

STAFFORD COUNTY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW OF ARCHIE NEWTON  
BY LOU Y. SILVER

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Date of agreement 11/16/86

Subject of Tape(s)

ARCHIE NEWTON

Q: Today is November the 16th, 1986. I am Lou Young Silver visiting Mr. Archie Newton to talk about his memoirs and Stafford County History. Archie, tell us what day

you were born. What day do you celebrate as your birthday?

A: July the 26, 1909.

Q: That means you have recently celebrated your birthday. You must have just turned 77.

A: Yeah--July the 26th, I will be 78 years old.

Q: You certainly will. Did you have a middle name when you were born?

A: Didn't know anything about it.

Q: Don't know anything about it. Were you born in White Oak or were you born in the City of Fredericksburg?

A: I was born on Stage Road. Right up here on John Newton's place.

Q: That's very interesting. Had your family lived in Stafford County for a long time or had they recently moved here?

A: In Stafford all their life. All I know about it.

Q: What kind of work did your father do, Mr. Newton?

A: All I know is farming and fishing.

Q: Do you remember any of the members of your family helping your father and did you, in fact, help your father?

A: I helped him all of my life, long as he lived--stayed with him.

Q: Tell us about some of the things you remember doing with your father.

A: I've done a lot of fishing, crabbing, and farming. About all I remember doing.

Q: Do you remember some exciting times when you and your father were out on the river?

A: Yeah, I've gone through some bad times with him. One day, I was out there, it got so bad, he got to crying when we had to bring him ashore.

Q: The weather--was it a hurricane?

A: He didn't like much of that rough water.

Q: Was there a big thunderstorm or wind storm?

A: No, just wind storm blowing made it so rough, that's the reason the river got rough. He never did like to go out there when it was real raw. Caught us out there that time.

Q: Was your mother a Stafford County woman or someone from close by Stafford County?

A: She come from King George, mother did.

Q: What was your mother's maiden name?

A: Ann Williams.

Q: And you had grandparents from Stafford County and grandparents in King George County, is that right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember having family celebrations? Or family get-togethers when you were a small child?

A: No, none that I know of.

Q: At Christmas time--how did your family celebrate the holidays? Was probably scarce years and lean times and-

A: Oh, we had plenty to eat, own turkeys for one thing.

Q: Did the children look for toys or fruit? What kind of Christmas gifts were they normally-

A: Like all the rest of them, was lucky to get one then. Back in them times.

Q: How many acres did your family farm? Do you remember how many acres?

A: They owned 99 acres down there at the creek, they farmed part of it and didn't farm it all.

Q: Did you all have mules or horses? How do you first remember that the farm was worked?

A: At first we had horses then we got a pair of mules, then sold the mules, then bought a tractor.

Q: Do you remember what year you got the first tractor?

A: No, I don't remember...

Q: Probably after the war times or close to that?

A: It was after the war. My daddy been dead now 30--about 37 years.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters in your family? Were you an only child?

A: Had Eva and Henry.

Q: one brother?

A: One brother and one sister.

Q: Were you the oldest? Youngest? Or in the middle?

A: I was the oldest one.

Q: You were the oldest child. Do you remember going to school? Did you and your brothers and sisters walk to school?

A: If you got to school, you had to walk.

Q: You remember the first school you attended?

A: I think it was out here to "Hard Corner" as they called it.

Q: Do you remember who your first teacher was?

A: I don't remember--old man Chinn or not, I don't remember now. I think Dick Chinn's father.

Q: He was the first school teacher. You ever remember having a schoolmarm or a woman school teacher?

A: I know one thing, that Ethel Leak undertake to beat me--boys, I'm telling you she poured it on me!

Q: What were you getting a whipping for, Mr. Newton?

A: Some of the other boys, old Jed Trigger and give it to one of those Silver girls and she took it up and gave it to the teacher. That's what I got it for.

Q: That's what you got it for--

A: I never even wrote "the God's thing" thought. They laid it on poor old Jed Trigger. He is dead and gone now.

Q: Do you remember which one of those Silver Girls was involved in that letter writing?

A: I think it was Edry.

Q: Edry.

A: Uh-huh. "Old critter", she is dead and gone, too.

Q: Do you remember, Mr. Archie, which day you got married on?

A: Indeed, I couldn't tell you. You know, Esther?(His wife) She don't know either. You know, she's really got that down-pat.

Q: What was Esther's maiden name? Did she live close to you or did she live in another county?

A: She lived in King George. Name is Esther May Carver.

