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Interview with George Morris Carter (FA 2)

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INFORMANT/FIELDWORKER DATA FORMI. INFORMANT.

George Morris Carter

NAME [Include fullest possible name - first, middle and/or maiden, last.
For example: John James Smith; Mary Franklin Smith (Mrs. John Smith)Tompkinsville, KY
ADDRESS

PERSONAL DATA:

Age: 64 Date of Birth: 03 April 19 Place of Birth: Rockbridge, KY Sex: MaleRACE/NATIONALITY/ETHNIC BACKGROUNDWhite / U.S. Citizen / AngloADDITIONAL INFORMATION: [Include education, occupation, places of residence,
religion, etc.)Education: 8th grade, graduate of Bowling Green Business University;Occupation: Retired Rural Mail Carrier; Places of Residence: (primarily)Rockbridge and Tompkinsville, KY; Religion: Christian; Veteran of US Army;Has been a radio announcer; Has many relatives in Public Office, servedII. as County Tax Assessor.
COLLECTOR.

John Alan Dowell

NAME (Include fullest possible name as described above)

1341 High Street, Bowling Green, KY 42101
ADDRESS, LOCALRoute 1, Box 128, Glendale, KY 42740
ADDRESS, PERMANENT

Acquaintance, introduced by William Lynwood Montell

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE INFORMANT, SUCH AS COUSIN, FRIEND, BOSS,
ACQUAINTANCE, ETC.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Due to a death in the collector's immediate family, the third and final
interview was postponed until Christmas Break of the 1983 WKU school
year.

Interviewer's tape no.:

WKU FL, FL & OHA Accession no.:

Interviewer: John A. Dowell

Address: Rt. 1, Box 128
Glendale, KY 42740

Interviewee: George M. Carter

Address:

Place of interview:

Date: Tompkinsville, KY

Mr. Carter's kitchen

13 October 1983

Other people present:

none

Equipment used: (for interview): Technics RS-1506 HS reel-to-reel
AKG DM700 mic.

Reel-to-reel tape Brand: Ampex 406 Size reel: 10" Tape Mil: 1 1/2 Speed: 3-3/4

Cassette Brand: Ampex 671 Professional C-30/C-60/C-90/C-120 (circle size)
(for archives)

Amount of tape used: (Side 1)

(Side 2)

Brief description of interview context and tape contents.

This is the first of three interviews of George M. Carter by John A. Dowell (Mr. Carter has been interviewed before -- some of those interviews are included elsewhere in the WKU Folklore, Folklife, and Oral History Archives).

The present document is a transcription of that first interview, which focuses primarily on biographical and demographic aspects of Mr. Carter's life (e.g., birthplace, education, occupations, marital status and children, military activity, hobbies and other interests, information on his parents and siblings, and other bits of information regarding his past).

Also included are a number of stories he has told, serving to help establish his reputation as a "storyteller."

TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE M. CARTER. DATED 12 OCTOBER 1983. JOHN A. DOWELL, COLLECTOR. TRANSFERRED TO CASSETTE FROM TEN INCH OPEN REEL TAPE, 13 OCTOBER 1983.

[Open reel tape one, side one; cassette tape one, side one.]

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JAD Here we go. I think we're on. I think we're on here. Yeah, okay. I have to begin with this: Today is October thirteenth, 1983. I'm here with George M. Carter. What does "M" stand for, by the way?

GMC Morris.

JAD Morris. I guess I should have you spell your whole name, if that's okay.

GMC My name is George Morris Carter. G-E-O-R-G-E M-O-R-R-I-S C-A-R-T-E-R.

JAD Okay.. We're at his home in Tompkinsville and it's, uh, do you have the time?

GMC About seven fourteen.

JAD It's about seven fourteen. Okay. Well, to begin, let's start with some biographical information. Tell me a little bit. When were you born and where and so on.

GMC I was born in the Rockbridge community. That's about five-six mile north of Tompkinsville here. Course, Tompkinsville being the county seat of

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Monroe County. And I'm out of a family of ten children being born, nine of us living to be grown. I now have one brother and four sisters living. My father and mother are both dead. My mother passed away in 1934, my father in nineteen and fifty-one. I was raised on a farm. Did mostly just farm work until I went into the Army in nineteen and forty-one, on April the twelfth. And I served in the Army about twenty-six month. After that I returned home disabled with a stomach trouble and nervousness. (JAD: Uh-huh.) ¶ Then I started working at other jobs and worked on the farm some and then I went to other places and worked. I worked for the railroad -- Southern Railroad Company in Louisville. And then I came back and went to the Bowling Green Business University, Bowling Green, Kentucky. Took a commercial course. After that, I came home and got a job as a bookkeeper with the Whitehill Motor Company, here in Tompkinsville with the Ford Agency. I worked there for couple of years, I guess. ¶ In nineteen and forty-nine I ran for office and was elected as County Tax Commissioner of Monroe County. I served in that capacity for three year. Almost three and a half years. ¶ And at that time I was

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appointed to a rural mail carrier, rural letter carrier, carrying the mail out to the country starting on Route One, which went south into Tennessee. Had a few patrons lived in Macon County, Tennessee. Then I transferred to Route Three, the route that run through Rockbridge, in the community where I was born. (JAD: Uh-huh.) I carried the mail on that route for twenty years, after serving around six years on Route One. So after I carried for, as I say, for more than twenty-six years, why I became ill with a little heart failure. (JAD: Hmmm.) At which I had to retire at the age sixty, after serving, as I say, for almost twenty-seven years. And I had to retire on, uh, I had to retire. (JAD: Uh huh.) Since then, I've just, I also own some farmland and I do have cattle, which I spend some time checking those or looking at them, as I have two houses on the two small farms I own, with tenants in those houses. And they look after my cattle. I've always enjoyed my work, and especially enjoy my farmwork -- used to enjoy my farmwork -- which I wished I could be doing now. But, uh, I've always enjoyed the people of Monroe County. The people of this county have given me a good life; they've helped me in any way that

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I've asked them to. I've had good people to carry the mail for. That's just about my life history, I guess. [GMC and JAD laugh.]

As I was telling you; I worked for Dr. [Lynwood] Montell's father; worked for his grandfather.

JAD His name was . . . ?

GMC His grandfather was named Mister Chris Chapman, a real good friend of mine. (JAD: Uh-huh.) In fact, when I was a young man, getting ready to go out to seek employment, he advised me about, in my travels, to watch; there would be people that would take advantage of me. And therefore, I would never forget Mr. Chapman, as he advised me. And I learned in my travels that everything that he told me was true. I always enjoyed his [Lynwood Montell's] grandfather, and his father, of course. xxx was a good friend of mine. We always had good times when we got together with a little family get-together. I could exchange a few yarns, you might say. (JAD: [laughs].) Jokes. That's what I know about the stories and the jokes that I know; some of them are actual facts and, of course, some them are hearsay [GMC and JAD laugh].

So anything that goes along with this tonight, I'm real pleased to tell you what little I know.

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JAD Okay.

GMC It'll be a pleasure.

JAD Well, it's certainly my pleasure to be here. Let's see, I have just a couple of quick questions regarding your previous employment. Okay, you were in the Army for twenty-six months (GMC: Uh-huh.), beginning in 'forty-one. And then immediately you were with the Southern Railroad Company?

GMC Yes, I came out of the Army in nineteen and forty-three. Well I just worked at different jobs around. And then in 1945, I got the job with the Southern Railroad. (JAD: Uh-huh.) and worked for just a few months, because I really wanted a better job and I didn't have much education, I'll tell you that.

But I took an aptitude test and was accepted at the Bowling Green Business University (JAD: Uh-huh.). I went to Louisville, Kentucky, at the University of Louisville, and had taken an aptitude test. And the gentleman there that gave me the test suggested I take my schooling there in Louisville. (JAD: Uh-huh.) But I had heard of the Bowling Green Business University being a very highly recommended school. So, on my own, I went to Bowling Green and went into the Bowling Green Business University and met the

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President, Dr. J. Murray Hill. And I explained to him that I'd had this test but I didn't have any high school. But I'd taken this test and I was willing to try to improve my education. Well, Mr. Hill looked at me very straight. Anyway, I told him what this gentleman at Louisville had told me, that he didn't believe I could get in the school at Bowling Green, because it was a high standard school. I'll never forget, Mr. Hill punched a button. His secretary called two or three more in and I'll never forget what he said. He said, "Here's Mr. Carter from right over the hill, here, a neighbor, at Tompkinsville, wanting to come to our university. And he says he's been advised by a man in Louisville that he don't think that he can get in." He said, "That would just be like me standing out here and some fellow [pronounced "feller"] wanted to go to St. Louis and me directing him to Nashville." (JAD: [laughs].)

So I went on through school. And as I say, I didn't have much education, but I'd always been pretty good in math, as far as figures, a little bit. (JAD: Uh-huh.) So the first day we met with Mr. W.L. Mathews (SP). I believe he was Vice-President,

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maybe, of the school at that time. So he said, "We'll have a little rapid calculation." We were all there; of course, I was just a very dumb old country boy, I knew. But anyway, he said, "This lady was going down the road with her geese." And he says, "She met someone and this gentleman asked her, says, 'Where're you going with your twenty geese?' She says, 'I don't have twenty geese. But if I had as many again geese as I have, plus half as many geese as I've got, plus two and a half,' says, 'I would have twenty geese.'" Says, "How many geese did she have?" Well, I started on the figuring right quick. I said, "She had seven." He looked up, he said, "That's right." Said, "What's your name?" I said, "George M. Carter." Said, "Where you from?" I said, "Tompkinsville." Well, he says, "If you do as well as some of the Carters I know in Tompkinsville, who are my friends," said, "you're going to do all right in this college." Which I did. I really appreciated what schooling I got there. I had a little advisor, classification advisor, who was Mr. Fuquay (SP). He helped me every way that he could.

So things went on. And when I was leaving, got

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my little diploma, why, I went in to thank Mr. Hill, the President, for accepting me. Anyway, he called his secretary in and wrote me a real nice letter of recommendation, which I've got today. xxx .

(JAD: Hummm.)

So I've, like I told you, I didn't tell you about my other little experiences. After I started carrying the mail, When I was a young man I always thought I'd like to be a radio announcer, but I didn't think I had the knowledge. So our local radio station here, WTYK, operating on thirteen hundred seventy kilocycles; I had a friend from Selina, Tennessee that owned part interest in it. So he and I were together visiting out there one day and he was explaining to me about his trouble getting employees. And I'd looked at the equipment stuff and I told him, said, "I believe I could do that." I said, "I've always wanted to." Well, I came home and I guess in twenty or thirty minutes he came down to my home here. He said, "I've called Atlanta, Georgia and they advised me -- as long as I had a [n] employee in the station that had license -- that you could come in and do some work. Help us." So I went out and took my training. Wasn't long till I went to Nashville and

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took the examination and got my license.

JAD That was what year?

GMC That was in 1967. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) So I disc-jockeyed after I would get off the mail, mostly in the afternoons. Just as a part-time job. Didn't get much pay out of it, but it was something that I kind of [pronounced "kindly"] wanted to do and really enjoyed it. And I had a lot of friends that xxx my old country brogue fit right in with it. And they still talk to me today about it, wished I was on the radio -- which I could be if I was able, I think. In fact, they mentioned it to me a few times. But I just quit and I had, like I say, I quit just about the time I had my heart trouble. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) So I've been more just at leisure for the last four year -- will be five next March. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) I had to retire in 1979. About the first of April, 1979. [four second pause] Let's see --

JAD Uh-huh. Excuse me, I was just going to ask: You mentioned a Mr. Fuquay a while ago (GMC: Yes.); how might that be spelled? Do you remember, approximately?

GMC I believe it was F-O-Q-U-A, I believe. (JAD: Okay.) Maybe F-U-Q-U-A. It was -- ha, I'm sorry that I can't spell it.

JAD That's okay, no problem. Not a problem.

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But he was William Fuquay and he was raised over in Clarksville, Tennessee. (JAD: Uh-huh.) He was just an old southern guy. Anyway, I was, like I say, about twenty-six year old when I started in school there. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And I'll never forget another thing he told me: Now he had the old southern brogue like I've got, and he said [GMC takes on a stronger "brogue" for this characterization], "George [pronounced "Jo-j"]," said, "now if these little girls [pronounced "gulls"] come in here and start beating the keys off of this typewriters," said, "don't let that bother you." Said, "The^{ir} fingers are limber," and said, "you look like you've done a lot of hard work," which I had, doing farmwork and other work. And he said, "You just don't pay no attention to that and go right along and you'll make it." And I did. I really appreciated that.

