sterrett: Well, maybe that was where it was.

Richard Anderson: Is that possible, do you reckon?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, it was on that property, I think. I think it was in part of Janis' yard I expect.

Richard Anderson: Was it a big school? Were there a lot of children, a lot of black children going to school?

Mc Sterrett: I would say there were 30 or 40 children there when I remember. And all in a one room school, and all had the same one teacher.

Richard Anderson: Did it go onto high school level?

Mc Sterrett: No, the children had to go away if they wanted to go to high school. I know the fellow that helped us, Dude Haliburton, they didn't have any children of their own, but they raised some of her sister's children, I guess they were. And I know that one boy finished school down here, and then he went to Roanoke and lived with his aunt.

Richard Anderson: Was there a black church here at that time?

Mc Sterrett: Yes. I assume that church [Asbury United Methodist Church] must have been started fairly soon after the Civil War, I don't know that.

Richard Anderson: I believe that's correct. Were there any other relationships between the white community and the black community?

Mc Sterrett: Well, we knew all the black people.

Richard Anderson: Did they mostly work in the area, the black folks?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah you could come to Brownsburg and pick up enough men to thresh or do whatever you were doing that particular day. You didn't have to make arrangements a long time [in advance] because they-- didn't very many of them have permanent jobs.

Richard Anderson: And there were black people living right here on Brownsburg Turnpike, right?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, as they are now. This fellow [Glasgow] Craney that lived up here [2650 Brownsburg Turnpike] dated back to 1880 or something like that, and his daughter [Frances Craney Porterfield] lived in the house until she died; now one of her children [Charles Porterfield] lives in the house.

Richard Anderson: Did they come buy their groceries at the stores, local stores and things like that?

Mc Sterrett: What they bought.

Richard Anderson: They didn't really have farms as such.

Mc Sterrett: No, most of them rented the farms. Now Pitt Pleasants, who lived in a -- or his father lived in a house right here where John Whitesell's store is [2664 Brownsburg Turnpike], or where the parking lot is. Letcher Pleasants.

Richard Anderson: There was a house there?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And anyway they rented the farm out here that we call the Strain place; it's where Billy McClung lives now [3191 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And they drove cows in here, I assume to milk, every day, while the children drove the cows in here to milk.

Richard Anderson: They drove them into Brownsburg?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And then I don't know whether they kept them here all night, or whether they took them back, but that was in the days' work.

Richard Anderson: Pretty amazing. Did you get to know any of them closely?

Mc Sterrett: Well, I knew the Haliburton family closely, and we played with the -- well in Dude's family, there were several children, and all of them had children when I was growing up. One of the sister's husband had died, he lived up on the hill above -- well, right across where I live now [1913 Sterrett Road].

Richard Anderson: There was Haliburton property right in there.

Mc Sterrett: Yeah. And then there was the Pleasants -- these people were named Pleasants. And I think Pitt Pleasants' wife was one of the Haliburtons, and Dude married one of the Pleasants and it was sort of a family affair.

Richard Anderson: Then on the hill that's beyond Eva McManama's [2580 Sterrett Road], were there black families in there all the time pretty much?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: Carters?

Mc Sterrett: Carters and Browns and --

Richard Anderson: Was the relationship fairly normal? I mean, was it hostile?

Mc Sterrett: No, it was a very good relationship, I thought. Of course we didn't see all of it, and they went to church at New Providence up until -- well, this man that worked for us [William Haliburton] or helped us grew up on the farm right there at Castle Carbury [34 Beard Lane], and they went to Sunday School over at New Providence and sat in the balcony.

Richard Anderson: Were there others that were like that that went to New Providence?

Mc Sterrett: Oh yes, I'm sure there were, but I can't name them.

Richard Anderson: I don't mean to name them, but I mean there were others, and how long did that last?

Mc Sterrett: I would say it had started whenever the church was started and lasted until after the Civil War for a few years.

Richard Anderson: But there were still people going there when you were going?

Mc Sterrett: Black people?

Richard Anderson: Yeah, is that correct or not?

Mc Sterrett: No.

Richard Anderson: Well these folks that lived at Castle Carbury, they didn't go to New Providence?

Mc Sterrett: Yeah, they went to New Providence but he went there when he was boy and he was --

Richard Anderson: So by the time you were growing up, they were no longer there.

Mc Sterrett: No.

Richard Anderson: Any other subjects that you can think of?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know of any.

Richard Anderson: I'm sure we have not covered everything, but we'll try to cover as much as we can. Are there other people that you think we should interview that you're aware of?

Mc Sterrett: I don't know who all has been interviewed, that's the problem. There are a lot of people.