Q: Did you all have children after you were married?

A: Yeah, had four of them.

Q: Tell me who's the oldest child. How many girls you have? And how many boys you have?

A: Shirley's the oldest, then Betty and Gordon and Bobby--that was all of them.

Q: Did your wife ever have to leave home to go out and work away from home? Or did she always work at home?

A: Always worked at home! She does enough now for two women, I think. In the cornfields she can shuck more corn than I can.

Q: Do you ever remember your mother leaving home to work? Did she always work at home?

A: She never did work away from home that I know of.

Q: Do you know did all of your children go to school in Stafford County? Do you know the name of them first school where your children attended?

A: I reckon--didn't all of them go to White Oak?

Q: White Oak Elementary School. Which was probably close to Mr. Dick Chinn and Mr. T. Benton Gayle's school and territory out there. Have you and Miss Esther always lived in this section of Stafford County?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was there ever much crime or much excitement of notorious kind of upheaval in your community or has it been a fairly settled community? Quiet Community?

A: Not that I know of--no crime since I've been around here.

Q: People sort of settle into this community and they don't move in one day and move out the next, do they? They are long-living citizens in this community. What kind of community activities has your family seen in this community? Are there churches close by or fire departments? What kind of activities does this community have?

A: Didn't really have any firehouse until the last, what, I don't know how long the firehouse been out there, about six years?

Q: Did your children have good doctors, good hospitals close by? Did you always have confidence that the doctors were going to take care of your family when they got sick?

A: So far, we didn't have to take them to doctors so much. When we did, we took them to Fredericksburg.

Q: You had an old community doctor named Dr. Lee?

A: Dr. Lee was with Esther when all the children were born. She never did go to a-

Q: Hospital?

A: Never have been to a hospital.

Q: That's good. Did Dr. Lee take care of all of the members of your family? Whoever was sick?

A: I used to go to him some when... ago, but I never did go to big doctor... Doctor on me.

Q: Do you remember the first dentist you ever went to? Have you ever been to the dentist?

A: Dentist? Dr. Kennedy was our dentist-doctor. He was the one that fixed my set of teeth I got.

Q: Do you ever remember dentists coming to your house? Was there a man who traveled around that was a dentist?

A: No, not as I know of.

Q: Do you know how long you've had your teeth? How long did Dr. Kennedy fix those for you?

A: Been a long time. They are in there alright.

Q: They're in there! Do you remember when electricity first came to this part of the country?

A: Indeed, I don't. Do you know, Esther?

Q: Do you remember having a house without electricity?

A: I reckon so.

Q: How did you used to read your books for your schoolwork? Do your schoolwork? Did you have kerosene lamps or gas light?

A: Yeah, we used kerosene lamps. We used anything at all. back in them times. How many years has it been--you know how long electricity? I know it must have been-

Q: 45 or 50 years, I reckon.

A: I reckon so.

Q: Do you remember the telephone you got?

A: I reckon it's been close to thirty years since we got a phone here.

Q: I was probably one of the first people to use it, I reckon. I remember being about 30 years--I think you're right. I probably rang it a few times myself. Do you remember when the roads were first paved? You've traveled a lot of dirt roads, I'm sure.

A: I reckon so. 'Cause you used to stomp from here to White Oak--and mud clean up to your knees nearly. Going down the road out here some times and it was so much mud,  
the horse didn't do a God's thing.  
Walked right out the shaft and pulled his single tree free and went on. Left his buggy sitting right  
there in the road with people in it.

Q: Did someone have to run to catch the horse?

A: I reckon So.

Q: Where did your family first shop? When you did your shopping, where did you go to do your shopping?

A: Wasn't as much shopping then as now. At a country store somewhere. Go to Fredericksburg, get a few things.

Q: Do you remember how often you went? Did you go once a week, once a month? Once every two weeks?

A: I don't know, I reckon it's been... once or twice a week, maybe. To Fredericksburg get something to eat.

Q: Do you know who was the first postmaster? When you got mail in your mailbox, did you have--was it brought by horse or was it brought by a car of some sort?

A: Brought by--didn't have nothing but--by horses, buggy. Wesley Newton used to carry mail, you remember that?

Q: No, I don't.

A: Well, I remember when Wesley carried it. Used one horse when he left Fredericksburg drove around the route, when he got up here to his Daddy, he took that one out an  
hitched in another horse to carry the mail. I remember that much. Or somebody told me about it anyway.

Q: You have any idea how many miles he would cover?