I know anything that would happen in the class, something that would happen in their grown-up days, just like he said: "George, tell them how we used to turn the corn to meal, to mill." I don't know if you know what that means.

JAD Afraid not.

GMC When I grew up in Rockbridge community and all other

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communities, there was what's called a grist mill. You would shell your corn, take about a bushel and put it in a bag and you'd tie the bag and then you'd lay it over your mule or horse, whatever you was riding, and hold it and take it to the mill. And they would grind that and they would take out, I believe it was, an eighth for their services for grinding it. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Then, of course, they would sell that to someone that didn't grow their own corn. And he'd have me to tell them things like that. And also he says, "George, you know, when you --" And back then, of course, everyone had coal oil lamps. He'd said, "You'd take coal oil and you didn't want to get that oil on your horse. It'd take the hair off. You'd tie it to the bottom of your stirrup on your saddle." And he would always, in class, he would always refer to me. I guess a lot of them thought, well, I was just a "pick." But he knew that I knew what we were talking about, because a lot of them there were out of the city, and in fact we had some from Cuba in school. Lot of them didn't know what we were talking about (JAD: Uh-huh.), and we'd explain it to them. (JAD: Uh-huh.) But he was a real gentleman and in fact I really appreciated going to the business university. It helped me through life.

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JAD Did you say that you would be thought of as a "pick"?

GMC I guess that's what it is, just kind of a pick.
Picked me as a pet or as a, you know --

JAD Oh, oh. Uh-huh.

GMC You know what I mean. Just picked me, you know what they call it.

JAD Like picked out. Uh-huh.

GMC Yeah, just picked him out from the others. Why didn't he talk to me that way. (JAD: Uh-huh, uh-huh.) When I first went in I think he understood that I was more of a country boy than a city fellow. Course, nothing wrong with city people. I've got a lot of friends. But there's so much in the country that maybe you see that you don't see in the city. Just like you can take a country boy to the city and he'd get lost or something. It's the same way. (JAD: Yeah.) So it was real, real nice to be in the business university at Bowling Green.

JAD Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about your business as a bookkeeper with Whitehill?

GMC Yes. I was with Whitehill Motor Company. And I went in there and I really didn't know if I could handle it. I thought I could, because I thought I had the qualifications after I'd gone to the school there at Bowling Green.

JAD Uh-huh. This was, excuse me, right out of Bowling Green Business University?

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GMC

That's right. I started there the twenty-eighth of March, nineteen hundred and forty-seven. (JAD: Hmmm.) So, I got out of school March the twenty-eighth, nineteen hundred and forty-seven. And I started just right after that. But I started keeping the books for this gentleman. Of course, he didn't know much about bookkeeping. His wife would work for the governor in Frankfort and that's how he met her. In fact, he was raised up in Central, Kentucky. His name was S.L. Hill. A very nice fellow; good fellow to work for. And so come the end of the month, I had to make out a financial statement each month. So he wanted to know why it was taking me so long there on the first time. Said, "The other girl, seemed like, didn't have any trouble." Well, they'd had this set up on an old corporation plan and so I got to checking. And they had showed surplus. And every month, she just changed that surplus and made it balance. [GMC and JAD laugh.] Course, I would work, maybe, for two or three days trying to find three cents or two cents where I was out of balance, cause I had the general ^{job of} xxx bookkeeping, you know. Debit and credit. (JAD: Uh-huh.) So after I explained it to him, he, I think, he understood.

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You wanted to know my history. I forgot to tell you. The main thing happened in 1955. I was thirty-six year old and I met a woman in Tennessee, at Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee. Was a school teacher. She was thirty-two. So we got married in Springfield, Tennessee on August the twenty-seventh, nineteen and fifty-five.

JAD And her name?

GMC Her name was Helen Spivey.

JAD S-P-I--

GMC S-P-I-V-E-Y. Her father run a general store about four miles south of Gamaliel, Kentucky. And Gamaliel is just about one mile from the Tennessee line, in Kentucky. It's a Bible name, I think, Gamaliel. A lot of people, it's hard to pronounce it. G-A-M-A-L-I-E-L, Gamaliel. But, her mother was dead when we got married. She has one brother. Her father came and spent his last five years with us here. (JAD: Uh-huh.) He'd retired from his store

xxx . My wife's brother is now administrator of the schools in, I believe it's, McMinnville, Tennessee in Warren County. And he's been there for twenlve or fifteen years. But he also had been a Principle at Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee and work^{ed} with the students and also in the Super-

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intendent's Office in the county seat, Lafayette, Tennessee.

But, we have one daughter. She's twenty-five. She was born in 1958. She graduated from Tompkinsville High School, 1976. Entered the University of Kentucky that fall. Graduated in nineteen and eighty. Came back to Monroe County. Taught school in the Tompkinsville Elementary School with her mother one year. (JAD: Oh, that's nice.) Then she went to the, they sent her to Gamaliel the next year. (JAD: Uh-huh, uh-huh.) And then, last year, 1982, she wasn't hired to teach. And she went back to the University of Kentucky and took another course in Special Education. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And then she applied back here at Monroe County Schools for a job and was accepted, or hired. In the meantime, she had applied for Fayette County Schools at Lexington. And they called her there, up, and wanted her to teach there. So she thought she had a little better set-up, or a little better working conditions. In the Fayette County Schools teaching at Yates Elementary School there in Lexington. And we're very proud of her, of course. What we always laugh about is when she was growing up going to school, she would never make a teacher, she said.

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She wouldn't want to teach like her mother. But she takes her work very seriously. First year she taught here, why, I told her that if they paid you [his daughter] by the hour, she wasn't getting fifty cents an hour. (JAD: Hmmm.) She'd come home at night and worked a lot. She taught second grade. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And of course she was really interested in the kids. I think that's what it takes to be a good teacher, to be interested in kids. Especially if you're teaching the elementary schools. (JAD: Uh-huh.) So, uh --

JAD

Oh, I'm sorry. Your daughter's name . . . ?

GMC

Jill. (JAD: Jill.) Jill Gail Carter. [GMC spells Jill's full name for the tape.]

So that's about my family history, I guess. Like I told you, I'm out of a big family. A large family. (JAD: Um-hmmm.) I grew up a lot different than it is now. Most everything we had, back then, to eat, we grew it on our farm. Killed our own pork, milked our cows, had chickens and eggs. And coal oil lamps. Carried water from a spring or an old hand pump. So life is much better lived now; the standard of living now is so much higher than it was then. But everyone seemed like we were happy. Had big families back then, most people did. Had big family get-togethers. Neighbors would come in. If you had some-

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thing that your neighbor didn't, you shared it with him. (JAD: Um-hmmm.) I'll never forget a neighbor -- he'd been a neighbor and he'd moved off. I guess I don't know who you'd call your neighbor; I guess your neighbor is somebody that'd help you no matter where you [were]. But he'd moved, I guess, about a mile and a half from us, or two miles. He came down and said something about we [the Carters family] are out of milk; our cows have gone dry. Why, he says, "Have one of these boys to go up to my house." And I walked up there, I'll never forget, and got two big jugs of milk. He gave it to us. That's the way it was back then.

JAD Hmmm. You mentioned that there were a lot of large families and you've told me and I've already forgotten: How many were in your family and where did you fit in?

GMC Well, like I said, there were ten of us born. (JAD: Um-hmmm.) My father and mother had the first baby, was a daughter. Her name is Glade Ethyl Emerton, now she married an Emerton. Then the next one was John, he died in infancy, at birth. (JAD: Uh-hmmm.) Then Clara, born next. Then I had one named Elzie [GMC gives the name's spelling], named after his uncle; Elzie Elsworth, his name was. (JAD: Oh.) Kind of funny to have it Elzie Elsworth, because a lot of people, they call Elsworth "Elzie," you know.

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(JAD: Uh-huh.) But anyway, then I had a brother, Denton. And Elsworth and Denton are both deceased. They died with heart trouble. Elsworth at fifty-two, Denton at fifty-eight. And my mother died at forty-nine with heart trouble. (JAD: Ummm.) Then I had a brother, Billy. He lived to be twenty-two; died in nineteen and thirty-eight with spinal meningitis, brain fever, I believe they call it. I was next. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And then I had a brother younger than me, Sammy Carter. He's working now for a congressman, Harold Rodgers. I mean as a local representative here that takes applications for any kind of government work, like social security and veterans'. He works a few days a week, works at local courthouses, like in Edmonton, Kentucky, Fountain Run, Kentucky, and Gamaliel, Kentucky. Here in Tompkinsville. And then I have a sister named Lena that lives in Upton, Kentucky.

JAD That's spelled how?

GMC L-E-N-A. (JAD: L-E-N-A. Okay, uh-huh.) And then Mary, lives in this county. So one sister's the only one that actually left the county to make her home. My next-to-the-oldest sister, Clara, lived in Louisville, I think, a little while, and up in Illinois,

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maybe.

But all of us have been a very close family.

JAD Uh-huh. And, of course, Upton's not all that far.

GMC No, Upton is just about twenty mile, I believe, south of E-town [Elizabethtown, Kentucky]. (JAD: Right.) Fifteen or twenty miles.

JAD My folks are in Glendale, so, of course, I pass by there.

GMC Glendale! Oh yeah, oh yeah. I know where Glendale is. Uh-huh. Sure do.

JAD It's Upton, then Sonora, then Glendale and Elizabethtown.

Let's see. Your father was a farmer . . . ?

GMC My father was a farmer. His name was Sam Bell Carter. And he married ~~Sarah~~ Bertha Huston Walker. And so they had this family. I forgot what year, now, they married. But she died in a very young age, in a way, we think, you know, at only forty-nine years of age. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Had a big family, but we had to give her up in 1934.

JAD Okay. You don't remember just when they were married, but, approximately . . . ? Ball park . . . ?

GMC I would say they married in about nineteen and eight. (JAD: Um-hmmm.) I believe they was, because my oldest sister was born in nineteen and nine. And I believe, maybe, the year after they married she was

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born.

JAD If you would, please, quickly run down for me you brothers' and sisters' ages, or, let's say, birth-dates.

GMC Okay. My oldest sister was born in June, nineteen and nine. My next sister was born in September, nineteen and eleven. My oldest brother was born in May, nineteen and thirteen. Then I had a brother born in February, nineteen and fifteen. And then I had a brother that was born in September, 1916. I was born in April, nineteen and nineteen. My other brother that's living, Sammy, was born in January, 1922.. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And Lena, my sister, was born March, nineteen and twenty-four. And Mary, my youngest sister, was born in September, 1926. I think I have all their ages.

JAD Okay. Let's see. You didn't get to high school, you mentioned. (GMC: No, sir.) So previous to your college work, what had been your highest educational level?

GMC I had gone to eighth grade. (JAD: Eighth.) My father, like I say, he just was a farmer. But now, his folks, uh, he had a brother that was a school teacher.

[END OF CASSETTE TAPE ONE; SIDE ONE]

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[BEGINNING OF CASSETTE TAPE ONE; SIDE TWO]

[Six second overlap with cassette tape one, side one.]

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Well, another one who had taught some school, but he left here and stayed away from here for years. But he [GMC's father] and my mother, they just didn't take interest, I guess, in educating us. But at that time, why, roads were very poor (JAD: Uh-huh.), and they finally got a bus -- or an old cattle truck, you might say, and kind of put a house on it. And some of them had to pay to go to school, of course. And I guess he just didn't have the money to, actually, to support a school. (JAD: Uh-huh.) I wanted to go, kind of, in a way, but at that time, why, they consolidated the Gamaliel School. They transported some of the Rockbridge students on through Tompkinsville to Gamaliel about the time I was ready to start to high school, and I just couldn't hardly see that. You know, I thought I wanted to go to Tompkinsville. Now that's just an excuse, maybe. But the older I got and the more I got out, I saw that I'd made a mistake by not getting more education. Especially when I went to the Army. There were jobs, maybe, I could have helped myself in. In fact, they called me up one day and talked to me, asked me how much

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schooling I had and after I told them, they let me go. Come to find out they wanted to make a dental technician out of me (JAD: Hmmm.). They thought because I didn't have high school -- But at that time, not bragging, but my eighth grade was as good as some of the high school. (JAD: Um-hmmm, um-hmmm.) Because I've talked to them later. When I was in school, I was -- what we used to call "cyphering." The teachers would, every Friday, we had one teacher -- my father's first cousin -- we would line up, two people would start choosing sides. I take you, you take him. (JAD: Uh-huh.) We would go to the board and it was all mathematics. You'd take, maybe, adding. We you came up you got a choice to take what you wanted. And you'd be two to start out. And they'd start out with the primer, or first grade. And some of them was just so small that they couldn't, maybe, add, they'd just make marks; who could make marks the fastest. They call that "cyphering." And then they would just keep turning each other down, what you'd call "turned down." If I beat you, you had to sit down. (JAD: Ah.)

