

Mississippi Oral History Program

Simpson County Historical and Genealogical
Oral History Project

An Oral History

with

Bonnie Blanche Little Whittom

Interviewer: Joe White

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Biography

Bonnie Blanche Little Whittom was born to Robert Little and Alethia McLaurin in Bridgeport, MS in February 1912. She had three brothers and two sisters. She went to school in Bridgeport and finished high school during the Great Depression, which made her unable to go to college. Blanche married Ottis Whittom in 1934. Together they had one child, Wanda Gail. Her husband died in 1994. At the time of the interview, Blanche was still living in the house that she was born and raised in.

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AN ORAL HISTORY
with
BONNIE BLANCHE LITTLE WHITTOM

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi, Simpson County Project. The interview is with Bonnie Blanche Little Whittom and is taking place on July 20, 2003. The interviewer is Joe White.

White: —2003. This interview is conducted under a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council as a part of the [Mississippi] Oral History [Program] directed by The University of Southern Mississippi. Today we're interviewing Mrs. Bonnie Blanche Little Whittom at her home in the Bridgeport Community of Simpson County. I've already given your full name here. Could you tell us when you were born and where you were born, please, ma'am?

Whittom: February the eighth, 1912, and I was born here.

White: You were born in this community, or in this house?

Whittom: In the house.

White: In this house. What were your parent's names?

Whittom: Robert Little and Alethia McLaurin.

White: McLaurin Little? Were both of them born in this territory?

Whittom: Yes.

White: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Whittom: I had three brothers and two sisters.

White: Can you name them, please, ma'am?

Whittom: Curtis Little, Margaret Dumas(?), Bob Tom Little, me next, and T.W. Little, Juanita Shepherd(?).

White: Juanita Shepherd.

Whittom: Little.

White: Did most of them grow up around here? Did they stay around here? Did they move off?

Whittom: They stayed around here till they got through college. They left.

White: Got through college. Did all of y'all go to college?

Whittom: No. I didn't.

White: You were the one of the bunch that didn't go to college, huh?

Whittom: I didn't get to go to college.

White: You didn't like school?

Whittom: No. The Depression.

White: Depression hit. I thought something might have happened. Well, it was pretty unusual for—

Whittom: Nineteen thirty-one, I didn't get to go. My older ones went, and young'uns went (inaudible).

White: We're going to skip around a little bit during this interview, but you already hit on a really interesting topic, the Depression.

Whittom: Oh, boy. I finished high school right at the height of it.

White: Did you go to high school here?

Whittom: No. I finished high school where my brother, Margaret and J.D. were teaching, up in Kemper County.

White: Kemper County. And you went to high school there. Where'd you start school? Here at Bridgeport?

Whittom: Bridgeport.

White: How many grades did they have down this way?

Whittom: At that time they had ten.

White: Who was your favorite teacher?

Whittom: I'd say Owen Cooper.

White: Owen Cooper.

Whittom: I learned more under him.

White: What did he teach?

Whittom: Math.

White: What did he teach you in math? What grade was that?

Whittom: Geometry.

White: I'm snoopy. I'll just ask you all kind of questions.

Whittom: Geometry. I loved geometry.

White: Is that right? Would you have majored in math, do you think, if you'd gone on to college?

Whittom: I probably would have.

White: You always been pretty good at it, huh?

Whittom: Well, I was at that time. (laughter)

White: Well, you must have been pretty good at it. I think you ended up, running several businesses over the years, didn't you, that it came in handy with?

Whittom: Yeah, stores.

White: We'll get back to the Depression in just a few minutes, but you had mentioned your early school here at Bridgeport. Where was the school then?

Whittom: It was right up there where that little, new building is, where our voting place is now.

White: Where the voting precinct is.

Whittom: It was a big, old, two-story building to start with. No. The first one was just a frame building, and it burned. Then they built this one in 1918.

White: Built the new one in nineteen?

Whittom: Eighteen.

White: Eighteen.

Whittom: That's when the other one burned. Turned right around, built it again.

