

**August 2006**

**Interview with Addie Bolen**  
**By Betty Brown, Lucy Hughes, and Harry Holtz**

Hughes: We are now interviewing Mrs. Bolen. She's at St. Luke's nursing home. Today is 8/19/06.

Bolen: I can remember they used to have lawn parties. And they fought up there.

Brown: [Laugh]

Bolen: And somebody got killed or something, you know, every day!

Holtz: What were you saying now?

Bolen: Now don't record nothing that I say because -- [laugh]

Holtz: I can't remember all that!

Hughes: Say who you're interviewing. I did mine. You've got to put yours on your tape. Okay, Betty, tape's awasting!

Brown: Alright. Now, can you give us a brief -- let's see, a brief background? What connections did you have with Brownsburg?

Bolen: I was born there.

Brown: Okay.

Bolen: Was born there.

Brown: What date? What date were you born?

Bolen: 1903.

Brown: Okay. 1903!

Bolen: That's right.

Brown: What -- What month?

Bolen: April. April 23.

Brown: April 23. Okay. And you were born in Brownsburg.

Bolen: Yes.

Brown: Do you know where? Where was your birth place in Brownsburg?

Bolen: Do you know where ah – not Isabel, I don't believe. It was around – you go out – I can't even point to you. Do you remember Aunt Sally Leeds?

Brown: I've heard of her.

Bolen: Well, now that was my mother's sister. You went around that way -- was Rev. John Peters family lived on that same road. The Walkers. Cousin Ben Walker.

Brown: Yes. We had to be going around just like where Miss Juanita was talking about at the edge of the road.

Bolen: Juanita was right at the corner.

Brown: At the corner. And then you all were up.

Bolen: That's right, I can remember them. And then it was Cousin Ben Walker. And then the next was the Jacksons. It was just kind of a row of houses. And the Massies. Ham Massie, and all of those.

Brown: Oh, okay.

Bolen: But I can't put it together.

Brown: So that would be on –

Hughes: So it was lot of houses as you come around the corner to get to – it was a lot of houses.

Brown: Where Aunt Bert lived.

Lucy: Yeah. It was a lot of houses down through there.

Bolen: What?

Hughes: Now, I said, it was a lot of houses back in that day down through there. I don't know the name. Is the road – it's signs, I mean numbers, right? One-oh-something

Bolen: Miss Mattie Hayes and all of them. Virginia Gilmore that was –

Brown: Yeah, they lived there where Jo Swisher lived. But I can't think of the name of the road [Dry Hollow Road].

Hughes: Academy Lane.

Brown: No. No, no, no. Where Tillary lives [1139 Dry Hollow Road].

Hughes: Well I don't know where he lives. I've never been out there.

Brown: [Laugh] We'll think of it. I'll think of the road in a minute. Alright. Okay. You said you were born in Brownsburg.

Bolen: I was born in Brownsburg.

Brown: Okay.

Hughes: Hip hip hooray!

Brown: April 23, 1903. Alright. And you told us where you lived. And what brought you and your family to Brownsburg? Why – why did they --

Bolen: I don't remember, I don't think. My mother was a slave child. Polly Lyle -- did you ever hear them talk about Polly Lyle? Polly Lyle was my mother's mother. And they lived right down now where Isabel and them, I think – Isabel bought that – it was a big house that sat up on that row of houses.

Brown: Okay:

Bolen: Now that's where we lived. And down -- there was a road that goes up – goes down. My grandmother was down, we called it down in the ah, valley-like.

Betty: Oh, okay.

Bolen: Polly Lyle.

Brown: Polly Lyle.

Bolen: Uncle Jim Scholtz. Do you remember him?

Brown: I've heard of him.

Bolen: That's Rev. John Peter's father – uncle. You remember the Peters?

Brown: Yes. Miss Carrie – I remember her.

Bolen: Tom and Carrie and Margaret and ah, let me see – Lloyd. Lloyd was in Baltimore, but he's passed now. But I can't put it together now.

Brown: Now, who were the people – I think their last name was White?