I was always pretty good, fast, at that. Se went to a school called Mount Giulliad (SP) there for a

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few years. Then the teacher, my father's first cousin, got to teach at a school called Rock Bridge. And he had a Model T car. And he would come by and pick us up; we'd ride with him to school. Course we cyphered, like I say, about every Friday afternoon. After we had our lunch Friday afternoon, we'd cypher. (JAD: Um-hmmm.)

We got to be pretty good. He'd cypher with us and he was very good. But anyway, I'd turned him down a few times. So he got a school in, taught back at Mount Giulliad. Well, I had a cousin about my same age, so she wanted me to come down to cypher with them. So my brother and I , I guess we walked three miles after lunch, in a run most of the way. We went down and, of course, they took the teacher -- first one [to choose sides] did -- then she took me. And that was really a high spot in my life to go down there to a strange school and turn down the teacher, you know. (JAD: Uh-huh.) So we had a lot of laugh out of that.

But I was faster because he was, I guess, in his forties then, maybe. And he always took subtraction. He had a big long one. And, of course, whatever the last -- back here -- I could see whether I had to borrow [pronounced "borry"] and I had those two

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down, probably, about as quick as I could get it.
And that's how I beat him. (JAD: Ah.)

But his son, now, is the Principal of the
Tompkinsville Elementary School. (JAD: Is that
right?) So it's been a great life for me. xxx
those things, you know, you never forget a lot of that
stuff, especially when you're younger, of course.
[When asked how to spell "cyphering," GMC laughed
and said he was unsure. He then added the following
statement.]

Now Lynwood [Montell] will remember that. Dr.
Montell, he'll remember that cyphering. (JAD: Uh-
huh.)

Other things, there was something I thought of a
while ago, maybe I should've told you, but I've
forgotten right now what it was.

JAD Was it about school?

GMC I believe it was something about school. (JAD: Uh-
huh.) We were talking about cyphering, now some
of them they call spelling, they had spelling bees.
I could spell fairly good, but not like, maybe,
some of them. Always mathematics was a little better.
for me, I think, than anything else.

Like I say, we were raised on about a ninety-
eight acre farm, which my brother and I (won) now. I
purchased another farm in about nineteen and fifty-

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nine. About sixty acres. And then in 1963 I bought fifty-one more acres. (JAD: Uh-huh.) I just raise a few cattle and just put up hay; don't raise any grain. But I rent my tobacco [pronounced "tobacca"]. So, I've always liked the farm life. Very independent life, farm life is. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Lot of people think farm people make a lot of money; they make a fairly good living, but it costs a lot to raise livestock and --

JAD

A lot of risk.

GMC

-- lot of risk. Biggest gamble in the world is farming. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) Course, this year, especially has been bad, you know. No rain, much. It's really been dry through this part of the country. Tobacco is -- some sections got pretty good tobacco, and some that's not so good because we didn't get enough rain.

JAD

Uh-huh. I'm curious regarding two things. I realize you were with the Southern Railroad Company only briefly, but what did you do there?

GMC

I fired a freight train. Fired the big engine. Back that time, we had steam. You've seen them in movies. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) There were two big swinging doors and there was a pedal here you pushed and the air ~~soo~~ from the engine and those doors would fly open like this [GMC gestures with his hands opening apart].

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And you'd get your coal and throw that coal in there. From in the back, here, all that coal sitting back there. (JAD: Yeah.) And it had this big steam engine and a big tank, of course. And you had to watch and you had to pump that, uh, there was a pump on that, on each side of your big boiler. There was a big tank back here with water. You'd have to pump that water up in there in the engine, and of course the engine would, if you didn't watch, you'd draw too much water in and it would cool down your steam. See, it was just all fed, engine was fed, by steam. (JAD: Uh-huh.) The engineer sat over here and then they had a, what was called, a brakeman, sat over here. (JAD: This way being forward...?) Going forward, the engineer would sit on the right side and the brakeman on the left side, where they could look out and look down the track. (JAD: Hmmm.) Of course, I would sit there when I was just practicing. Well, I had a place there where I'd sit. Three of us on the engine, at that time, and two in the caboose. Took five men to operate the train. (JAD: Uh-hmmm.) And you'd have to watch, in putting that coal in there. You'd have to learn to hit that shovel to spread your coal out [GMC gestures with his hands a quick series of slaps on his hands to

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illustrate hitting the bottom of the shovel against the floor of the engine compartment.]; if you didn't, pitch it in there, it just all get clinker-up and just lose your steam. (JAD: Uh-huh,uh-huh.)

So I didn't work too long. But I guess four or five months is all I worked. I seen that it was going to get in my blood, you know. This engineer told me one day, said, "Do you like this?" I said, "I'm beginning to." He said, "You're a young man." He said, "If you've got anything else that you think you'd rather do," said, "you get out of here. If you don't," said, " that's all you'll ever want to do, is operate a freight train. Or a train." So I took his advise and came home and, like I say, then, applied for the schooling in Bowling Green. Went to college. at the business university.

But it was very interesting, the railroad was. You had a lot of old engineers that was always telling some big tale, story, that would keep you laughing. (JAD: Uh-huh.) It was a pretty good bunch of people to work with.

JAD Did you pick up any of the stories that you still tell, from back then?

GMC I don't remember right off. (JAD: Uh-huh.) But I know we had a xxx from Louisville to Danville, Kentucky. And we had an old cabin down there, just a

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long shack, of course. Didn't have any refrigerator or anything. That was in 1945. But we had little old boxes we'd keep -- just wooden boxes -- we'd keep a few eats in. We'd go down there, go from Louisville and we had to lay over there two hours before they could put us back on the train. That was the regulation. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And I remember I came home and, of course, like I say, we killed our own hogs, and that was during the war. Forty-five, you couldn't get meat. Early forty-five, just before the war was over. So I took back a big piece of that ham meat. And I also took back a quart of canned beef that we'd canned; killed a baby beef that was real tender. We'd always go to that old shack down there and had a stove, coal stove, and we'd make stew. Course, we'd have to buy a little meat and potatoes and stuff. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) So this day, I was on the train with this old fellow and I knew he liked stew. And I said, "Well, we get some good stew today. I've got some beef that we canned at home." I said, "I helped can it." "You did?" I said, "Yes, sir. ^{Killed a beef} while we were down and canned it." So we opened that up and cooked that. It was good. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And I cooked some of that ham meat and, of course, you could smell that ham meat. Well,

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them fellows come in there and they was about to kill me. [GMC and JAD laugh.] Said if I'd of let them taste some of it, it would've been all right. Said had to leave that smell. Everybody'd come in and he'd holler, "Hey, come here!" Says, "Old Carter been down in Monroe County, brought back some good beef he killed himself," said, "we've got the best stew you ever eat!" And it was. [GMC and JAD laugh.]

And he was always telling -- another fellow was telling -- about a fellow that got killed on the railroad. Got too fast with the train. They had a curve in a hill, and I know he was a telling, said this fellow's wife was a telling his wife, said, "I've got the best danged engineer; my husband's the best danged engineer and the fastest rascal on that line." Said, "I told him, graveyard would get him!" Says, "He got killed last week." [GMC and JAD laugh.] Something like that.

But I remember we were going down there one day and we saw had fusees you'd set out. When you took your train --

JAD Fusees?

GMC Fusees, they called them. And this brakeman was on the back with the conductor. And if this train stopped, slowed down, he's supposed to jump out and run back here and put down a fusee that would be a

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burning. And the next train came along, if it was still a burning, he couldn't pass that. Well, I don't know whether they failed to put out the fusee or not, but a train come around the curve and run into the back of another one. (JAD: Oh.) Oh it demolished the caboose and the next car was loaded with Budweiser beer, I remember. And it, oh, it -- you just couldn't hardly believe how much -- what a compact it had against that. But they jumped off, the engineer did (JAD: Yeah.), and they saved their -- didn't get killed. I remember we went on later then and had to wait around there a good while. For they had to bring in a crew and clean all that up. (JAD: Oh.) We were delayed there for, I think, about all day.

But it was very interesting to work for the railroad.

JAD Fusee. F-U-S-E-E?

GMC [Agrees with spelling proffered.] I think I've got some here now, someplace, I saw them a while back. My nephew brought them to me. He knew I used to -- well, I worked with his brother-in-law. He thought I'd want them, I think, and he brought them to me. But he's still a working, the fellow I started working with in Louisville. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) And

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he's got about thirty-five years [of service with the railroad]. He's got over that, because he got started in about 'forty-four, he's got almost, about forty years. So he's still working. Told me he's going to continue while he's just in his late fifties, now. Upper fifties, somewhere in there.

JAD

Uh-huh. Okay, let's see if we can catch this fly. [Several flies had been buzzing GMC and JAD throughout the interview session.] If you want to get your flyswatter, feel free. Let's see. I'll ask you in the meantime, then, about your election in 1949 to County Tax Commissioner.

GMC

Yes, I decided at that time that I wanted to get in politics. My folks was in politics, in fact, I've got a third cousin that's a circuit judge here. His brother's County Attorney and their cousin [GMC and JAD laugh at a buzzing fly] was Commonwealth Attorney here for years. And, of course, I got to thinking I wanted in politics and run for office, but I had to take it that same year they passed a new law that put the -- Tax Assessor had to take an examination and it just lasted for that year. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) On the old law, if you took the examination to be Tax Assessor, you got a certificate for life. Just kind of like the old school certificates that they issued years ago. (JAD: Uh-huh.)

So they passed this law and they did away with the other certificates. Today it's the same law.

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If you were to have an election or even a special election, you have to go take an examination. So I went to Sommerset, Kentucky; they was having them in Sommerset or Bowling Green. So I thought, well, maybe there wouldn't be anybody from down here, because I might not pass it and I didn't want anybody to know that I took it.

So I got up there and two more fellows was here from Tompkinsville (JAD: Um-hmmm.), who took it. And one of them, I think, passed it and the other one failed. (JAD: Uh-huh.) But I came back home and they sent me a certificate. And I started to run then and I didn't know for sure whether to -- I didn't get too much encouragement. But I finally got on. I had to have two people of my own party to sign my declaration as a candidate (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) and file them with the County Court Clerk.

So in the meantime, the fellow that was already serving, the incumbant, he'd filed. When I went to have my papers filed they was a fellow in the court-house yard there, said he'd go sign them. I asked another fellow, and this other fellow was kind of crippled. So he went up and signed them. After that, why, this fellow aimed to try to bring a suit against [pronounce "agin"] me that the fellow that signed my papers had been convicted of a felony and had never restored his citizenship, so -- (JAD: Huh!) -- got me kind of scared, but we worked that out; there

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wasn't any suit brought. And back in those days we had, they called it, stump speaking. (JAD: Yeah?) We'd go to the communities and speak on different -- on the election date, each candidate would get up and make speeches. So we got us a public address system from a fellow, rented it. So we got ready to go, and I had a red truck. It had a flat bed on it. And I knew we'd need a place to speak each time, so I built me a little podium on the back and we'd get up on that to speak. So I headed for a little place, Heston community. So I, going on down, I made the awfulest speech I guess you ever heard. Boy, I was really telling them about it (JAD: [laughs].), just by myself, you know.

But when we got down there, why, the Judge Carter, who's that third cousin of mine, he and his secretary came to me and said, "Here's something that your opponent wants you to read." Well, I got it and I was nervous, got to looking. It was a copy, it was on real thin paper, I think I tore it in two a time or two trying to read it. And he'd withdrawn from the race. (JAD: Oh, ho-ho!) So it left me without an opponent. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And, of course, I went on and didn't -- in the primaries, that was -- and in the general election I didn't have any opposition.