White: Now, how did you end up going to school in Kemper County? Your brother and sister—

Whittom: Margaret and J.D. were teaching up there.

White: Oh, they were teaching there. I'm sorry. I didn't catch that. I'm a little bit hard of hearing. And you went and lived with them and boarded and went to school there. Was that because of the Depression?

Whittom: Yes.

White: Times were tough out on the farm, huh?

Whittom: (Inaudible) That's (inaudible).

White: Your father was a farmer, and he did something else, too, didn't he?

Whittom: Merchant.

White: A merchant. Did he run a store here close to the bridge?

Whittom: Had one right up, out there, to start with.

White: Right close to the house here? What kind of store was it?

Whittom: Oh, it had everything. Just the old-timey store where you get on rollers and reach up and get your merchandise. Things come in barrels. Sugar and flour and all that was in barrels.

White: What age were you when he had that store?

Whittom: I was little, but I can remember it.

White: You do remember it? What kind of things did they have in the barrels?

Whittom: The flour and the sugar and all that kind of stuff.

White: Y'all probably ate pretty well.

Whittom: Loose rice.

White: Y'all probably ate pretty well.

Whittom: We had what we wanted. Never went hungry.

White: How big a farm did he have?

Whittom: Well, he farmed the Massey(?) Place at that time, and that's about a five-hundred-acre.

White: Oh, my heavens. He stayed (laughter) busy then, didn't he? Massey Place.

Whittom: The Massey Place.

White: Is it fairly close to here?

Whittom: It's down the river about eight miles.

White: And he farmed for some—what? Did he lease it from somebody and farm there?

Whittom: Well, it was his mama's. It was a family inheritance from her.

White: His mother was a Massey then.

Whittom: She was a McLaurin, and they inherited it.

White: You remember his parents' names and your mother's parents' names?

Whittom: My daddy?

White: I'm going to really dig into your memory today. I warned you about this. (laughter)

Whittom: Well, his daddy was Robert Little, and his mother was Peggy.

White: Peggy. You don't remember who she was before they married.

Whittom: She was a Drummonds(?).

White: Drummonds. I knew some—there's Drummonds around—

Whittom: Around Shivers somewhere.

White: Right, right, yeah, right between Shivers and Pinola, back in that area. My grandmother was from over in that area, and your mother's parents?

Whittom: They were Eva Carnes(?) and Cora Wilson.

White: Cora Wilson. And they were from Simpson County also?

Whittom: Oh, yeah. They was down on the river.

White: You mentioned the river twice, and the river seems to be pretty doggone important in Simpson County history, though, the Strong River and the Pearl River is part of it, too.

Whittom: The Strong River runs into the Pearl River, right, not too far from here.

White: Between here and Georgetown.

Whittom: Uh-huh.

White: Isn't that right? One of my earliest memories, as I mentioned to you, of this area was coming with my uncle, Snoop(?) White, and setting up a traveling tent show across from a store down here, which I remember being close to the old river bridge. The old river bridge is closed now, but still standing, parts of it still standing. But as it turned out, that was your store, your family store in that area.

Whittom: Up here where the voting place is.

White: Right. As I came by, I kept telling the lady I was riding with over here, that, I said, "I know it was close to the river. It should have been right along in here, and then I realized that it was quite a bit of distance away from the river. Do you remember your folks talking any about how significant the river was as far as transportation on water?"

Whittom: Oh, yeah. My great-grandfather, he shipped produce to New Orleans on the river.

White: Is that right?

Whittom: Um-hm.

White: From here in Bridgeport?

Whittom: Yeah, down on—they had a landing place down there where they—

White: Where was it? Do you remember? Remember them talking about it?

Whittom: I know where it was, but it's on the river down there, not too far, in this community.

White: And it's just literally a landing?

Whittom: Yeah.

White: Some of the farmers, a lot of the farmers used it, then. What kind of stuff did they send down the river? Do you remember them talking about—

Whittom: Oh, cotton and all that stuff.

White: Pretty big boats, then, if they'd send cotton down the river, wasn't it? I know you don't remember any of that, but if you remember them talking about it—

Whittom: I don't remember that, but I remember them talking about it.