Richard Anderson: Well, ask Isabelle to give you a list. She has a list of names that we have on the list.

Mc Sterrett: Did you all interview any of the Whitesells?

Richard Anderson: Not so far, I don't believe. They're on our list.

Mc Sterrett: They've lived here longer than me, and he's a little older than I am.

Richard Anderson: John Whitesell's older?

Mc Sterrett: Yes, he's two years older, I think he is.

Richard Anderson: Well we definitely have him on our list, as well as Virginia.

Mc Sterrett: Well Virginia [Wade Whitesell], of course, was raised in Rockbridge Baths, but she's lived in Brownsburg for a long long time. Louise Wiseman [Stuart] who lived where the Lunsfords live [2651 Brownsburg Turnpike], and Marjorie Ann Whitesell [Chittum] who is John Layton's [Whitesell] sister is the one that should be.

Richard Anderson: Marjorie?

Mc Sterrett: Marjorie Ann.

Richard Anderson: Marjorie Ann.

Mc Sterrett: You might like to interview that lady that was here at the-- she was one of the Wades who lived in that house, too. [2651 Brownsburg Turnpike] She's a Harris now.

Richard Anderson: Margaret Harris?

Mc Sterrett: Margaret Harris.

Richard Anderson: Yes I believe we have her name on the list, yeah.

Mc Sterrett: She was one of the Wades and she was Claudia Runkle's sister. She had about four brothers, and they were a large family.

Richard Anderson: Have most of the families that were living here, or in the Brownsburg area, when you were growing up -- have most of them gone elsewhere?

Mc Sterrett: I expect they have, yes. Most of them have just sort of -- I guess a lot of them have died off. But a lot of the black families moved to Lexington and found work at VMI and things of that nature. And some of them drove up there. Well, Louis Carter, I think is one of the ones.

Richard Anderson: I was trying to think of names of families that have been here a long time who are still here. I guess the Pattersons.

Mc Sterrett: I don't think there are any of the Pattersons left that grew up down here. I know all of Ed's family is gone, and probably all of Mr. Fin [Finley] Patterson's family has gone, unless that one lady lives at -- Caroline, but I think she's gone too.

Richard Anderson: And the Wades are pretty well gone.

Mc Sterrett: There's been three families of Wade, three different families. The Wades that lived in Bustleburg was one family and they were a big family. The Wades that lived at the mill were one family. And then Miss Jen Wade and her parents were another family. And then this Mr. Wade that lived right up here where Walter Lunsford lives was, I don't know. I think they were some relation to Randall [Wade], but I'm not sure what they were.

Richard Anderson: And McManamas?

Mc Sterrett: McManamas have been around here for a long time, but most all of those, you know, are gone. Eva [McManama] was a Fitzgerald to start with, I think.

Richard Anderson: How long were the [Ralph] Armentrouts here?

Mc Sterrett: They weren't here too long. I have heard that that house [2597 Sterrett Road] was built when a Dr. Campbell was here. Now that was before my time. Then Mr. Charlie Dice lived there for years, and he moved here about the same time we did. He and Mr. Walter Dice were brothers, and Mr. Walter bought the house that Edna Driver lives in [22 Hays Creek Road].

Richard Anderson: Who lived in that house early on, do you know?

Mc Sterrett: Well I don't remember anyone but Mr. Dice. But some governor built it, and lived in that house I think. I've forgotten what his name was.

Richard Anderson: There haven't been a whole lot of new houses built in the area.

Mc Sterrett: No. I think Sam Patterson built that house out there on the Patterson place [the house later burned, but was located at 2963 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And Boyd Stuart built the house that Dick Cash lived in, and those two houses were about the only two houses that were built before ours was. I think when Boyd Stuart built this house that he lived in, they said that was the first house that had been built around Brownsburg since the doctor's house was built.

Richard Anderson: Did you know much of Rufus Patterson?

Mc Sterrett: I remember him slightly; he lived down there in the stone house where you all used to live [Sleepy Hollow, 2645 Sterrett Road]. They had a son who was-- well they had John Patterson -- they had two sons -- and Stuart Patterson and Stuart was the one that had-- was paralyzed. They evidently -- oh I don't know too much about it -- but I remember they had to build on bathrooms and things of that sort that he could use. His wife, Mr. Rufus Patterson's wife, and Mr. Tom Sterrett (who was my great uncle) were [brother and] sister. Now that's been a long, long time, that's going way back before the Civil War even, I expect.

Richard Anderson: Well if there's anything else you'd like to say?

Mc Sterrett: I don't believe so.

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