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So I'd --

JAD Excuse me, I was just about to ask -- you've probably already mentioned and I've forgotten -- which party did you say?

GMC I was Republican. (JAD: Uh-huh.) This county is about two to one Republican, I guess, something like that. Or maybe a little more. But we have elected -- in fact, we've got a Democrat jailer here. I mean a Democrat sheriff here now. (JAD: Ummm, ummm.) And so it's, in the last few years.

So I got out of politics, though, I decided I just didn't want to be run the next four years.

JAD So you were the incumbant, then, from 'forty-nine to 'fifty-three.

GMC Yeah, I took office -- ^{Tax Assessor,} most other county offices, you'd take office in the first of January, first Monday, I believe, in January. But in Tax Assessor, they take office, I believe, the first Monday in December. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) Because their work starts the first day of January as accessing property to where they can have everything set up to access property. (JAD: Uh-huh.) the first of the year.

Now I served, took office, the first of December and quit, I resigned, in May of 1953. Started carrying the mail, May eighteenth, 1953. (JAD: Oh.) Had to retire, 1979. In about April, April first.

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Well, I had about a year's sick xxx leave that I had to take, before they give me my -- before they released me from the job. (JAD: Umm-hmmm, um-hmmm.)

JAD Tell me a little bit about -- now, I realize you were there for twenty-six years -- there's bound to be some stories in the mail carrying business..

GMC Oh yeah. You can have a few things you like to -- I remember this old gentleman came out; when I started carrying the mail there weren't any social security checks at that time, as I remember. I remember this one old gentleman started drawing his social security. So he came aout and said something about some fellow had been there wanting him to sign a bond, or something. And he says, "Ever since I've started getting this little constipation checks (JAD and GMC laugh), they've aggrivated me to death." He meant compensation. (JAD: UH-huh!) But when he said that, aw, you know, something like that that, it's really something that you really don't ever forget. (JAD: Uh-huh.)

And other things that would happen at different times, that you wouldn't -- you know it -- Really, y you weren't supposed to pick up anyone on your route. Was a Federal, now it's a tort, law. Someway, if you -- they could get hurt, you know, and sue the government. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) You could be -- course, you'd

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JAD What sort of a vehicle did you use.

GMC Well, I've used mostly pick up trucks. (JAD: Oh, uh-huh.) Because some of the roads, and especially when we first started carrying the mail, were dirt and a little gravel, and they'd get eat out, ruts, they call it, and you just couldn't hardly go. (JAD: Yeah.) Well, you could go in a car, maybe, as good, but a car just wouldn't hardly stand it up, stand the pressure like a pick up truck. You might, maybe, load cement blocks or something in the back to keep it heavier --

JAD For traction.

GMC -- for traction. And I bought several new trucks. xxx when you're carrying the mail.

JAD Um-hmmm. How many did you go through, would you say? How many miles would you get out of one?

GMC Well, I had a seventy mile route when I retired and I would put from around forty [thousand] -- I would try to trade about every two year. And I'd put around forty something thousand in two year. About twenty some thousand mile a year. But it wasn't all right on the route. I used it for little other things. (JAD: Oh, sure.) Usually, when I'd trade them, I would have around forty thousand miles.

And I remember my first one I started was in 1953,

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was the first automatic truck that had been purchased in this town. I got the first Ford pickup truck. Everybody was kind of afraid of automatics then. (JAD: Oh?) And then I purchased the 'fifty-five, I believe, G.M.C. and then I got about a 'fifty-eight Ford. 'Sixty-two Ford. 'Sixty-four Ford. Sixty-eight Chevrolet. 'Seventy Chevrolet. 'Seventy-two Chevrolet. 'Seventy-four, seventy-five Toyota. (JAD: [surprised] Oh!) And that was a pretty good operating little vehicle; it was cheap. It was pretty rough riding, though. Springs on them. And then in 'seventy-six, I purchased a Bronco. I got --

JAD

Back to Ford.

GMC

Yeah. And it was a four-wheel drive, of course, and that really helped the mail carrying.

JAD

Was that your first four-wheel drive?

GMC

That was the first four-wheel drive.

JAD

When were people afraid of the first automatic transmissions?

GMC

Well, now, you know how people had been used to just the manual shift and they just asked if it would hold up, especially in mail carrying; stopping and starting so much. (JAD: Umm-hmmm, umm-hmmm.) In fact, some of them, in these small, I mean, in these bigger towns, now up at here in Radcliff, there

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where the -- uh, I had a friend from down here that carried the mail there, was raised here, and he told me that he got a Chevrolet car and it was in town there, and he had to move so slowly that transmission just burned out on him. Couldn't keep it cool. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And they were -- in fact, this Ford, that I had [GMC muses to himself for a moment], it had a vent in it. And that thing got stopped up on the route and it pumped the fluid out and it stopped. And I called the wrecker, they came in. And that was on Route One, then after I got to Route Three, why it, not that one but another one, it did the same thing. But it didn't hurt the transmission. They were well built, most of these any more. I mean, I never had much trouble with them, anyway. But it was, sometimes, awful rough going. But when you got the four-wheel drive, why, I had it pretty well made. (JAD: Uh-huh.)

You take your leave here of a morning and it's raining, get out in the air, start snowing, by the time you get in you'd have three or four inches of snow and you just couldn't hardly make it. (JAD: Yeah.) So then I traded the Bronco to this; I've got a 'seventy-eight International Scout. It's of the pickup type. Truck type. So it's a good little truck for carrying the mail. Other carriers, most of

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them now, up in my office in the last five year, have gone to four-wheel drive. Most of the regular carriers.

Course, each carrier now -- well, not each one but most of them -- have their own substitute carrier. See, you have to have a substitute carrier when you wouldn't go. It wasn't like -- our set up wasn't exactly like the postal service with people working in the post office. They had a substitute; just, if one didn't come in, they called him. But back up until a few years ago, why, each rural carrier could get his own sub [substitute], without any qualification, you might say. If they could read. But if you got to be a rural carrier, you have to take a pretty stiff civil service examination. But, we kept trying to work for our subs, because they learned the people and knew the route and we tried to get them to, maybe, succeed us if we retire. So --

[END OF CASSETTE TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE,]

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[BEGINNING OF CASSETTE TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE]

[Thirteen second overlap with cassette tape one, side two.]

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So under the changes back in the 'seventies, from the United States Post Office to the United States Postal Service. It's more of a corporation now. They're trying to make it pay its own way. And then they put us under the Fair Labor Standard Act. We used to not be under that. And then they started negotiating, now, for their wages and everything, just like business.

JAD Yeah. There was a strike there for a -- a nation-wide strike there -- one year.

GMC Yeah, now the postal workers did. Now the rural never did strike. (JAD: Oh.) But there's [pronounced "theys"] several different crafts. There's, let's see, postal clerks and then postal carriers, there's city carriers and then we were rural carriers. And we never did strike but now in New York, I think, the city carriers struck there one time. But anyway, when they put us under that and negotiated, why they made all the people that started carrying, substitute rural carriers, took examinations to get booked. They started where they didn't want to put one or two subs -- some way or another -- on the unemployment; they started drawing unemployment if you didn't work so much. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Maybe they would have to learn

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two or three routes. Not over three, I believe, but they could have you carry it on three. But the last, I believe it's 'eighty-one, the last negotiated contract, I believe they started letting the rural carrier pick his own sub, but he's not classified to where he could go to the route until he took a competitive examination. That's the way that operating now.

JAD And so, did that effect you, then, were you still...?

GMC No, it didn't effect me, because I had my regular sub. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And I don't remember if he had to sub on any other route or not. Some of the other boys right after that -- course, see, I've been retired almost five years -- what they did, they already had most of them set up. Unless somebody quit or something, why -- But now they've got, I believe, there's one carrier down there, maybe one or two, that's qualified to transfer to the routes without taking the xxx, because they were already in there.

JAD Umm-hmmm, um-hmmm. Well, here's, I guess, the most natural question to ask a postman: Were you ever bit by a dog?

GMC No. But I did have an experience that -- when this woman, I guess, it would have scared me very much if the boy's mother hadn't have hollered at me. As I started to open the mailbox, she says, "Watch, there's

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a snake. Those boys have put a snake in the mail-box." Don't you know, when you open that. (JAD: Uh-huh.) And I'd have trouble with these little old wren birds. (JAD: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.) And you'd open that and they'd try to build a nest. See, there was a place on the old mailboxes had a little slit, you'd call it and it came out and it was flexible in there and you could just slip a letter in the box -- Without having to open the thing, yeah.

JAD
GMC

-- the box, And maybe those little metal old boxes were so old, they'd get torn out, and they was little old birds could go in there. (JAD: Ohhhh.) And, boy, you'd open that and they'd come out and oh, it was terrible. Hit you out before you knew it. Be right in you truck, flying around. [GMC and JAD laugh.]

And then one day, I went down the road and I saw a big rattlesnake. (JAD: Ummm!) And I thought, well, I'll run over that snake if I can. I pulled over right quick and he was too quick for it, he jumped back there and I looked up and there laid another one. And it had been killed the day before. (JAD: Uhhnn.) So I was talking to people that really knew rattlesnakes and they said you'd usually find one and you'd find another one. It was usually two together. Then I came by, I was on Route One, and I'd never seen a copperhead snake. This fellow brought me

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out a copperhead, showed me.

Well, we've got an old Mulky Meeting House State Park here. Hanna Boone, Daniel's sister, is buried out there.

JAD Hmmm. What's her name?

GMC Hanna Boone. (JAD: Hanna, uh-huh.) Uh-huh. She's buried just a mile out of town, here.

JAD I should know that.

GMC I wish it was daytime, I could take you out to see it. Anyway, I was down at this park and I wouldn't have known if this fellow hadn't have shown me this rattlesnake that week before that, I guess. Saw this fellow had a little short stick. I walked down and he said, "I'm fixing to kill me a snake. I saw it was a copperhead." I said, "Boy, you'd better get you a longer stick that that." I said, "That thing'll eat you up." "Awww," he said. Then I kept on insisting. And he finally got one, I guess, about three times as long as he had. He hit at that snake and that snake come up that pole at him.--

JAD Climbed the pole!

GMC He turned white. Yeah! Right up that pole. Just jumped at him. (JAD: Wow.) And he jumped back and hit it then and he turned white. I'll never forget

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it, how he looked. He looked at me, he said, "Man, if you hadn't have come down here I'd have been eat up." (JAD: Yeah.) So he brought the snake on up there and this old fellow came down there later and looked, said, "Boy, there's a rattlesnake." He'd been helping clean the territory off before when they was trying to get it a state park. It's now been made one. So he says, "There's a copperhead [corrected from the above reference to a rattlesnake.]. I wonder who killed that." And I told him about it. And he said, "Boy, we killed a lot of them in here when we was a cleaning out around here." And see this old Mulkey Meeting House he has got about twelve corners. It's a historical thing here in Kentucky.

JAD How's that? Monkey?

GMC Old Mulkey. M-U-L-K-E-Y. There was a fellow name of John Mulkey that came in the -- there was two churches, they built it, I think, the Baptists and the Methodists. But anyway they split some way, the history on it, tells one of them went one way. It's pretty -- Dr. Montell can tell you quite a bit about it. Dr. Montell, he's written a book about this section, over in Kettle Creek . . . ? (JAD: Yeah.) And, see that's across Cumberland River, here. And then the Coe Ridge

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(JAD: Umm-hmmm.) And so, he knows pretty well about this section.

JAD What other kinds of hazards would you encounter? Did you ever have any encounters with the fiddler spider?

GMC Well, no, I've seen those. The picture on the back looks just like a fiddle. We've had a few in through here to be bitten by them. Yeah, they've been a few in this -- in fact, I've seen a few. Looks just exactly like a fiddle in the back of them. And, yeah, we've had a lot of hazardous things, of course, in my time.

I remember we had a doctor that came in here that was a chiropractor. And he had two sons. And one of the first great tragedies that I can remember that we talked about a lot, we'd read about them, of course. But anyway, someone went to his house one morning, and there they were both dead. And his car was gone and they found his son and a colored fellow, I believe, in Nashville. And this youngest son had killed his parents. (JAD: Hmmm.) And, of course, to me, that was in the 'forties; I was twenty something year old. But, we'd read about it in the paper, but in a small town like this, that was something we'd heard before. (JAD: Yeah.) Course, there's been other things, if I

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could think of. I know that was at that time that it happened, why it was pretty tragic.