White: Yeah. There are some pretty spots, also, along that river, really pretty spots.

Whittom: Oh, they are.

White: But the banks of the river are extremely steep. I've heard several people refer to it as the hidden grand canyon of Mississippi in there, and that's between here and Georgetown, down on the river, isn't it?

Whittom: Yeah. The turn hole(?) is a beautiful place.

White: Turn hole? Is that what they call it?

Whittom: That's on our place, Massey Place. Well, it used to be our place.

White: Oh, is it? Well, that's probably the area that I've heard people talk about. Years ago we'd ride canoes.

Whittom: You'd throw a plank in it. It'd go around, around and around and down.

White: Straight down into the whirlpool, huh? Did you spend a lot of time on the river when you were coming up?

Whittom: No, not much. Too many mosquitoes.

White: Is that right? They were bad even then, huh?

Whittom: Oh, yeah.

White: You didn't do much boating or much swimming, then, huh? Let's get back to those tough times when you were coming up right about Depression time and everything. What were your folks doing? What was your mama doing then? Did she work outside at all?

Whittom: She'd teach school every once in a while.

White: Every once in a while?

Whittom: Well—

White: When they'd call her in?

Whittom: Yeah.

White: She substitute teacher?

Whittom: She was a good teacher.

White: What all did she teach?

Whittom: Anything.

White: Just whatever they called her in to teach, huh? Was she a good cook?

Whittom: Yeah. She was a good cook.

White: What did breakfast smell like?

Whittom: Sausage and biscuit and syrup.

White: She make good biscuits?

Whittom: Yeah. It's raining.

White: Yeah. It was raining a little bit when we came in a little bit earlier. I tell you what that reminds me of that I need to ask you. This house, I bet you, had a tin roof on it one time, didn't it?

Whittom: I don't remember it (inaudible).

White: You don't remember rain on a tin roof?

Whittom: Mm-mm. (laughter)

White: Well, maybe y'all—

Whittom: Nearly as I remember it always had a roofing one.

White: Maybe you guys could afford a roof. We couldn't up in Pinola where we lived. (laughter) We had a tin roof, and I—

Whittom: Now, I don't know about that because we was poor, now. I'll tell you that. (laughter)

White: One of my favorite memories of childhood was just taking a nap in the afternoon.

Whittom: Oh, I love it to rain on a tin roof. We didn't ever have one that I remember.

White: What was it like, growing up in this house?

Whittom: Oh, I had a lot of fun. I had brothers and sisters to fight with.

White: You liked to fight with them, huh?

Whittom: We did.

White: I had noticed on the biographical sheet that you had filled out or had talked to them about filling out earlier that the two years that you went to school in Kemper County, was the school—was it named Damascus, or was it in the Damascus Community?

Whittom: Damascus was the name of the school.

White: I'd like for you to tell us a little bit about what you remember about what your dad did for a living. Farming, and didn't he do some carpentry work, too?

Whittom: Yeah. He did that, and he run a store, grocery and mercantile store. They moved this store up to where that building is up there on (inaudible).

White: The store that was close to the house here was moved up to the (inaudible).

Whittom: Just half of it.

White: You remember about what year that was?

Whittom: No.

White: It's sort of hard to tell with some of those years, isn't it? You ended up running that store. Was that after he died?

Whittom: Yeah. We bought it from them, me and his brother run it.

White: What was his brother's name?

Whittom: Hought(?).

White: Hought?

Whittom: You remember Hought Little?

White: I do remember that name, as a matter of fact.

Whittom: That was my daddy's brother.

White: How many other brothers and sisters did he have?

Whittom: That was his only whole brother, and he had several half.

White: You remember their names?

Whittom: I get to thinking of them, I guess I could. (laughter) Is it important?

White: No, not unless you remember them or just want to. We'll talk about what you want to talk about. What would you like to talk about?

Whittom: I don't know. (laughter) I'm ready to quit now. (laughter)

White: No. You can't do that. (laughter) I can't let you do that. What do you do these days that you enjoy doing?