A: Indeed, I don't know. Imagine must have been around 30 or 40 miles.

Q: Do you know how old you were when you started school and how long you went to school?

A: I reckon I was about 7 years old. I ended up--if they hadn't have kept me home so much,  
I quit when I was in 5th reader, but I never did go to more. I did learn how to write my name.

Q: That's good. I'll bet you learned how to write a check, too.

A: Indeed, that's something I never write many checks.

Q: From the time that you were, let's say 12 years old, you started working with your dad everyday probably. Instead of going to school, you went to work with your dad.

A: He kept me home so much, what was the use of going--keep you home two weeks go back another week. So I quit.

Q: And then did you help him do the fishing from that point on?

A: Yeah, I helped him do a lot of it. One time he was in the house, sick with the rheumatism and couldn't get out the house, and I hauled seine all night and come home with a whole load of fish. Here come my daddy out the house then and he help me to barrel them up and ship them. That wasn't yesterday either.

Q: Do you remember what time, Mr. Archie, the day would start for you all? What time, tell me how a typical day--what time you would get up, get started in your fishing activities and what time you'd go to bed at night.

A: We'd go to bed about 9 o'clock, I reckon. When my dad was there, you couldn't lay in the bed--you gonna have to get out. Get somewhere. Ain't like some of them coming along now don't want to get up at all.

Q: Did you take a lunch with you when you left home or did you get to come back home in the middle of the day to get some lunch?

A: Always carried myself a lunch when we went down to Belle Plains working.

Q: Did you ever have any kind of time to go for recreation or amusement? Do you ever remember any form of amusement?

A: I didn't even know what that was when I was coming along, shucks, like it is now.

Q: Did you have a radio at home?

A: The only thing you had back in them times was a battery radio if you had any old gramophone, big old horn on it. Used to have one of them.

Q: Did you play that?

A: No, indeedy. Had records on it. Put them on and wind it up with a handle to get it started off.

Q: Then did you dance to the music?

A: Yeah--no, dance? Can you dance?

Q: Every once in a while. Do you remember any humorous times or anybody's- celebrations--birthday celebrations?

A: No, back in them times, you know, there wasn't any birthday parties when I come along.

Q: I want to know what kind of dances you were aware of. If you didn't dance at home, were there any dances anywhere in the community? Did the young people get to go to anybody--?

A: I used to go sometimes and watch some of them dance. That's the onliest thing I ever did do. I never did to no dancing.

Q: And where did you go to watch them?

A: At some people's houses. If George Newton was around, I'd like to go see him.

Q: Where did George do his dancing? Where was his best amusement places?

A: He didn't know anymore about dancing than the old horse did.

Q: Did you ever take an important trip anywhere? Did you get to go off to Washington, D.C., or Canada or-

A: Used to go to Alexandria a few times. That was where me and Esther got married, in Washington.

Q: That's good. What do you remember seeing when you got up there? Was there anything exciting to see?

A: Onliest thing I seen was to fight the girls off my back!(Laughter)

Q: That's good to remember. Do you remember going to a fair? Was there a county fair or Fredericksburg Fair? Or-

A: Oh, I used to go some over here in town, Fredericksburg that's all. Never did go to Richmond Fair.

Q: What did they do at the Fair in the olden days? Did they mainly just have the cows, vegetables and things for competition?

A: They had a lot of cattle and amusement and all of that at the fair.

Q: Did they have a raffle, auctioned off things? Or raffLe off automobiles?

A: What do you mean, at the--?

Q: At the Fair.

A: Yeah, I think they did.

Q: Told me in the olden tales of George Young won a car at the Fair. Paid a dollar and won a car.

A: Who was that?

Q: George Young. Do you ever remember anybody winning a car?

A: Deed, I didn't. Oh, Daddy, he had one one time, sold it up here to the place was sold up there where Mr. Spratt used to own, he sold that Model T back to people that sell that land up on there. Woever win it would get that car for a prize. We hadn't had it long and we had to wash it all up. They couldn't get nary a one like they wanted to they bought that Model T from Daddy.

Q: Was there any rivalry that you can remember between the people in your community and some other community? Did they have a little competition between White Oak and New Hope? Or White Oak and King George? Do you remember any tales?

A: No, I don't remember none.

Q: Seems like thay sometimes call "persimmon tree climbers in Stafford and King George crab shells". Mr. Gayle said that.

A: Yeah, they used to go on with all that stuff.

Q: That's true. He said the boys from White Oak would rock those King George buggies when they'd come through...