Bolen: Who?

Brown: What were the people – their last name was White? And they lived on around that road. They lived where the Tillarys live now. I can't think – They ah, they used to drive that Model A, or Model T, and they had a son?

Bolen: I can't remember.

Brown: Can't remember? Okay.

Bolen: Can't remember.

Brown: I can't think either what they were.

Bolen: Maybe that was after I had gone from Brownsburg.

Brown: Maybe so. Alright. Okay.

Bolen: But Miss Virginia Gilmore and all of that bunch.

Brown: Now, who was Miss Virginia Gilmore married to?

Bolen: I can't think now what her first – but she married -- Mr. Wilson White was her second husband.

Brown: Now, didn't they have a son? The Whites?

Bolen: Mr. White -- Mr. Wilson White had a whole lot of children. That was his second wife.

Brown: Okay.

Bolen: Serina was his first wife. And they lived in Augusta County.

Brown: Okay. But it was somebody that lived around there – in the ah – where the Tillarys live. Now I can't think of who they were.

Bolen: And the Lindseys were further on out that road.

Brown: Yes. Where Grasshopper [John] Runkle lives [1054 Dry Hollow Road]. But she drove -- they drove a Model T. And the boy always rode in the back. In the rumbleseat. So that might have been after you left.

Bolen: After I left. Because I think we left Brownsburg – I was about 12 when we moved to Augusta County. Down here in Staunton.

Brown: Okay. Alright. Left Brownsburg when you were 12?

Bolen: I wasn't that old. I was ten or 12.

Brown: And she gave us the relatives, didn't she? Some of them that lived in the Brownsburg area? Did you attend a school?

Bolen: Huh?

Brown: Did you go to school?

Bolen: That's where I went to school.

Brown: Okay.

Bolen: Carried your dinner in a tin bucket – molasses bucket. [Laugh] That was where I first went to school.

Brown: And what grades did you go?

Bolen: Until about – when I left Brownsburg, I couldn't have been more than in the fourth grade because I went to school in Augusta County after we moved.

Brown: Okay.

Bolen: And I got up to the eighth grade.

Brown: Now, tell us that little story again about the ah – the teacher.

Bolen: Huh?

Brown: What was the story about the teacher?

Bolen: Margaret?

Brown: Yeah.

Bolen: Well, they had those big stoves, you know. The kids gathered around it. And you'd sit on the benches and things. And the school teacher's name was Branch. Did you ever hear of him – of her? Mr. Council? Heard that one?

Brown: Uh hmm. Yeah, I've heard that one.

Bolen: Well, that's who were teaching then. And we kids all gathered around the stove, and Miss Branch told us to take our seats. And ah, I was sitting up there. I was always mouthy, you know. But I can't do it now. And I said to Margaret, I said, "Huh. She's just an old fool."

Brown: [Laugh]

Bolen: Margaret said, [laugh] "Miss Branch". [Laugh] She held her hand up. She said, "Addie Jackson called you an old fool." [Laugh] Oh, Lordy. [Laugh]

Holtz: So Addie Jackson was your maiden name?

Bolen: That was my maiden name, uh huh.

Brown: Maiden name was Addie Jackson, and she's Addie Bolen now. So. Alright. After you came to Staunton, how did you spend your adult life?

Bolen: In Staunton?

Brown: How did you spend your adult life?

Bolen: I went to school until I was – I was – well, I went to school out at Smokey Row – you know where that is. I went to school out there. Went to school. And I ah, worked in Staunton for white folks you know, until my mother was taken sick. My mother died in '23, and ah, I went home then to take care of her. And after she passed, my father and brother – I had a brother named John. He was the youngest. We moved to Pennsylvania. And that was the way I got into Pennsylvania.

Brown: Okay. Okay. Well. Did you attend Asbury church when you were in Brownsburg?

Bolen: Yes. We had – I can tell you some of the preachers' names. Reverend Lewis.

Hughes: Oh, good!

Bolen: And let me see – who was the other one that I can remember? Moon was the preacher there by – do you remember Moon?