Whittom: Well, right now, I'm not able to do anything. But whenever, before I got hurt, I just did the ordinary things. I mean, you know, didn't have a business to run.

White: You like to read?

Whittom: I read. I read all the time.

White: What kind of books do you like to read?

Whittom: Good books.

White: Good books. What's a good book?

Whittom: Oh, well, I got a whole library in yonder.

White: You just enjoy reading. Is that right? You watch television much?

Whittom: If there's anything on to look at. (laughter)

White: What about church? Where did you go to church?

Whittom: Out here, Pleasant Hill.

White: Pleasant Hill. Baptist, Methodist?

Whittom: Baptist.

White: Baptist. What kind of church is that? Pretty strong?

Whittom: Well, it's getting mighty weak now because everybody that moved away and dying out.

White: Country church.

Whittom: Country church.

White: Who do you remember influenced you in early years, other than your teachers? Who were some of your neighbors around here?

Whittom: Well, I had a lot of neighbors, Petty Little, Maude Little, my aunt and uncle, Aunt Birdie(?) and Uncle Hought.

White: Did they do a lot of visiting?

Whittom: Back in those days they did.

White: What was a typical visit like? Would they come and stay an hour, or did they come and stay a while?

Whittom: Come mostly on Sunday afternoon, and spend the evening.

White: Did they come for lunch?

Whittom: Sometimes they would.

White: Who all had to fix the lunch? Was it just your mother?

Whittom: Mostly.

White: She didn't have too much help, huh?

Whittom: We had a store right here, and that (inaudible) county courthouse, the judges and all, they'd meet down here and do their talking. Mama'd end up cooking for them.

White: Politicians?

Whittom: Yeah. (laughter)

White: This was kind of the eating place for politicians, huh?

Whittom: Yeah, the meeting place.

White: Who were some of those early politicians? You remember?

Whittom: Hiltons(?), I remember them.

White: Any of the sheriff's candidates or anything like that?

Whittom: Oh, they all (inaudible) up down here. I don't remember. I was too little.

White: You don't remember any shootings over at the (inaudible).

Whittom: No. (laughter)

White: My grandmother and grandfather used to talk about the politics in Pinola getting really heated sometimes.

Whittom: (Inaudible)

White: Did they have a special place that they would speak?

Whittom: Out there on a porch at a store, back in those days.

White: Your store was kind of community center.

Whittom: It was.

White: You eventually set up a movie theater.

Whittom: Well, actually, we moved it up there where the other little store is.

White: Sat up a movie theater up there? Was it a tent?

Whittom: And it blowed away, and we just kept on showing. (laughter)

White: When did it blow away?

Whittom: Wind blowed it away. (Inaudible) strong.

White: Oh, you just kept the movie going with the tent blown down, huh. (laughter)

Whittom: We (inaudible).

White: Well, we mentioned a later life you had here and a marriage and things like that. I think we need to find out who you married and when.

Whittom: I married Ottis Whittom from Columbia.

White: From where?

Whittom: Columbia.

White: When did y'all get married?

Whittom: Thirty-four.

White: Nineteen thirty-four. That Depression wasn't really over by then, much, was it?

Whittom: I know it, but we didn't have anything to start with, so—

White: So you might as well get married, huh? (laughter) And how many children did you have? You pointed over to your left here. You had—

Whittom: That's all.

White: Pardon?

Whittom: That's all I had.

White: You had one child. And her name is?

Whittom: Wanda Gail Whittom [Mitchell].

White: Wanda Gail Whittom [Mitchell]. And she lives in Picayune, I believe she told me the other day. You stay down there some with her right now, don't you?

Whittom: I am now till I can get better.

White: Until you get over this falling-down problem that you've had lately, huh?

Whittom: I don't believe I'm ever going to get over it. That's about five times.

White: Well, just quit falling down, you know. You'll get over it. (laughter)

Whittom: Break something every time I fall.

White: You bound to get over that pretty soon. You also had a cemetery project you were interested in, too, at one time, didn't you?