A: ... one of them throwed a rock up here somewhere up here between here and Aunt Mary's(?) and it stuck in the back of that buggy and they had the print for that rock in the back of that buggy. If it had hit Jim Williams, it would have killed him, I reckon.

Q: That was in his courting days?

A: Yeah.

Q: Coming up here doing his courting?

A: They caught the horse, some of them did, and held the horse. And when they turned him loose, boys, you're talking about the horse going away so fast with that bunch!

I heard them talking about it.

Q: Did you ever get chased out of King George County when you were doing your courting?

A: Yeah, I never went--I rode a horse down there one time, that was enough for me. I didn't ride him no more after that.

Q: Did you walk after that?

A: No, I was driving cars.

Q: Oh. Who were the local leaders in your community? Who do you remember bein-g on the board of supervisors, or that were the politicians from your community?

A: Politicians?

Q: Yeah.

A: Something like Joe Newton?

Q: That's right.

A: Yeah, he was one of them. I think him and Roy was the worst two in the country. They'd get to arguing and fussing for the life of them.

Q: Was there much rivalry between the local Democrats and the Republicans? Or did they all get along fairly well side by side?

A: They was all the time arguing, I can tell you that much.

Q: Mr. Joe Newton was for the Democrats? Is that the side he was on?

A: Always was! And Roy, he--I don't remember whether he was a Democrat or a Republican.

Q: He must have been the Republican. That must have been why they had to argue politics. And the first cousins grew up, one group to support the Republican party and one the Democratic party. Who were the main characters or the people that you remember being your friends when you were a young man? Who was your best boyfriend? Best growing-up pal?

A: I don't know about my best friend, but old man Hugh Newton. It looked like he thought more of me than my daddy did. One time, I was over here at Lucy Butler's. it rained so. You couldn't even see to get home, all the lightning. Got home and my daddy come over there, he was going to thrash me, going to put it on me. Well, Hugh Newton said, "You better not put your hand on that boy. If you do, you're going to have to whip me, too."

Q: What had you all been doing at Miss Lucy Butler's house? Helping her out?

A: Over there farming. Mr. Hugh Newton and Wesley used to farm the land over there.

Q: Mr. Hugh Newton, was he your next door neighbor?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you helped him out whenever you got a chance. Whenever you could go?

A: I go in and he'd let me plow for him. I wasn't over 7 or 8 years old, when that happened.

Q: Do you remember going to church? Did you and Esther go to church together?

A: We used to go some together, uh-huh. Never go to church anymore.

Q: What was your church? What church do you remember going to first?

A: Fletcher's Chapel, I reckon.

Q: Is that where your children and your grandchildren go to church?

A: I think so. So far.

Q: Now, you see you must have had some influence on them. You must have taught them that was a good church.

A: Yeah. Esther, she's been going ther all her life, and her mother went to it long as she lived.

Q: Do you remember the first preacher you ever listened to?

A: Deed, I couldn't tell you, not right off now. It's been so long since it crossed my mind.

Q: I want you to tell me one of your favorite stories of either fishing or farming. What's one of your favorite stories that you like to tell your grandchildren or your children or-

A: Been so many of them I've been through.

Q: Can you remember back when we had a real big snow--must have been about '56, '57, '58 or so and all the cars in the country were snowed in? I think you must have been the first person that ever helped plow us out.

A: Been a long time since we had a big one. I went up here to feed the cows one day--I couldn't even go up the road here--had to go through that field up yonder in front of my mother's house. Got ready to come back, ... where I bought the tractor in that field and filled up again. Had to bring it on back and get back. That's happened since we've been here.

Q: How long have you been here?

A: Been 40--been near 40--over 50 years. Happened since we come here. I mean it was almost had it from bank to bank up the road there. Blowed off the field.

Q: Then when you finally got so you could get your tractor out and get the plow on it, you plowed upen this road.

A: Always--I couldn't go up the road. I had an old W.D. tractor, I couldn't go up that road. I had to go through that field.

Q: The W.D. was a form of tractor--was the name of the tractor that they made?

A: Was Allis Chamblers.

Q: Was Allis Chamblers' tractor. And after you got the pathway open out on this road, you went on over and worked on the Belle Plains Road and helped plow out the people over there.

A: Yeah. Me and Edgar Newton went out one time. I had had a sore throat five mornings. I went to town one day, I was on the way and on the way, I said, "Darn if I ain't going to kill or cure," got me a pint of orange gin and before-by the time I got home, boy, you talking about sick, I vomited for about two hours both ways on me--the next morning, I didn't have no sore throat. And I ain't had a sore throat from that day to this.