JAD Regarding, again, your years as a mail carrier, can you think of a story that might illustrate maybe a humorous time or something that's interesting that comes to mind, especially?

GMC Well, not right off; I don't believe I can really think of anything right now that was too much unusual.

(JAD: Uh-huh.) Because you would see something --

Well, of course, this happened to me. A lot of these young girls, you know, would write and they'd maybe want you to don't put it in the box till you see me, their mother, maybe, wouldn't want them to be writing to someone. So I was in Lexington, and I got to talking with this old gentleman, he was retired. And he was a laughing about it, said this girl --

JAD Also a mail carrier?

GMC Yeah, he was retired from a meeting. We was at a mail carriers' meeting. We'd have our state conventions. In fact, I started in nineteen and fifty-eight, and hadn't missed a one until this year. I wasn't feeling too good. I always attended my state conventions. But anyway, this old gentleman was talking about -- he and I got to talking about something like that. Well, he said he had an experience

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that maybe he'd carried this girl's mother's mail. Anyway, said she came out and said, now, "Would you not give this till you see me?" Said, "I don't want Mother to see it." So he says, "Well, I guess I can." Said, "I did your mother that way, since I carried mail for her she didn't want her mother to see." [JAD and GMC laugh.] So it was something like that.

Go on, you know, you'd have a lot of experiences of things that way. And the people would, come people, would come out and want you to rest, you know. "Would it hurt your feelings if I gave you a mess of vegetables," or something. And, you know, just had a lot of good people and then you have some that, maybe, didn't like the way you was a doing. But most of the time most of my patrons, I really enjoyed having them. They worked with me pretty good, I'd say. (JAD: Uh-huh.) I hated to give it up.

I'm trying to think of something unusual that happened.

JAD While you're doing that, tell me, your retirement with your heart problem. I mean, don't go into any greater detail than you want to, but were you asked to retire, or was it a matter where the doctor said, well, you'd better retire...?

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Doctor said. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Yes, I'd had some trouble for years and been treating it at Nashville, by the doctor, for poor circulation. Then I got to feeling kind of where I couldn't breathe at night. And my wife kept wanting me to go to the doctor. But I hate to go to doctors. (JAD: Oh, yeah.) But anyway, I finally called my doctor in Nashville on a Friday. And he advised me to come on Monday, which would've been the nineteenth of March. And I did, I took off the next week, thought I'd go down and see him and rest a little, if I had to. But when I got there, he checked me and he thought it was just still poor circulation and bronchitis. So I came back home and I didn't feel too good. But that week, I got to feeling a little better, I guess. So I went to have my truck worked on; my nephew was running a service station. And I got to feeling kind of bad there and he brought me home. But then the next day, I felt better. But on Friday night I had a little spell. And on Saturday night, it just seemed like when I was breathing I couldn't get any oxygen, or something. My wife kept after me to go to the doctor and --or a hospital -- so I told her I'd try it in another day or two.

Well, on Monday, I went to a local doctor up here, he was my third cousin, once removed. And he checked

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me and, oh, he got all excited! And he took X-ray. He came in, said, "Well, got to get you into the hospital." I said, "When?" "Right now," he said. And he said my heart was awful enlarged. (JAD: Oooh.) And I had a fluid. But at that time we didn't have the new hospital we have now, and he didn't have a room available. They'd been a putting some of them in the halls, till they could -- I told him I didn't want in a hall; I'd come home. But the next day, he called a Dr. Fix (SP) in Bowling Green. They took me to City-County Hospital, I believe they called it then. (JAD: Yeah.) And when they got me down there, why, they checked me, started monitoring my heart, And so he came around and he said, well, "George," said, "We found -- Dr. Carter found -- your trouble. But we'd feel better if you'd go to some medical center and have a diet test run on you." And of course I never, still haven't today, worried about myself much. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Because I figure we've just got a life to live and when it becomes rime to go, we have to go. But , naturally, I want to take care of myself --

JAD No sense rushing it.

GMC That's right. So anyway, he came in and he said, "George," said, "here's," handed me a little slip --

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and says, "I want you to report to Saint Thomas Hospital in Nashville, April the fifteenth, on Easter Sunday at 1:45 and go to have this test run." (JAD: Uh-huh.) And he said, "You're not a taking this real seriously, are you? You're not worried about it?" I said no. Well he said, "When you first came down here," he punched me way down here in the side, says, "I couldn't find the heartbeat. Or something kind of there." He said, "We coming out of it," but says, "your heart has gone down some, but the parameter is still too large." So they took me to Nashville to run that and they said my coronary arteries are in good shape, that it's the muscles in my heart. (JAD: Uh-huh.)

So I came back a few days after that and he told me to report to the other doctor in about a week. Up here, Dr. Carter. And I went and I asked him about going back on the mail. And he looked at this letter they'd written him, well he said, "I wouldn't think about the mail, let alone carrying it," Said, "Your mail carrying is over." And they called my wife and xxx in Nashville and told me, "You're going to ^{whole} have to change your^life style, now. You're going to have to take it easy." So I just had to apply for retirement, cause I had to. I had to do something,

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you know. (JAD: Yeah.) Almost thirty year in. So I got my retirement, went right on through, they retired me. So I've lived, just like I say, just fooling around and travelling a little, taking a few trips. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Go out to the farm and look around, cause I love cattle, always just an old country boy, you might say. That's all I'll ever be, I guess.

JAD Plenty of experience^{at} raising cattle, certainly.

GMC Yeah. It's really something interesting, if you've never been around them you might get interested in them, you might not. Now some people, they're just not interested in stuff like that. But I've just always been. I had a lot of experience, like I say, with meeting people in the Army.

I learned a lot. I remember we had a doctor -- I was in the medics. And went over to the infirmary. So they were playing checkers. And I was, at that time, thought I could play checkers a little bit. But I played a little dumb. I asked them, I said, "What kind of a game you playing?" There was a Lieutenant Kaplan, from Baltimore. He was a dentist. He said, "Checkers." I said, "Well, what's that one a laying on top of that one?" "Oh," he said, "that's a king." "What for?" "Oh," he said, "I can take,

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you can move anywhere with ~~the~~^a one after you get it kinged," said, "but these others you got to keep moving that way." I said, "That looks like a pretty interesting game." So after they got through, he asked me -- I seen they couldn't play much -- he said, "Would you like to try a game?" I said, "Well, I don't know. I might." So I sat down and started moving. Well I moved up here and he jumped this one. Oh, he looked up and smiled and I moved over here and he jumped another one. He smiled again. I moved over here and ^{he} jumped one and I took about all he had. [JAD laughs] He looked up and said, "You sure you ~~now~~ never played this game before?" [GMC and JAD laugh.] So the Major Wells was in [from] Bowling Green, but he was raised at Summer Shade, the little town you came through. (JAD: Yeah.) And he was County Health Officer of Warren County there in Bowling Green. City Health Officer, or something like that, in Bowling Green. (JAD: Uh-huh.) So he found out that I could play and he wanted to play me and, of course, I beat him. But anyway, he'd laugh and tell xxx: , "I'll tell you, I'm a going to give that George Carter the worst licking ever was." But he never could beat me.

We had a lot of fun, though, in the Army, now. We had a lot of experience in the Army there that I

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wouldn't give a dime for any more, but I wouldn't take nothing for what I saw. It was a great -- a lot of us grew up after we went to the Army, you know.

JAD Where were you when you were in the service? And also what -- not branch, what, uh --

GMC Well, I was with the Medical Detachment of the Hundred and Forty-Ninth Infantry of the Thirty-Eighth Division. See, the Thirty-Eighth Division, when I went into the Army, was made up of four regiments. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Two out of Indiana, Hundred and Fifty-One -- Hundred and Fifty-First and Hundred and Fifty-Second Infantry Division. Hundred and Fiftieth was out of Virginia and Hundred and Forty-Ninth, Kentucky. They were old National Guard units and they mobilized them. But after that, was called the Old Square Division. And then after we got in the Army, they triangled it. Called it the Triangle and took the Hundred and Fiftieth Infantry, I believe it was, out of it and they made a guard unit and sent them to guard the Panama Canal. (JAD: Hmmm.) So that left us -- and they also at that time they added to us a cannon company, to each regiment. Which they hadn't had. They'd had anti-tank, but they had a cannon company, they had a tank

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or two. And they were closer to the front. The big tanks was a way back, you know. But sometimes they would be a tank slipped in and they needed to close some way. Now they worked it out some way. (JAD: Uh-huh.) But they figured that would be the best way.

And I was, I served, like I say, about twenty-six month. And I had stomach trouble. I've had it all since; still got it. Little. Got to watch what I eat. Just it'll hit on it. Something like ulcers. Now the Army claimed I didn't have ulcers, but I came home and later I was treated for ulcers for years and years. And that's what this doctor that I was telling you about treated me in Nashville, he treated me for ulcers there for years.

JAD Oh. And so it's diagnosed as ulcers.

GMC Diagnosed as ulcers. But now in the Army, they claimed it was just nervousness, so, you know. They got their ideas.

JAD Yeah, yeah. Are you receiving any veteran's benefits?

GMC Yeah, I've got just a ten percent disability, that's all I've ever got. So I wrote them after I retired to see if it was any different, and they said it was just the same, so -- (JAD: Ummm.) That's when I thought I had ulcers, when they discharged me. But

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they claim my records showed that they never -- it was just had -- And I, in fact, I had a third cousin that was a doctor and I visited him and they told me they could give me a discharge of certified disability, Honorable Discharge. Rather they, if I'd rather . . . , they could send me to some disabled place, whatever they call it. Limited Duty. (JAD: Uh-huh, uh-huh.) But he advised me that if I got discharged, to just come on home and I could probably get better treatment than I would there. Which I did. And he told me all the time I had ulcers. He talked to me a while back about it. He said, "Why, I thought you had ulcers. Everybody thought it when you were discharged." But now the Army's records don't show it. [GMC and JAD chuckle.]

JAD Well, it reminds me of what my father would say, you know. "There's a right way and a wrong way and the Army way."

GMC Yeah. Well, now, that was true, that was true. They would have you to hurry up and hurry up and then wait for them. (JAD: [laughs].) So it was very --

JAD Oh so, then where were you while you were in the Army?

GMC Yeah. When I left here, I went to Louisville and they put me, wanted me to be, in charge of the group going up there. But there was a few that was a drinking. I

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didn't much like it. So they put me as second in command. Another fellow and I took the boys to Louisville. And we got off the bus, why, we were met by a sargeant, I believe it was, and he took us up to the old post office building there in Louisville, and we were inducted that day. Later on they were beginning to letting them come home and do up business affairs and anything. But at that day, they was eighty-eight of us in ducted into the Army there in Louisville. (JAD: Hummm!) And I'd never rode a train. They put me on a train that night and sent us to Fort Thomasm Kentucky. We got there about ten o'clock that night. And they issued us our bedclothing and next day they took us on Sunday morning and examined us medically again. And give us some shots and issued us some clothing, what they had there. I'll never forget they issued me a one of those little old C.C. Camp overcoats. It'd strike you about [GMC gestures to jus tbelow his waist.]. You know, they had all that over and they just issued you whatever they had and then you had to go in later and get new clothing. (JAD: Uh-huh.)

And we had this fellow that was --

JAD Was that kind of like what they call an Ike jacket or something? Kind of short?

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Well, no. It was just a little old -- it was supposed to be an overcoat. But it was just for some little fellow and they issued it to our --

But, anyway, this fellow, Hoss [pronounced "Haws"] they called him, and he'd worked for sawmills, lumberyards; worked in the woods. He'd never worked anywhere out. And most of those people out in the woods, all of the water they drank was out of a spring (JAD: Uh-huh.), see. So we got up there the next day, on Sunday, and got all this done and through with, and their clothes issued. They said, "Now, you're relieved until Monday morning." Said, "You can go up to the PX or up to the theatre up here on the street." [GMC swats at a fly with a loud crack.] So I got up there and there he was. When we got ready to leave here, he was a drinking a little. And we got up to Louisville and they started to examine him. And they said, "Say, what's wrong with you?" Said, "Aren't you a drinking?" He said, "I ain't had a drop" [Said by GMC in a slurred voice.] (JAD and GMC chuckle.) And instead, of course, he was feeling pretty good and just sort of fell over in their arms! (JAD: [laughs].) And they didn't hardly examine him. They just patted him, said, "You'll make a good soldier." And he went on in and did; he made a real soldier.