Whittom: Well, we worked on that a while.

White: What cemetery was it?

Whittom: Out here, Pleasant Hill.

White: At Pleasant Hill Church? Who all has worked with you over the years on that?

Whittom: Well, Ottis did a lot of it. He worked, making the rows around it.

White: Y'all keep the grass cut?

Whittom: Well, we hired somebody to do that.

White: About how many people are buried out there?

Whittom: Oh, I don't know.

White: Pretty big cemetery, isn't it?

Whittom: There's a lot of people out there. Ever since it's been a church.

White: There's not another big cemetery right around the community here, is there? I don't think there is. I may be wrong.

Whittom: Over here at Union is the closest.

White: Right.

Whittom: Rockport and Bridgestone.

White: Well, you know, a lot of people want to know what the difference between Rockville and Bridgeport is. What is the difference?

Whittom: Two counties. (laughter)

White: Right across the county line, isn't it?

Whittom: Nothing to Rockport right now. It's about like Bridgeport.

White: How'd Bridgeport get its name?

Whittom: Really, I don't know unless it's on account of the rivers meeting down here, and (inaudible) argued and argued and finally decided on a bridge (inaudible).

White: Think there was a little bit of politics involved in—

Whittom: Oh, yeah.

White: —it, at one time. (Inaudible) Well, we're going to take a break here in just a few minutes, and then we'll get right back to this tape. (brief interruption) You had mentioned, Ms. Whittom, your grandfather, Turner Wilson(?). Is that right?

Whittom: That's my great-grandfather.

White: He was your great-grandfather.

Whittom: He was my great-great, I reckon. He was my grandmother's father.

White: Grandmother's father.

Whittom: Turner Wilson.

White: What kind of fellow was he?

Whittom: He was a gambler. (laughter) He owned part of Jackson and gambled it away and got racehorses. He came home and opened up a racetrack.

White: Around here?

Whittom: Down on his place. That didn't last all that long. I think he finally gambled it away or something.

White: Did he have a pretty big place?

Whittom: Yeah, he must have had a big place.

White: Did you hear this from your grandparents?

Whittom: Yeah. I heard my mama telling about it.

White: What else did she say about the family?

Whittom: He was so colorful.

White: You had told us something about schools. Which grandparent was that who married (inaudible) Florida?

Whittom: That was the one that he had there to teach his kids. I mean, the kids on the place.

White: McLaurin was the teacher that he (inaudible).

Whittom: (Inaudible) Bouie, out here.

White: Came from where?

Whittom: Out at Bouie.

White: Bouie.

Whittom: You ever been there?

White: No, I haven't. I've heard of Bouie, but I don't know where it is. Where was it?

Whittom: It's between Mount Olive and back in there, and Pinola.

White: I've heard of it. I just didn't know where it was.

Whittom: I've been there one time.

White: She came to teach the kids (inaudible)?

Whittom: He did. (Inaudible)

White: Oh, he came to teach the kids on the plantation. OK.

Whittom: He married the daughter.

White: And they ended up settling here, didn't they?

Whittom: They settled. He gave them the Massey Place. He owned half of the county.

White: OK. The Massey Place, then, is the place you were talking about that you remember your father farming. Is that right?

Whittom: Yeah. His mama inherited it, you know. He farmed it.

White: Did he have a farm right here, too?

Whittom: Here around the house, cotton and corn.

White: What was school like? We had talked about that earlier. You told me who your favorite teacher was and that you liked math.

Whittom: Well, when I was growing up, it was strict.

White: Was it?

Whittom: Yes.

White: What kind of discipline did they use?

Whittom: You were good, or else.

White: You mentioned something about a peach switch. What was that you were talking about?

Whittom: I never did get a whipping, but boy, there was a lot of them that did.

White: They use a board or a switch?

Whittom: Board mostly.

White: Is that right? Were most of the teachers men or women?

Whittom: Well, they had both. But the men was the strictest.

White: What other courses did you take that you liked?

Whittom: I liked English.

White: English?

Whittom: I didn't have any trouble with any of it. Not that I was smart, but I just—it came to me easy.