Q: What kind of gin did you buy?

A: Orange gin.

Q: Orange gin.

A: I'll be derved if she didn't fix me up. And I done been to the doctor twice, I don't know what it cost me, but I don't the gin cost me over about two dollars and a half. Already been to two doctors and they didn't do me no good.

Q: So you got plenty sick off that orange gin, but once you got over being sick--

A: I got a good cleaning out, I know that. Esther said, "'You ever come here again like that, it's going to be too bad for you."

Q: You decided it would kill you or cure you, huh?

A: It cured me alright. Damned if I didn't go through something before it cured me. Edgar Newton, the next morning, he drank the rest of the gin. I couldn't even smell it--it made me sic to smell it.

Q: So you passed the bottle onto your friend?

A: Yeah, and he got rid of it.

Q: I want to know if that's the only time you remember celebrating with a bottle of gin?

A: That was the onliest time.

Q: Made you so sick you decided not--

A: I didn't want to see anymore orange gin for some time.

Q: Do you remember any other home remedies that you have? Do you remember any kind of medicine that your mom would give you or a spoonful of curasine?

A: A spoonful of castor oil.

Q: Castor oil?

A: Yeah, boys, when that came out, I got gone, I didn't want that. That stuff had made me sick as the orange gin, I believe. That was a dose. You ever taste any of it?

Q: Oh, yeah. Mr. Archie, I want you to tell me about your days as a trucking merchant. When you would take your vegetables and fish to town to sell them. How did you learn to be a successful salesman?

A: Oh, just took it up for a trade, I suppose. I used to go with my daddy--old black horse and one-horse wagon. I went to sleep more than one time sitting up on that old seat, going to town and coming back.

Q: Did you sort of get an established pattern? Do you serve some of the same families? Did you go the same streets?

A: I went to everywhere where I been selling the same way I do now. A lot of time now, I go on to Mayfield and Slabtown back in. It's years--many years back and I'm still going there.

Q: Those people like the country vegetables? And they like to buy the fish? Is that what they buy mostly?

A: Yeah. When I have plenty of fish I can sell. Nowadays, you got to fish so many, you can't even--they don't even want you to throw a fish net to catch some fish. Getting terrible.

Q: The rules have changed a great deal.

A: You're telling me.

Q: Do you remember the day when the Potomac River was a pretty river and not pollute You could catch all the fish?

A: Yeah, but been a long time. Have been over there ans fished at Aqua Po and we carried two loads of fish to Washington in a day's time. Carried one in the morning then go back in the evening, and carried another load. But now it's gotten so you can't even--don't even want you to bring a rockfish home and cook it. Getting to be beggest mess I've ever seen in my life.

Q: When you carried your truckloads of fish to Washington, did you sell them to a wholesale place? Was it a company that received them?

A: I don't remember now--don't know what is the name of that place now.

Q: And did you have a holding pond over there, Mr. Newton, that you all would some days catch your fish and save them?

A: Yes, I build a pond and I sold carp, catfish--I don't know how many I sold.

Q: And now even the market on those kind of fish is not good.

A: I don't fool with them no more.

Q: Do you enjoy the truck farming? Do you and your wife take your vegetables to town?

A: Yeah. Must do, we're still planting them. I think this summer coming on, I think I'll have to plant about 1-2 acre butter beans--she likes to pick them so.

Q: You plant turnips and green beans?

A: Yeah, but they didn't do much this time--it was sort of dry. Junior (Silver-my husband) told me to come up there and get all the kale I wanted. Said it's up to his knees.

Q: True.

A: Come on up there and get what I wanted of it. I asked what lie wanted a bushel for some of it. "I don't want nothing."

Q: So that's how you sort of make it along with the truck... You buy and you sell, you trade and sometimes, you even give away your products. You visit people who are sick

or people who need some food. I know there have been many people in the community that said Mr.

Newton would bring them some fish or bring them some vegetables. Now was that the way you did your business? When you know someone's sick, you take them some food or some fish?

A: When I carried Sidney Silver some fish here some time back, he said, "I'll clean them in the morning." Then I said, "No," 'cause I'll clean them right now. So I turned in and cleaned them. Sidney told Marion to find something to put the fish in.

Q: I think Sidney is hard of hearing.

A: Yeah, he is, but he's not by himself because Archie is, too. Esther says, "You can hear better than that." I've been out there as far as that gum tree and she hollers for me, I can't hardly hear her until I get up close to her.