Brown: No, but I've heard about him.

Bolen: It was Reverend Lewis and Reverend Moon, and they were from Grottoes. Reverend ah -- Lewis was. And they had these two daughters. The Reverend Lewis had the two daughters, and one was named Elsie and one named Lola. Lola married the ah, Sammy ah, oh – the boy from Brownsburg. Gilmore.

Brown: Oh, okay Sam Gilmore.

Bolen: Samuel Gilmore, uh hmm.

Brown: Samuel Gilmore. Alright, I've heard of him.

Bolen: Have you heard of him? I can remember them, Ruth -- They were Haliburtons. I don't know if you remember Mr. Henry Haliburton. He was along – there was Mr. Henry Haliburton. And let me see, they had a daughter named Lula. That was before your time.

Brown: [Laugh]

Bolen: That was way before your time. Uh huh.

Holtz: Who was Lula?

Bolen: Huh?

Holtz: Who was Lula? The daughter?

Bolen: Huh?

Holtz: Who was the daughter?

Bolen: Who was Lula's daughter? Let me see. I can't think.

Holtz: Okay.

Brown: How did you get to church? To and from church?

Bolen: Walked.

Brown: So you all did not have any type of automobile?

Bolen: Didn't have automobiles, but my father had horses –

Brown: Horses.

Bolen: Had horses and things. But now we walked around from out where we lived to the church. And my father was quite a worker. They had those lawn parties once a year. The big ones I think it was the first Saturday in August.

Brown: Yes, you did.

Bolen: They used to have Brownsburg, then there'd be Raphine and was different ones.

Brown: Uh huhh. Okay. Alrighty.

Hughes: Did you ride horses?

Bolen: Did I ride?

Hughes: Did you ride horses?

Bolen: [Laugh] You know, my father – they had this farm, and my father -- he worked for Bosworths. You remember Bosworths. My father had to work, and he'd come in for the evening. And I'd always run to meet him. I was just a small kid about – I imagine about three or four or five years old. Something like that. And that barn -- you know how the house is, and the barn was down, and the house was up. And I used to run from the house to the barn to meet my father so I'd get this ride. So he picked me up and put me up on his shoulders. He had gotten off the horse and things, and he was going to give me a ride, you know, on his back up to the house. And he wasn't going fast enough for me. So I -- I can remember that until the Lord calls me, I'll remember that. And pinched him.

All: [Laugh]

Bolen: How Daddy took me down off of his shoulders, and he sat my rear on fire.

All: [Laugh]

Bolen: And my mother was watching us from the kitchen up at the house, and she had to set my backside in a pan of cold water. [Laugh] I'll never forget. I wanted to make him go fast, you know.

Brown: So you pinched him! [Laugh]



Bolen: Yeah.

Hughes: Do you remember the blacksmith's shop that was in Brownsburg?

Bolen: Yeah, [??] Lucien Dudley wasn't it? Dudleys?

Hughes: Dudleys? Okay.

Bolen: Wasn't that name?

Hughes: Oh, I don't know. I've just heard stories about it. And I was just --

Bolen: Well, now we weren't around that way.

Hughes: Oh, okay.

Bolen: By the blacksmith's shop, I think. No, the blacksmith's shop was up on Main Street.

Brown: Uh hmm. That was one of them. Didn't they have one right there where the old store was?

Bolen: Where the Lucas Wade store --

Brown: Yeah.

Bolen: And you turned there.

Brown: When she said Lucas Wade you know where she was talking about? Mr. Barnes' house.

Bolen: Lucas was on one side, and Whipple's was on the other. And Bosworth's were up the street. Jim Bosworth. A place to work.

Brown: Yep. Uh hmm.

Bolen: I can remember all that.

Brown: Do you remember anything about the slave quarters?

Bolen: What?

Brown: Do you remember about -- anything about the little house down -- I believe it was on the Pattersons? Called slave quarters? Just a little small house?

Bolen: By the Pattersons?

Brown: Yes.