White: Did y'all do much traveling back then, or did you stay pretty close to home?

Whittom: Stayed home.

White: What kind of transportation did you use during the Depression? Did you have a car?

Whittom: Old Model-T.

White: Model-T?

Whittom: We had.

White: Tell me about that Model-T.

Whittom: It was a (inaudible). Uncle Hought had an Elgin. Papa had a Model-T.

White: Hought had a what?

Whittom: Elgin.

White: Elgin.

Whittom: Yeah. They thought they was rich.

White: That's a pretty unusual car, I imagine. Wasn't it?

Whittom: It was back then.

White: Did your dad ever have a mule wagon?

Whittom: Oh, yeah. One of them run away with me and T.W. one time.

White: Ran away with you and who?

Whittom: My cousin. (laughter)

White: Mule ran away with you?

Whittom: No. A horse and wagon, mule and wagon.

White: Where was that?

Whittom: Right down this road.

White: What happened?

Whittom: I don't know. He just got scared. Neighbor run out and stopped him. But that ought not be on here. What am I talking about?

White: What kind of wagon was it? A big wagon?

Whittom: Yeah.

White: Well, what were y'all doing on it? (Inaudible)

Whittom: Well, we was hauling something.

White: Oh, were you? Just got away from you, huh? Were you driving, or was he driving?

Whittom: He was driving.

White: Did you ever drive the wagon? You did?

Whittom: Rode a mule and did everything else.

White: Did you ever plow?

Whittom: No. (laughter)

White: Did y'all like mules or horses?

Whittom: Both.

White: Kept both of them, huh? Did you ever have to feed them in the wintertime?

Whittom: Oh, yeah.

White: What did you feed them?

Whittom: Horse and mule feed, mostly.

White: Buy feed and feed them, huh?

Whittom: Yeah, and corn.

White: Did y'all ever do a lot of canning and putting up food and stuff like that?

Whittom: Yes. I hated canning. (laughter)

White: An honest homemaker. (laughter) Were you glad to see freezers come along?

Whittom: Yes.

White: I like the way she discusses the questions. "Yes." (laughter)

Whittom: I know I'm going to be ashamed of that, if I ever hear it. (laughter)

White: No. I'm enjoying talking to you. I like to pick at you about that, too. Your brothers, did any of them stay on the farm here?

Whittom: No.

White: They all went out and made their own ways, then, huh?

Whittom: Curtis, you know, was head of the tax commission a long time. Married Irene. You know them.

White: Irene. What was her name before they married?

Whittom: Grantham(?).

White: Grantham.

Whittom: Bob married a girl in Newton.

White: Newton?

Whittom: T.W. married one around here, (inaudible).

White: They just sort of scattered around then. And you stayed at the home place, huh? (End of digital file named tape one, side one. Beginning of digital file named tape one, side two.)

Whittom: —forty-seven years, before he resigned, and then B.E. Phillips(?) took it over. Back then, they (inaudible). They didn't change every few minutes. They're a very prominent family here, the Buckeys(?) were. About all gone now, dead. Got one living, Truitt(?).

White: Well, y'all had a dinner on the ground out there today, didn't you?

Whittom: Yeah, he was there.

White: Was he? We've talked about everybody else but you and your husband, mostly. I think we need to mention him here.

Whittom: (Inaudible) talk about us (inaudible). (laughter)

White: You don't like to talk about yourself, do you? (laughter) When did your husband die?

Whittom: Ninety-four, I think.

White: Ninety-four.

Whittom: I even forgot that. (laughter)

White: Y'all had been retired a few years by then, hadn't you?

Whittom: I hadn't.

White: You still working in [19]94? What were you doing? Running the store up here?

Whittom: (Inaudible) store.

White: When did you close the store?

Whittom: I guess I did close it up before he died.

White: Not long before, though.

Whittom: It wasn't long, in the [19]80s, late [19]80s.

White: What did y'all like to do? Travel?

Whittom: No.

White: You didn't?

Whittom: We didn't go anywhere or do anything.