Q: You're going to have to put a hearing aid on your Christmas list.

A: I got one up on the icebox now.

Q: But you just don't take time to use it.

A: If I put it on, you're hearing tractors, you got to cut that thing down, it'll run you mad. I hardly ever put it on. Wind blowing--that wind whistling through it. That don't do it for me.

Q: You don't like it when you're out on the boat--out on the water? When the wind blows, it bothers you.

A: Yeah. Worse than any--you can just put your hand up on it like that, it like a bird's in it. That was gived to me.

Q: That was a gift for you.

A: They called and my wife won it at the fair.

Q: How long have you had it?

A: I reckon I've had it--what? Three years?

Q: The rascality that went on in the community especially around Halloween time. Did the Halloween trick-or-treaters ever come and visit you?

A: Oh, yes. Always do in here. Most of the grandchildren. Didn't half a dozen come here this year.

Q: Tell me some of the things you remember happening to your place during Halloween time.

A: They never did bother me much, but they always picked on my daddy. One time, they took a God's wagon, carried it somewhere and hid it. Back when I was a little boy.

Q: You never did know who did that?

A: No. They worked an Tom DeShazo, too. They took his wagon wheels off one time. Took the hind ones and put them on the front and took the front and put them on the back.

Q: Did that make the wagon rool terribly?

A: Darn, when you got in it, the hind. part was sitting up and the front part was sitting down low....

Q: Did you ever do any Halloween trick-or-treats? When you were growing up?

A: The worst thing I ever did was go out trick-or-treating was stealing--was in a watermelon patch, of old man Enoch (Armstrong) and Edwin with me. (Mr. Armstrong's son)

Q: That was Mr. Armstrong's farm?

A: Went down to get a God's watermelon and by the time I touched the watermelon, ole Edwin says, "There's the old man," and Enoch was in the house in the bed.

I run into a wire--barbed wire fence and knocked me out ten feet backwards. I know one thing, I got myself together and come home. I didn't do that no more with Edwin.

Q: You didn't steal any more watermelons?

A: Not that night. I wouldn't of been down there then if it hadn't been for that lying Edwin Armstrong. Lord, I believe he's the lyingest man ever to hit Stafford County.

Q: Do you ever remember Edwin getting in any other fights. I've heard a few tales about Mr. Edwin Armstrong.

A: He always got beat. He got into it. He never did win out. Always got beaten.

Q: Do you remember him fighting down at Belle Plains Creek?

A: I remember his daddy.

Q: Tell me about his daddy.

A: B. Newton chewed ole man Enoch Armstrong's ear clean off. He had to go to the doctor and have that all sewed back. Got in a fight over selling fish, something or another.

That's been a long time ago, too.

Q: That was back closer to the 1910's, 1915's or so.

A: I reckon it was. Back then when they trading in Fredericksburg with horse. A two-horse wagon a load of hay. Ole man Ed Embrey out here, he used to haul fish for old man Luther Newton and Carl Newton. Back when I was a little boy.

Q: And after Mr. Ed Embrey did some farming and fishing with you all in the communit then did he go on to become a deputy sheriff in the county

A: Half-way! He was right when he got that "button" on jacket, wanted somebody that to think he was a sheriff. He and Will Curtis used to go together.

Q: That was Mr. Will Curtis?

A: Yeah.

Q: And he was the sheriff of the county, too?

A: Yeah.

Q: And Mr. Embrey was your neighbor for many, many years? And sold his Model T?

A: Yeah.

Q: That being the longest running car in continual use from the time he bought it.

A: I tell you, I've taken care of him. I'd been fixing him something to eat about a month before they took him to the rest home.

Q: Do you know how old he was, Mr. Newton, when he died? Was Mr. Embrey in his 90's?

A: I think over 90, he was old, wasn't he? Yeah, he was old when he died. He stayed up there in the convalescent home about, it must have been three years or more. All the time bragging, telling me about the money he had. The most money he ever got was that place was sold up yonder. \$1,000 I think it was. Told me that he done willed the place to the family and he never did have no place. Nothing but a lifetime interest in it.

Q: And did he rent his property to you when you did some farming over there?

A: Yeah.

Q: Plowed the field?

A: I worked about one' third of it. I worked, I don't know how many years. They called me up and ask me if I want to buy it and said the man who bought it, he owed them \$65,000 for it. I told them, "Go ahead and let him have it. I don't want it." I told them I'd give him \$40,000 for it, but... this man he tole him he'd give him \$65,000. He put a mansion up there, didn't he?