Bolen: That went around towards –

Brown: You were going towards Raphine. [Sterrett Road.]

Bolen: Like where the Hoserts lived.

Brown: Right. Right. Yeah.

Bolen: Yeah, I can remember. [Unintelligible]

Brown: You don't know who lived there? Do you know who lived there?

Bolen: Huh?

Brown: Who lived there? Do you know?

Bolen: I think they called -- Mr. Rufus Patterson was the man, and Miss Ettie was his wife. They lived – there was a spring down there somewhere. We used to go down there and get water for school. And everybody drank out of the same dipper.

Brown: [Laugh] Okay. Alright. Well, you weren't there in the 1930's and '40's, so this is just about it for that part. Do you know – [Break in the tape.] Do you remember any businesses at your time – that was in Brownsburg? Do you remember?

Bolen: Any ministers?

Brown: Businesses?

Bolen: Uh hmm.

Brown: Do you remember any businesses?

Bolen: No. I can't think of any.

Brown: She shared her humorous story with us of the time that she lived in the area.

Holtz: Yes, Mrs. Bolen, you've got an excellent memory.

Bolen: Huh?

Harry: You've got an excellent memory.

Bolen: I don't now.

Brown: Oh, yes you do!

Bolen: My grandmother, when you said that, it made me think of her, my grandmother. You know, my grandmother was a slave. And she -- you would tell her something, and then she would said it's in one "year" with me and out the other. "Year." She didn't say "ear", she said "year", and so that's the way it is with me. It's in one ear now with me, and out the other. [Laugh]

Lucy: Do you remember how far back ah, slaves were in your family? I know you say your grandmother was a slave.

Bolen: My grandmother was a slave.

Lucy: Okay.

Bolen: But I can't remember.

Lucy: So when ya'll -- when ya'll came to Brownsburg we were considered free slaves -- property?

Bolen: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. Uh hm.

Hughes: Any thing else, Betty?

Brown: No. Huh uh.

[The next section is inserted here from the Hughes tape]

Bolen: Jim Scholtz was my grandmother's brother. And Tommy Peters, whatever become of him?

Brown: He's been dead.

Bolen: That's all of them.

Brown: All of them are dead.

Bolen: And Margaret, do you remember Margaret Peters?

Brown: I've heard the name, uh huh.

Bolen: It used to be a piece she'd sing, and they sometimes sing it in the activity room up here, and sometimes Dan Franklin and different ones would come in. And "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me." I can remember that. And she had a beautiful voice.

[Return to Brown's tape]

Hughes: How did you all purchase the land back in those days? You know, I know that a lot of Black families still have property in Brownsburg and so forth.

Bolen: I don't know how they – how they purchased it.

Hughes: Uh hmm. Okay. They must have – must have -- Did you own property? Did your family own property?

Bolen: My father owned property.

Hughes: Okay.

Bolen: That house that I was telling you about where Isabel and them live [2540 Sterrett Road]. Now that's where I was born.

Brown: Oh, okay. Alright. Where you were born. Okay.

Holtz: Are you talking about Isabel Carter Sites?

Bolen: Sites. She was – yeah. They used to live in that house. Now that's where we lived. And then down there was houses down across here. Do you know where those were? My grandmother lived down in the hollow.

Lucy: Down next to the creek?

Bolen: Was a little branch down there.

Lucy: Yeah. Yeah.

Bolen: You remember that?

Lucy: I don't remember, but I remember going through that field, there were old stobbs [??] where there might have been houses or whatever. There's stones and things down there.

Bolen: And then up there on the hill was a peach orchard. Do you remember that?

Lucy : No that was before -- Do you remember that, Betty?

Brown: Uh huh.

Bolen: She wouldn't remember it, I don't think, cause that's been –

Lucy: I can remember – I can remember some things, when we used to go exploring and we'd find different pieces of foundations for old houses, and stuff, you know.

Bolen: [??]

Lucy: Yeah, out in those fields and everything, you know. Yeah.

Brown: We thank you.

[Tape ends]

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