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(JAD: Uh-huh.) But I'll never forget what he said that Sunday morning, course he hadn't had nothing to drink that day knowing that whiskey had died in him. He said to me, he said, "Carter," -- he'd always use two words, and he'd say, "Carter, Carter," he says, "How would you like to be down in good ol' 'Roe [Monroe] County? Boy we could go out to a spring and drink all the good cold water you could drink." [GMC and JAD laugh.] Something like that, you know, you don't forget. But he went on and made, he was a machine gun operator. Boy, he made a real soldier. They said really did a good job. He's here now. Lives out here toward Rockbridge. His raised, I think he has one boy. And his boy, his son, works with the Human Resources. Got a pretty good job. (JAD: Umm-hmmm.) But we had a lot of fun in the Army, boy. They was things that'd come up there taht you could laugh about, that you could remember. Yeah, we had --

I went to the rifle range, shoot some times with the boys. Of course, I was in medics, but I could hit that old bullseye pretty good. I know they was an officer there, go around, said, "Who is that a hitting them bullseye?" They told him. Why he said, "And you with the medics." Said, "Why aren't you in one of these rifle companies, getting all these medals?" Course, I

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done it for kind of meanness, I guess. I looked all around, and I said, "Well, I don't see no medals on any of these other fellows shirts." (JAD: [laughs].)

But we had some good times in the Army, and of course we had bad times. But I had it pretty easy. I couldn't kick. I worked as a medical technician and drove one of those old Army jeeps a little. We just -- I don't guess I could kick much on the treatment I got. Now a lot of people would kick about having poor officers. And it's just like carrying the mail. A lot of them be going down, they've got poorest postmasters, they claim.

You know working conditions are great, but I think a lot of the people, maybe, bring some of them on themselves, you know. You've got to remember, if you're working for somebody else, he's usually got a boss. You've got to realize it. (JAD: Umm-hmmm, umm-hmmm.) And if you can't take it, you'd better not hire out to work under anybody. You better get your own business, because the only thing is, there's a big wheel bigger than you. Anything else that you want to ask me about, I'll be glad to try to cover it.

JAD

Okay. Let's see. Tell me a little bit more about your boyhood. That was all in Tompkinsville, right? That was all pretty much in this area in here?

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GMC Well, Rockbridge. Around Rockbridge, yeah. I grew up, why, of course, we went to school, walked to school, at least mile to a mile and a half. And we would, at school, at that time we'd go and we'd have classes and then we'd have what was called recess. And then we'd have more classes and then break for dinner, called it lunch. And have about an hour -- had about thirty minutes' recess -- about an hour at lunch. (JAD: Uh-huh.) Back then and have an evening recess for about thirty minutes. And then after that, we'd go to school till four o'clock.

JAD It started about what time?

GMC It started about eight. And last till about four. We had games. Some of them we'd play. We played marbles. "Rolley-Hole." They still play it. It's about out of the -- in fact, Dr. Montell came down here and we went down and put it on tape. I was telling him kind of how the game operated. And you had three holes. They still play out here now, about every night. I guess it's getting about too cold, now. But they start here and there and there. [GMC indicates place in a line on the kitchen table top where he and JAD were seated.]

JAD What, about two feet away?

GMC No! No! They'd be about twelve feet away.

JAD Oh!

[END OF CASSETTE TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE,]

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[BEGINNING OF CASSETTE TAPE TWO; SIDE TWO;]

[Eight seconds of overlap with cassette tape two, side one.]

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GMC And they's fellow that can hit them that far.

JAD Oh!

GMC I've got some where I can show you some if you want to see them, that we made out of stone, rock, flintrock. But anyway, partners, we'd play that. And this one fellow out there, this postmaster, xxx , is about like xxx a while back. And he got killed in the Army, the boy did. (JAD: Hmmm.) But he come around, and they'd make little holes where it'd be hard to get in. But he could roll them. He had a big heel, barefooted, always barefooted, most of them, and he just took his heel real hard. And they named him, they said, well that looks like a cow track. And then from then on he went by the name of Cowtrack Hammer. (JAD: [laughs].) But then the boy went on to the Army and he got killed. In fact, they said -- I talked with people that knew him -- they said that the last time they saw him he told them, said, "I'll never come back." And I had a friend, his name was Carter, I don't know whether he was related to me, but when I was discharge, like I say, before the war was over, I took it down to the company there, I was going with through the company

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that I was discharged, they wanted to see it [?]. And Major Wells, my Commanding Officer there, he took this Carter boy did, and he looked at it [the discharge papers], read it. 'Give you a million dollars if I had that.' He says, "You're going home and I'll never make it." (JAD: Hmmm!) His wife was there with Dr. Tim Lee Carter, who became a congressman, served for sixteen years in this district. Took their wives out to the post and caught a bus back and they brought the car home when they were shipping them overseas -- or getting ready to. And he told me this fellow looked into his eyes and said, "Well, there they go. We'll never see them again." And he said, 'Yeah, I'm going to see my wife again.' And sure enough --

And I've known of others, in fact, I've been told about World War One, that fellows that would say, "I'll never be back." And they didn't make it. It just seems like that happens. I've known of another ^{one or two} _{^ xxx} in this county, happened the same way. They just had a feeling that they'd never return.

JAD Do you think, possibly, that was more frequently the case in the World Wars than, perhaps, in Korea?

GMC Yeah. Yeah, I think so. I believe, you know, I think the people in Korea and maybe in Vietnam had an attitude, "We'll just go over there to kind of guard,"

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or something. In fact, the people of this country in World War One and World War Two had great backing of your soldiers. Where they got to be war in Korea and Vietnam, seems like they didn't get the backing. I remember they asked me to come out here for a memorial gathering one Sunday and make a little talk to them. That was during the Korean War. And I told them that, I mean, that was part of my speech, that there were some boys there; their lives was just as precious as ours were. Several come around and shook my hand, said, "I don't believe the people are seeing it that way. I think we ought to." And I know it was on that same way. And you might say they just didn't hardly recognize the Viet Nam people when they first came back. They begin to now. Just for the last two or three years. (JAD: Yeah.) But, it's like you say, they looked at it more like they would not return. Some of them did.

JAD Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Well, we've gotten into a couple of things. Talking about games and early school and --

GMC Well, you asked me to finish. I never, I guess, got finished on my schooling. Like I said, we had those games. And then later on, we would play in the winter time. We would have a different game. I remember we liked marbles so well, that we cut holes in the

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floor of the school and played. Some teachers would enjoy it more -- in fact, some teachers would play with us. I started working out, then, like I say, after I got fifteen year old. Just didn't realize I needed the education. I think that's the trouble with a lot of young people. They think they need a little money and they'd rather go to work than, maybe, get an education. But every kid I've talked to since I've grown, I've tried to advise them to try to get as much education as they can. Because that's something you can never be taken away from. Every one of my relation, my nieces and nephews, which I've got plenty of them, I've tried to advise them to get as much schooling as they can.

I've a nephew who teaches here now over in the trade school. And others that's taken up public works that way.

Some of them's gone from this county. I've got my nephews and nieces --

JAD About how many nephews and nieces?

GMC Well, let's see. I've got [GMC counts to himself], I have [counts some more] I guess I have about twenty something nephews and nieces. Somewheres in the twenties. I could count them up --

JAD Oh, well.

GMC -- but I think that's approximately what it would be.

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I just had one child; one of my brothers just had one; and I had a sister just had one. But the rest of them had from three to eight. So, I figure somewhere in the twenties.

My mother's folks were a big family. Now, my father just had three brothers and one sister. But my mother had quite a few brothers and sisters. My mother's got a first cousin in Iowa (pronounced "Ioway") that's ninety-eight year old and she's in the nursing home there in Iowa. Now I was up there I guess about two year ago and she was almost just like a mother to me. I used to work up there some, like I say, when I was young. I'd give anything in the world if she could've talked to me, but she'd just sit there. She's got hardening of the arteries and never got a pain, I don't think. Sat there and grinned when I talked to her. Her father was a brother to my grandfather. He left Kentucky and went to Indiana -- in Crawfordsville, Montgomery County -- and got married to a girl by the name of Reddish. And he had a friend by the name of Pitcock, left here with him. They both married sisters; Reddishes. Well, that family all took covered wagons and left and went west and went to Iowa. They settled in Monroe County at Alby, Iowa for about a year and then they moved on to Indianola, in Warren County -- that's just sixteen

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miles south of Des Moines. He raised a family there of about three girls and one boy, but was never back to the state of Kentucky. Left at about eighteen year old.

In nineteen and thirty-seven -- my mother had died in 1934 -- my mother and this lady, her first cousin in Iowa, had corresponded just occasionally. My mother died in 'thirty-four; well she got a letter from her cousin in Iowa in 'thirty-seven. Not knowing that my mother had passed away -- see, they didn't correspond often -- wanting to come to Kentucky to see where her father was raised. And, of course, we wrote back and told her that mother had passed away. But I was eighteen year old and we would like for her to come and visit anyway. Well, here and her son -- he was about twenty -- came. He had a 1934 Ford car -- had the doors that open in front, like this way [GMC gestures with his hands].

JAD Oh, they swung toward the back.

GMC Swung towards the back. So, I'd been in Illinois, a cutting broom corn, first time I'd been away from home to work. I was eighteen year old and gone up in August to cut broom corn about a month.

So, I was going back that fall to handpick corn --

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did a lot of handpicking then. So I was going back and she said, "Why don't you go back with us?" Said, "We raise a lot of corn in Iowa." "Well," I said, "I'd just as soon go there as anywhere." Well, she said, "We're going to just mark that down and you'll go with us." So when they got ready to go, she wanted to go to Hot Springs, Arkansas. We went to Hot Springs. Stayed about sixty-five miles this side of Little Rock at Brinkley, first night. Then went on in to Hot Springs, then went through the Ozark Mountains, stayed in Springfield, Missouri. Then I went on in to Iowa.

Something that was kind of amazing to me (was) he got down here and had never seen all this red mud. He went out -- the roads was bad -- and, of course, it got up on his car. Just had big red spots all over it. Well, he had his car serviced, but he wanted to take that back up to Iowa. (JAD: [laughs].) So we went on and he took that all the way till we got in southern Iowa going home, it started raining on us. But it still showed the signs; he wanted to show his friends how it was. That was my first trip, you might say.

Well, I stayed in Iowa that winter. Cold, boy. We went out and trapped some. What I did, I worked shucking corn -- picked corn, or whatever. So, it

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started getting cold one Saturday there. They'd gone to Des Moines, my cousins and their mother, to get repairs for the furnace, to keep the heat. And when they came in -- we didn't, of course, have bathrooms, they had to get in the old washtub -- when they came in, I'd cleaned myself up and had my suitcase packed, coming [going] to Kentucky.

The oldest boy -- he's never been to Kentucky, he's in Denver now -- he said everything to me; said I was like the geese, I was a going south for the winter. And they talkèd me out of it. The lady, my mother's first cousin, she said, "we were expecting you to stay all winter here with us." Said, "You're the only one of my father's folks that I've ever known." And I was. She said, "Now you stay here and help the boys chore" -- that is, taking care of the stock; they lived on a farm, they was in the edge of town, they was in the city limits of town, or, almost, just right at the edge -- so, she said, "You stay here," and said, "if you need any money," said, "I'll give you money to go to the show and stuff on." Just like a mother to me. And she's up there now just helpless. It's

So I spent the winter there with them, and I'd go back and forth; worked back and forth a few times. I'll go visit, occasionally, now. But she's not the same, you know. It hurts you to see her. But she was a dear woman to me. Just next to my mother. [A few

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seconds of silence.]

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Then after I went into the Army, they sent me their local paper. Of course, I registered up there for the service, but I came home and was drafted here in Monroe County. I joined this National Guard outfit, which was the Hundred and Forty-Ninth Infantry.

JAD Let's see, you joined the National Guard --

GMC Well, they drafted me into the Army as they had mobilized the National Guard. You see, in 1941, the government, see, your National Guard is kind of controlled by your state. [JAD: Oh, oh.] See, each state's got a National Guard. But they can mobilize them into the Federal service, you see.

JAD I see.

GMC Someway, through cooperation with the Federal government and the state, operates your National Guard.

JAD Uh-huh. So, it's like you were drafted by the U.S. Army into the National Guard?