Q: That's a pretty house. You're right.

A: I bet he's paying some pretty taxes, too.

Q: I think you're right. And at re-assessment time, they probably go even higher.

A: They're high enough now.

Q: Do you remember the old tax structure, Mr. Newton? Were the taxes in the olden days as high as you remember them being in the last few years?

A: Higher? Shucks. Down there at Belle Plains now, used to be the tax wasn't nothing. We got rid of ... what we had down there, the last of it. If we'd kept it five more years, we'd been paying \$3,500 taxes on 42 acres. They tell me that man is now paying \$1,800 a year... on that 42 acres. The boat club down there is seven hundred and some dollars. An acre and a half of land.

Q: An acre and one-half of land.

A: ... they want... \$75,000, now they have offered \$100,000.

Q: To buy that piece of property. Have you made your mind up? Do you want to sell or not?

A: It's already been sold if I hadn't kicked the bucket on them. I don't want to get rid of it. I don't need it. You sell it, they're going to get part of it for taxes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Just like what Lard's(?) got. He has to pay... of tax on what he had before. The man who used to write all the checks for to pay us off, he has tried to buy it for the club. My daddy when he bought it on the lefthand side, he give \$500 for it in 1904. Now, some of it, now has been sold, 8 acres for \$100,000 or more \$165,000, eight acres, ain't that something?

Q: That's a lot of money.

A: That's off that same that my daddy paid \$500 for. And that was 1904. And that was daddy bought it.

Q: Do you remember who he bought the property from?

A: Who, my daddy? Clarence Bourne.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Tried to sell it two or three of them who would want it, so my daddy went on and bought it. He sold Carl Newton some of it and he sold Marvin Newton a piece of it. Me and my mother... I think it's about three acres of it. Me and my mother give him our part--he had to pay Eva and Henry for their part. (Mr. Newton's sister and brother) He'd get a fortune for that three acres with a house on it.

Q: That is the truth. Real estate has gone sky high in your lifetime.

A: ... way things are going. Now you take up there toward Ferris Belman's Store, he had a good business going, but that one got going in at the bottom. You been in that one?

Q: only briefly.

A: And, boy's he really ruint Ferris belman. I come out of ... Store the

other day, one evening late, and there was one car there.

Q: Have you shopped in that new store over that way?

A: I never been in it. You been in it?

Q: One time. That was enough for me.

A: Was it?

Q: It certainly was.

A: What's the matter, too cheap? You know one thing, they don't--Stafford County don't get no tax from then either. You know that?

Q: No, I didn't.

A: I heard two or three talking about it. You take the High's up here. Stafford County don't get no taxes off of them.

Q: Where does the tax go?

A: God knows, a woman told me about it this morning. Paul Sullivan's wife was telling me about it. They went to court about it. They do some kind of business That High's up here, everything is high. Everything they got in there is high.

Q: They call that a convenience store. But you think it's not too convenient for taxpayers' benefits. They don't really get in line when it comes time to pay all the taxes, huh?

A: I'll tell you one thing, I'll be darn if I can see how they get through with it. They are all the time taxing up--taxing a poor person who ain't making much.

Q: I want you to tell me about living off the land. Did your family like to eat squirrel, rabbit, raise your own pork, beef?

A: I reckon if no body ever eat anymore hog meat than I do they wouldn't know it. I ain't raised hogs in some time. I was raising some to sell them. Got so they didn't want to give nothing for them, so I quit (raising them). Sold five calves here not long ago.

Q: And did they go to the slaughter house? Were they to be--

A: I don't know where they took them. Stock market, I reckon, is where they

went to. The one was a bull and one heifer.

Q: Did you eat wild game? Did you catch rabbits and--

A: We had two rabbits give to us the other day and me and Esther wound them up in about two or three days. Probably eat them all. I don't care nothing for no deer. I don't like that taste. Do you like it?

Q: I like it.

A: What?

Q: If you put barbeque sauce on it and turn it into a barbequed piece of venison.

A: I ain't never taste none of it that I like, but people like it. Bobby is crazy about it. ... I don't like that taste. Got that wild taste, is what it is.

Q: Do you remember when the first tractor was brought down in this part of the world and who bought the first tractor and put it to use? Was your dad the first one?

A: I tell you who put it to use--it was Willie Deacon. That one was--that he used to plow with the one he used wood (a wooden tractor). That wasn't yesterday either.

Q: Willie Deacon.

A: How about Tom Deacon? How long has he been dead?