White: Well, I understand you collected things, didn't you?

Whittom: Well, we have a lot of collectibles, hid around.

White: Glassware?

Whittom: (Inaudible) or pots and pans.

White: Metal things, huh?

Whittom: Metal things.

White: Where'd you collect them?

Whittom: We got a lot of old plow (inaudible).

White: Where'd you find them?

Whittom: Out on the place, I reckon. When he used—buying—see one, he'd buy it and bring it home. He was a collector (inaudible).

White: You still got any old buggies or anything like that?

Whittom: I got a buggy and a wagon.

White: Have you? A buggy and a wagon.

Whittom: Good ones.

White: You got them under covers?

Whittom: I got them under a shed.

White: Well, that's good. That's the way to do it. When was the last time you remember using a buggy?

Whittom: Well, Ottis and I used to use the buggy every Sunday evening. We'd hitch it up to a horse and go from here to Georgetown, around.

White: What was going on in Georgetown?

Whittom: Nothing. We'd just be riding in the buggy.

White: Were a lot of people riding in cars and trucks by then?

Whittom: Yeah.

White: You wasn't worried about them running over you? (laughter) You just hooked one horse to it?

Whittom: It's a one-horse buggy.

White: A one-horse buggy. Is that the same one you still got? It's kind of like a one-horse sleigh, except on wheels, then, isn't it? What about the wagon? Is it one you had?

Whittom: It's one that we had on the place a long time.

White: You know whether it belonged to your grandfather?

Whittom: I think it did. I think Ottis (inaudible).

White: Tell us a little bit more, and we won't bother you too much longer here, about some other people in the community who may not be here anymore.

Whittom: Well, there aren't any of them here anymore.

White: Nobody here anymore, huh? Did any of them come back for the reunion in church, today, dinner on the grounds?

Whittom: No, just the usual.

White: Folks are still—

Whittom: Them and some visitors.

White: Folks who still live around here mostly?

Whittom: Yeah.

White: What was the last name of some of the families? You mentioned the Buckleys.

Whittom: Well, the Barries(?) and Buckleys. Everything else was Little, near about it. Mullenses(?), Grahams, Shermans(?). They lived down below the church.

White: Were there any foreign-named families lived in here, or most of them Scots/Irish background people?

Whittom: I guess they was Scotch/Irish.

White: Not many McGillicutties(?) or anything like that. Well, I appreciate you taking this time with us. If you can think of anything else that you want to talk about in the next few minutes, we will sure do it right now. I understand you make a very mean—is it chocolate pie or chocolate cake?

Whittom: Oh.

White: I did want to get that on—

Whittom: That's her talking. (laughter)

White: That's your daughter talking? You don't think it's that good? What is it? The pie or the cake?

Whittom: I don't even like pie. (laughter)

White: You say you don't like to cook, but she told me you were a very good cook. (laughter) Thank you very much for talking to us today. (brief interruption) I've been reminded by your daughter to ask you about the church, something to do with the building of the church over here.

Whittom: Well, my mother designed the church.

White: She designed it.

Whittom: And my daddy helped build it. He was one of the carpenters. And that was in 1913.

White: Nineteen thirteen?

Whittom: This new one, yes.

White: The new church in 1913. Did she design it, something, it was held up by a center pole while it was being built?

Whittom: (Inaudible) holding up. It hasn't fallen.

White: Is that right? They built—

Whittom: No (inaudible) in it.

White: They built it around that post to hold it up—

Whittom: I guess they did.

White: —while they were building it.

Whittom: Somehow she did it. She was a mathematician.

White: Oh, she was? Did she teach?

Whittom: She taught school.

White: She just figured out the stresses on the walls and everything and built it around that post, and then removed the post in the church. And there's not one, not a post in the church now, huh?

Whittom: That's the reason I want you to see it.

White: Yeah. Well, that sounds interesting. Is it all wood?

Whittom: It's a big church. Yeah. It's all wood.

White: Well, I would like to see that church. We're going to make a trip by in just a few minutes and do that. Thank you, ma'am.

(end of interview)