GMC Yeah, well, actually the U.S. Army then, cause they had done mobilized the National Guard. But before I went in, it was actually the National Guard. And then in January, 1941, they mobilized them and put them in what was known as the U.S. Army.

JAD When it was mobilized?

GMC Yeah, so I stayed in there for twenty-six months. Outside of that, I've worked at everything, just about.

Then my radio work, like I told you, I haven't

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covered that much. When I got out and started training, of course, it wasn't too long (before) I got my license. Every afternoon, just about, I'd have to come in and go out. I'd get a lot of letters from people wanting me to play certain tunes and a lot of them wanting to know if I was married and all that and I'd get phone calls. It was very interesting work. I had a great time at that; in fact I like that about as well as anything I ever did. I just wasn't that good. You've got to really remember your artists pretty good, and the history of them, to make a good announcer, you know. If somebody asked you something, you'd need to be able to tell them about it.

JAD
 GMC
 JAD
 GMC
 JAD
 GMC

Right off the bat, eh?
 Yeah.
 What sort of music would you play?
 Mostly country music.
 Uh-huh. Contemporary country music?
 Yeah, mostly like Loretta Lynn songs and Dolly Parton. Of course, some of those are playing pop now. I'm not good enough to really distinguish pop and country too much. You know, some of the same songs will make it on the pop and on the country, too.

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JAD Yeah, sure.

GMC But these fellows that really know it could tell you a little different. Back years ago, you know, that country music -- they called it "hillbilly music" -- it's made a lot of people a good living.

I went to Nashville on the Eddie Hill Show -- used to be a fellow name of Eddie Hill on channel five -- WSM?

JAD

GMC No, WLAC it was at that time, now WTVF. But anyway, Eddie Hill had a program every morning and we had an announcer that came from Nashville up here. His friend was managing our (county) fair. I was secretary/treasurer of the fair. We was getting Eddie Hill to come up and emcee our beauty pageant of the county fair. So we went down and got on the show. Anyway, he asked us what would be at the fair and everything. I took my marbles with me; had a marbles contest. He laughed and I seen he knew a little about it. He said, "Do you ever fudge?" [GMC chuckles.] Fudging would be -- you were allowed a span here -- some of them would get up and do that [GMC gestures the crossing of an imaginary line boundary.]. See, that's called "fudging." He said, "Do you ever fudge?" Well that tickled those little boys with me to death. I wasn't where I could

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see the (video) monitor; they could see me there
[GMC and JAD laugh!]. We had a good time.

JAD They'd have to keep you honest that way, right?

GMC We started the fairground in 1955. I told them I
could never forget that. I left the last day of the
fair and my wife and I got married.

We went out and cleared the land and started
building the grandstand. We've got a few other little
displays built. But it takes a lot of money to operate
a fair. What it is is an agricultural fair and you
give a lot of prizes to these kids who bring in their
livestock. There was a while there where the only rev-
enue brought in was gate receipts. But now they can
apply through the state Department of Agriculture and
they furnish part of the prize money.

But I served on that a good while and worked hard at
it; more than I ever needed to, I guess. We'd broadcast
from out there, too; I'd help them do that. We always
had very good fairs, for a county fair. A few years
they say wasn't, but it picked up this year. Had a
pretty fair fair this year.

It takes a lot of work putting on a fair, you know.
It's mostly volunteer work. You've just got to pick
your programs, something that the people will like.

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You usually have a carnival to come and that helps bring in a lot of the people, they like to come. Then you'll get a little revenue through the carnival.

JAD Do they split some of their --

GMC Yeah, the carnival always pays so much for each concession, plus a percentage. It'll come out. You can pay your bills that way.

JAD Now how many years were you involved with the fair? And what years?

GMC Oh, I started in 1955, and on up into the -- oh, I was about, I'd say fifteen year, I guess, I handled that. There hasn't been a fair, I don't know whether there's been a fair since, but what I've had to do something. I usually did some emceeing on some of it. In fact, they called me this year on Saturday morning. I hadn't helped them do anything through the fair and called up. I tried to bow out a few years ago, told them to try to get some young guy. They had me emceeing a tractor pull.

Of course, it costs a lot to operate the fair and, of course, I was doing it for nothing. They went somewhere and hired somebody to come in, you know. What I was wanting to do was to get some local person to help do it,

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because it would [sound of a flyswatter loudly smacking the kitchen table. (JAD: Dog-gone!)]. You know, you'd have to get younger people to do all these civic jobs with them. But then, this year, they called me here and said, "Get out here, they haven't got a judge to judge the mules." They had a lot of mules, you know. Well, I got out there and got drafted up to be a judge pretty quick. Of course, I emceed it for them. We had a real good mule show; about as good as you'd see. About the same type mules at the State Fair, in fact, a lot of these go on to the State Fair --

JAD

Is that right?

GMC

-- up in Louisville.

JAD

My mother and I always go. I take my mother to the State Fair every year and we always go to see the mules. We always pet their noses.

GMC

I was there this year.

JAD

Were you?

GMC

Yeah, I always try to go that day, to see the mules. In fact, I know quite a bit of the mule people there. In fact, a fellow ~~from~~ from Scottsville over here, Tabor, was there. And then George Key, he showed mares and stuff, he's from there in Fountain Run. And Higginbottom, from Russellville, up in there. There's a lot of other people that I know. In fact, I went to Nashville to see them down there.

FA2, F2

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It's usually on a Thursday down there. I saw them back in the twenty-second of September. I like to see them.

But the fair is something that you can have a lot of fun (attending) and you get a lot of bad people, too, you know, if they think that they should've won something. Oh, we had a lot of up and downs if I could think of what some people would come out there and they know their horse had won so-and-so place, why couldn't they have won there, you know.

It was very interesting. Oh, we had the fair board and we'd meet occasionally, especially in the spring to get ready to start having the fair about August. We started out, like I say, about the last of October, then we started having it the first of August, and now it's about at the last of September. They started trying to get them to where your next county fair wouldn't lap over with the same one, you know, at the same time. Then we'd have a beauty pageant. Then they've got a program -- it's a state thing, they meet in, well, we met in Louisville when I was a going. I'd go up there and represent our fair several times. Maybe the president and I or somebody else.

This girl that won here would go on and try to get to.

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be a Miss Association of Fairs. In fact, we've had one or two that won here -- more than that -- several, because we've had some to win since I quit, would win the state contest. Fact, we had a girl from Gamaliel that -- her father just died recently, they live in Nashville and moved down there with her. I remember her and then there's one, a girl, over at Glasgow that won at our fair then went on there and won. We really have some really nice beauty pageants. You'd get a pretty good emcee that would entertain you too. Now we had Boyce Hawkins did it one time. And then they was another fellow, he's dead now, that was a weather fore-caster on channel five.

JAD The first guy you mentioned, Hawkins?

GMC Yeah, Boyce.

JAD What's his first name?

GMC Boyce.

JAD Boyce. Right. Isn't he the guy that throws the chalk up in the air?

GMC No, that was George. George somebody. "That's the weather, by George."

JAD That's right, that's right. Yeah.

GMC But now Boyce Hawkins was the weatherman there on channel four for years. I understand he had a drinking problem.

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Then he played off. Then they got him back on channel five and really thought they had things a going and then something didn't go. But now he helps them on channel four some and the way it sounds now, that maybe he straightened out. About a month ago or six weeks, he'd become a grandparent, a grandfather. Anyway, he was talking about that.

Our fairs, like I say, we've had quite a few. Bill Jay, from Nashville, quite a few of those artists up to emcee the fair. He emceed the beauty pageant. You've got to have something that'll bring your crowd in to get your revenue to help pay your bills and prizes.

We've had a mule-pulling contest; they didn't have it this year. I always was in charge of it for years; emceed it. Put blocks on a sled and have to pull it so far and measure it. Boy, some of those old mules could really pull and you have some that wasn't so good. It's something.

A county fair is just something all the county people get interested in and they come in and have a good time.

JAD

And mostly agricultural? Would there be many businesses that would come in?

GMC

At one time, when we first started, we had a display room that some of the stores or business classes would put up displays.

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Then your farm machinery people would put out their machinery for people to see. But that's kind of played the way, it seems like, it used to be at the state fair, you know. Any more the Kentucky State Fair doesn't have too much machinery because they have a big machinery show now in February. Just a machinery show; that's taken over from the fair.

JAD Well, let's see. Gosh, you know, really there's so many things. But I don't want to keep you much longer.

GMC Now you just (ask) anything you want to ask me about, these old things. I know some of these stories that happened that was told to me.

It was like this old gentleman out there that they -- some of their folks passed away, they would take it pretty seriously. Anyway, the fellow's mother had died and they was all gathered in, brought some food. And this old man was a eating. Like I say, they took their deaths pretty seriously. So someone made the remark, said, "Well," said, "looks like Jimmy's a taking it pretty easy." He looked up and he said, "Wait till I'm through eating these pinto beans and I'll show you some old-time taking on." (JAD: [laughs].) That was a big laugh.

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Also they had a sister, two of them, married brothers. One of them had a daughter and one of his sisters was pretty bad to try to fight; whipped other women. But his niece got to about grown, why, they had another funeral and they got to arguing who took it the hardest. Wound up a fighting outside at the graveyard. (JAD: [laughs].)

JAD Really?!

GMC Oh, yeah! Had a big fight and there was a fellow name of Uncle Abe there. And this old lady moved closer to us later, he (Uncle Abe) was telling me about it, says, (the woman) "I whipped her all right." Uncle Abe says, "Boy, that little one was a horse" (pronounced "haws!"). (GMC and JAD laugh) Something like that.

She moved to there by home and would tell these old haunted tales. She'd call them "haints." She said that they lived so many places, and dogs and cats would run around the house and squall. Her husband would sit there and she'd say, "Ain't that right, Jimmy?" "I never seen it, but I heard it," he'd say. (JAD: [laughs]).

It was about a teenager and she told me about her and her son being a Sing-digging (pronounced "sang"), you know. Did you ever hear of Sing?

JAD No.

GMC Golden Seal and Sing; they use that for medicine. In

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fact, now they're growing it, kind of. It's a wild thing and they pick it out and it sells about a hundred and some dollars a pound when you dry it out.

JAD Really? "Sang?"

GMC S-I-N-G.

JAD S-I-N-G.

GMC I believe is the way you spell it. My brother-in-law, he's eighty year old, and goes out in the woods now and finds that. But anyway, she said, "We were Sing-digging one day, my son and I," and said, "we stopped to eat our dinner," Said, "We took our lunch, our dinner with us," she called it. Said, "We sat down on this big log and all at once," said, "that thing started moving and we looked and we was sitting on a big snake!" (GMC and JAD laugh) And she'd tell us that stuff when I was a kid.

JAD You mentioned ghost stories a moment ago. I love ghost stories.

GMC Oh, she was always a telling about this old house they lived--

[END OF CASSETTE TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO.]

[BEGINNING OF CASSETTE TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE;]

[Eleven second overlap with cassette tape two, side two.]

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in. The landlord moved to town and said that he came out ther and said, "Did you all have anything out here last night? A noise?" Why, she said, "Yeah, there was thezawfullest things running around here." Why (he) said, "They was someone at my house that told me that that they was a seven men out here aty your house a running around here and they'd kill the dog, but they was afraid to." (GMC and JAD laugh.) She'd tell us stuff like that.

Said they'd moved to a place and said the cooking stove, at certain times, would just start jumping and jump all over the house. She'd tell them old stories and , of course, my daddy, he wouldn't pay no attention to it, but I'd get right down; I was just a teenager listening. And, boy, as long as you would listen to her, boy, she'd try to tell it to you.

yeah, they's something else I jotted down you might get. This old man --

JAD What have you there?

GMC I just jotted some little somethings that I could think of [GMC was holding a small sheet of paper with brief story captions printed neatly on it].

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JAD Oh. Like reminding you?

GMC Yeah. Like Kettle Creek. I thought of one that, you know, that Lynwood Montell had written. But anyway, this fellow was Deputy Sheriff here. Him and his buddy were both Deputy Sheriffs and they needed some whiskey for election. Thought everybody wanted a little drink, see this is dry territory. They just made moonshine. Well, they got with this old fellow that sold whiskey and said, no, he didn't have any, but he could get some on Kettle Creek. Well, the ferry was out and they had to go through Salina. So he said they went up there and got this bootlegger went with them to get it. So they started back they got to thinking, well, what if the Tennessee law caught them with whiskey? So they placed this bootlegger up in the seat, handcuffed him and in the Tennessee law had've got them they was going to tell them they captured him on Kettle Creek and was taking him to Tompkinsville for prosecution! (GMC and JAD laugh.)