Q: I suspect around 16 years.

A: Is ayreone of those boys still living? Willie Deacon's?

Q: Youngest--Alex. Alex Deacon.

A: Where is be at?

Q: I think Maryland somewhere. He comes down to visit his sister. Likes to talk about Stafford County history. Likes to talk about the old times in Stafford County.

A: Which one of them married Edrye? One of them did.

Q: Henry. Henry Deacon.

A: He dead, too?

Q: Yes, he died, too.

A: Did Edrye, she died, what did she have cancer or what?

Q: Yes, she did.

A: Haydon's wife, she passed on, too, didn't she?

Q: She certainly did.

A: She was more than 90?

Q: 80, I think. Eighty when she died. Do you remember who the large farmers close to you all? Next to the Newtons. Was Isaac Silver(?) a big farmer?

A: Isaac and Willie Deacon. And that's about the biggest ones that I know about down through here. John and Sid Silver and their boys are about the biggest ones around here now, I think.

Q: Is old Mr. Edwin Young do any farming back in those days? Or did he just have the milk cows? Ile just have the milk cows?

A: ... that Young boy, he come over from King George. What was his name, Esther? Was his name Edwin, too? He come out of King George County, right down there below Chapel Church. Got some business going up there now.

Q: Yes, he has a large farm now.

A: He owns a place down here next to Billy Carver's. Bought from somebody down there. The old man bought that before he died. Bought a lot of land over there to Potomac Run. Bought next to Stone.

Q: Was the Stone family also farmers?

A: Used to be, there's a lot of farming back in the horse times. Robert was working some back up at the home then... turned that over to him. Young's usually work it putting a barn in...

Q: What was the Carrol Stone and Lois Stone's father's name? Did he have a be farm?

A: Yeah. All of that land belongs to Charlie Stone.

Q: Charlie Stone.

A: Him and Jim Williams--Jim used to work over there, Camp Seldon's. They used to get kind of tired and they'd get together and have a big talk--sit and talk for a long time and rest up. I hear them talking about it. I'll tell you that Lois, I'll be damned if she ain't a loud(?) talking gal. God dog. ... says she's been like that ever since she had that little stroke. Old Edgar (Newton) be damned if he ain't got a big lot of land over there now, too. He done bought-- he owns all that Sidney used to own, he done bought that.

Q: Oh, he has?

A: Over there where that big oak sit in that field. He done bought every bit of that. That was gived to--that land was gived to Sidney.

Q: And now his son-in-law, Edgar is farming it, huh?

A: No, Lois, she don't go to the barn no more--after if they have a falling out. She went back to school. I don't know if she's still teaching school or not.

Q: That's Janet. That's Edgar's wife--Janet. That's correct. She's back in college now. Yes, she's going back to college.

A: Edgar done quit drinking, smoking and all. He quit cigarettes like today--the next day, I asked didn't he want me to get him 1/2 gallon--I was going to town. He says, "I'm going to quit that, too." And the next day, he quit that. Ain't drank none since.

Q: That's unusual. Quit smoking and quit drinking within two days of each other.

A: Yeah, boy, I'll tell you one thing. He said, "I found out I spend a whole lot of money." He used to average a quart a day. So he said. Now, that's drinking liquor, wasn't it?

Q: Well, Mr. Newton, this has been very interesting talking to you about the neighbors and the farming, the fishing. Do you have any-

A: I hope all that don't come out in the newspaper.

Q: I don't think so. I want to know if you can tell me any more good remembrances you have, especially of your courting days. Do you have any more favorite tales to tell me?

A: I didn't go with but three girls, that's all.

Q: Tell me your three girlfriends.

A: One of them, Maxie Armstrong, I went with her for five years. She was wanting me to marry her and I never married her. Went with Sissy Sullivan about two years. And Alex Newton said,  
"Court that good- looking gal up there at George Carver's! Maybe you can make a hit on her."  
" So that's where I ended up at.

Q: Miss Esther became your wife. How long have you been married? How many years have you been married?

A: Let's see--going on 55? 54-long time to stay with one woman, ain't it? Long time for a woman to stay with one man, I reckon.

Q: That's right. and you've already passed your diamond wedding jubilee, and your silver and your gold have gone by. You'll soon be getting to your diamond. Sixty years of married life.

A: I'll have to get them on my finger like you got them on yours.

Q: I want to thank you for your time and for your interest in remembrances with us today. If you have other stories and tales to-

A: I'm afraid I'm done run down.

Q: We appreciate being with you.