JAD And there was evidence, right there!

GMC Then I've got a cousin, Paul Carter, here was elected Commonwealth Attorney. It's something you might kind of laugh about. While he was electioneering he met

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this old fellow over in Cumberland County, I believe it was, and got acquainted with him. So when he went to hold court there -- they hold court once every three months, I believe it is, -- so he got over there and said that this old fellow got ready to xxx and said he noticed him. Said, "Hey, come here! Don't go away." Said, "I've got you some fish to eat." Well, he went with him, said they had the best fish dinner ever was. So when they came back after noon, the judge -- which was his cousin, first cousin -- called this case against this old gentleman for illegal fishing. Paul Carter, which was County Attorney, said, he said, "Judge," said, "I'd like to have a recess a few minutes on this case," says, "I think I'll just eat the evidence!" (GMC and JAD laugh.)

And then this Jenkins, I was telling you about, he told another one about the colored boy that died. Back then they had to, the undertaker, a lot of times, couldn't get out; they'd just send them (the bodies) by wagon or something. Well, they took this colored boy, had to take him way down towards Gamaliel with a big snow on. They didn't have a small casket; had a

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big long one. They just put him in that big long one.. Well they got down there and, of course, they got up and preached the funeral, then called on them to come up and open the casket for his folks to see it. Said this fellow went up there who was with him and opened it up and in going down there, that body had scooted down here where you couldn't see it.

(GMC and JAD laugh.) He said that fellow went up there that was helping him and said he opened this up and [GMC makes an open-mouthed, wide-eyed expression of surprise] "Where'd he go?" They thought they had lost the body! (GMC and JAD laugh.) Them colored people was just a looking.

Oh, he could tell some pretty good ones. Most of them would be on himself, too. Then we had a --

JAD Uh-huh, uh-huh. I'd see ~~you're~~ ~~people~~ looking over at this (wobbly tape hub on the reel-to-reel); don't worry.

GMC Okay. We had another fellow out here, Walden. He could tell some pretty good tales and he said that he had a cousin that got ready to get married. Nobody thought he'd ever get married. And he was finally supposed to get married and they met him this Sunday. He was sitting out in the woodyard. His wife was in, his fiancee, was sitting in the house

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there getting ready. They finally got out and got him and got him walking, said the preacher was asking him (going through the vows) and he just kept walking! He just backed the preacher clear on out in the other room. Finally got him married and they said -- I forgot something funny he said --

Anyway, said he come on into town later when they got older then and a congressman had come here. He thought he'd go around and introduce his cousin to him. Well, he said -- he's with the congressman -- he said, "Here's cousin Ing. I want you to shake hand with him." This cousin Ing looked up, said, "No!" Said, "You been a shaking hands with everybody else," said, "you might give me the itch." (JAD: laughs.) It just embarassed him to death, you know. But he's that kind of fellow.

When I was Tax Assessor, I was out (briefly) from my office down there. He run up to me, he said, "What are you a doing down here?" We elected you to be up yonder! In the courthouse!" He'd just scare you to death, kind of.

They needed some money and Judge Carter was practising

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law and they got a farm loan. He had two boys and Judge said that they come up there and wanted him to do some abstracting and everything and he pitched up --

JAD

Abstracting?

GMC

Abstracting, oh, that's seeing if your deeds are clear. And your line, you know. If you've got a deed that will call for so much. Then you've got to see if it's (got) any lien against it, or anything. So he run that down for them and said they came in one day and said, "Well," said "We want to pay you. How much is it?" "Twenty-five dollar." Of course, that was back when times were crunched. That old man said, "Twenty-five! Lord have mercy! Highway robbery!" Said, "You surely wouldn't charge no twenty-five dollars!" "Aw," he said, "Come on now." "I ain't a going to pay it." Well, he (the judge) said it scared him to death; he was just a young lawyer. Well, he said he kept waiting, said they finally said, "Fill out a check." Well, they filled it out. "I ain't a going to sign it." Judge Carter said he kept on, said he was scared to death. He knowed him after he learned him; he was just that kind of a fellow.

And, you know; you meet characters that way. After

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you get to knowing them, they're nothing like you really think (thought) they are. Yeah, he's pretty good.

JAD Now, Judge Carter is -- tell me about him.

GMC He's a third cousin of mine and he's served thirty-eight years as circuit judge; go's out (retires) the first of the year and his father served thirty-six years -- so they both, that family, served circuit judge of the twenty-ninth judicial district for seventy-four years.

His father, I remember him when he was circuit judge; and judge Carter then took over, thirty-eight years ago, the first of January. In fact, I went with him when he was running for Commonwealth Attorney -- the judge that's now -- I'd just gotten out of the Army -- and he wanted me to go up in the district with him and we went up and met a fellow and he was wanting to go to Danville, Kentucky and I went up there and the old man liked wine and I come to find out he wanted to take up there and get the way and he was a magistrate -- that's, uh, you know what a magistrate is -- in this county we have four or five -- they're the financial overseers of the county you might say. They're just like a board of aldermen or something.

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JAD

Oh!

GMC

But anyway, this old man was magistrate up there and graveled a lot of road; they take care of the county roads; so we came back and he got him some wine -- and he took the judge back and electioneering for him and he'd tell this fellow "This is old Judge G. Carter's boy, running for Commonwealth Attorney" -- says, "your vote and confluence will be highly depreciated" (JAD: heh-heh-heh.). And the judge, it scared the judge, kind of, he was -- course he wasn't judge then, but he got to wondering if he was doing the right thing. With running around with that fellow there drinking wine and --

JAD

Say his votes would be depreciated.

GMC

Yes, his vote and confluence will be depreciated. Well, when the judge got to asking me, I said, "You'll get everything up here in all the voting -- when his votes is counted he's got everything, he really knowed who to talk to. But such as that, it's a lot of fun, I mean I've had a lot of experience with these elections and I do stake a pretty good part in 'em cause my folks was in 'em -- course, after I got on civil service that cut that out --

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I couldn't take anymore.

JAD Uh, don't feel obligated to do everything that you have on your list there, cause with your permission I'll come back.

GMC That's alright, I can tell you some pretty good stories that was told me when I was Tax Assessor -- had a Tax Assessor over at Barren County, Glasgow, and this old man was, he was kind of a crippled fellow, but he was one of the nicest fellows ever was. And he got to telling me about this, of course -- uh, north, uh, north of the Mason-Dixon line we have a, you have townships and land laid out in segments. He said this old man had three daughters and a neighbor over there lived with his mother and she passed away; and so, he got talking to this bachelor and said, "Why don't you get married?" "Why, I hadn't much thought about it." Said, "Tell you what; I've got three daughters, the oldest daughter of mine," said, "if you would marry her I'd give you eighty acres." "Well," he says, "I tell you," says, "I don't know, I'd have to take her and try her." "Well," he said, "well okay," so he took her home with him and next morning he come back. And he said, "Well now," said, "what do you think?" "Well," said

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your daughter's nice, real nice," but he says," she's just a little bit bow-legged." Well," he said," what about that second daughter?" Says," I'll give you a hundred and sixty acres if you'll take her." Well, he took her and next morning he came back --

JAD*

Okay, uh, I have to introduce this, it's still the thirteenth^{**} of October, 1983, and I'm still with Mr. Carter and we're still at his house, and right now it's, oh my gosh, it's about twenty-five after nine o'clock. And he was just interrupted in the middle of a story so we're gonna "take it from the top," as they say.

GMC

All right, the story gonna tell you know is one that this old gentleman from over at Glasgow -- was county tax commissioner in Barren County, of course, I was tax commissioner here in Monroe County, but he told me a good story about which happened up in, north of the Mason-Dixon Line where the land is laid out in sections. But anyway, he said this old gentleman had three daughters and his neighbor was a bachelor, his mother had died and left him -- he was a bachelor and so this old gentleman went over and talked to this

*This marks the beginning of Side Two of the Reel-to-Reel tape.

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young fellow and asked him why he hadn't got married, he told him just never found anybody he thought he'd like. "Well, he said, "I've got three daughters," said, "my oldest daughter," said, "I'd give you eighty acres of land if you wish to marry her." So this bachelor said, "Well, I don't know much about women," said, "I'd have to take her and try her out." So he took her home with him and uh, the next morning he came back and he said, "What do you think?" "Well," he said, "Mister, you got a fine daughter; she's just a little bit knock-kneed." Said, "Not enough to hurt anything, but just a little bit knock-kneed." "Well," he said, "that second daughter of mine, I'll give you a hundred and sixty acres if you want her." aid, "I'll take her and try her." So the next morning he came back, said, "Now your daughter's a fine girl and I like her alright but she's just a little bit bow-legged," said, "now not enough to hurt anything you see, but--" Says, "okay, okay," says, "I've got this youngest daughter of mine and she's real pretty, good-looking, and I'll give you three hundred and twenty acres if you want her." Okay, so he took her. Well, they didn't come in for about a week, in a week he come in and

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he says, "Hey, here, what's going on? Where you been?" "Oh," he said, "we got married," he said. "We done had our honeymoon." Says, "We really made good," says, "think we're going to make a real fine couple." But says, "There's one question I want to ask you." Says, "Why was it that you offered me that eighty acres for that for that older daughter which is kind of homely? And then you second daughter, which doesn't look too good; for 160 acres," but says, "this 320 you gave me to marry your pretty beautiful; young daughter?" Says. "I want to know, what was the difference?" "Well," he says, "I'll tell you, young man." Says, "That youngest daughter of mine was just a little bit pregnant," he said, "but not enough to hurt anything!" [GMC and JAD laugh loudly.] Just a little bit pregnant, but not enough to hurt anything! [More laughter.]

Then there was another one told about going out West, a fellow did, and he stopped in this big park and he noticed all the people there looked like they were real old. You know, there were these three old gentlemen a sitting at this table talking. So he thought, "I'll go over and find out about those people and see what's made them so old. To live so long." Well, he went over and he

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said, "Would you tell me what you think has made you live to be a ripe old age?that you are?" Well, he says, "I'll tell you. I never did drink any whiskey. No alcohol whatsoever." And he says, "I've contributed that to my old age." Well, he says, "How old are you?" He says, "I'm eighty-five." Well this other one, he says, "What about you?" "Well," he says, "I'll tell you what." He says, "I never did fool with no women. I just never did fool around with them," says, "I was afraid of them." "Well;" he said, "how old are you?" He said, "I'm ninety-two." Well, this other one says well, "How about you?" "Why," he says, "I'll tell you what." He says, "I've dranked everything that I could get a hold of," he says, "I've run around with every woman I could be with." Well, says, "How old are you?" "Twenty-seven." [GMC and JAD laugh.]

This other old man I was that I was a telling about, another old gentleman,down here that told me just before he died, how he helped my grandfather move a couple from Bowling Green with a yoke of steer, oxen. He said my grandfather had never been to Bowling Green, but my father's youngest brother was with them. They got between Glasgow and Bowling

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Green, my grandfather wanted some whiskey to drink. Back then you had to buy bootleg whiskey. So anyway he told him, he said, "There's some whiskey over here, right off the road." Said, "You can get it." Said he wanted him to get it. He said, "No, you can get it as well as I can." So he went down and got it. Came back and asked if there was a store anywhere close. On down there. Well, he went down there and he come back with a little paper bag with womthing in it. He thought he'd got some sugar to sweeten it to make him a good drink. He said, "You fellows want a drink of this before I fix it?" No! They thought he was a reall going to fix it up. And he poured black pepper in it and shook it up good, said "Do you want a drink?" He said he took a drink and smoke went out his ears, out his eyes, and everywhere. My uncle said, "Why you fixed it to where we couldn't drink it." So they went on to this old fellow and my uncle and my grandfather -- got to drinking pretty heavy, got to feeling pretty good. And they got down there a getting ready to move and the old man asked them, said, "I believe we ought to have a prayer before morning!" So he started praying. And my grandfather got to saying, "Oh man, amen, do hip,"

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said, That old man just kept praying. Got to noticing that my grandfather dozed off to sleep. And said my uncle punched him and grandfather jumped up and started hollering, and the old man thought he was a feeling his religion. Said, "I thought he was a shouthing, 'sosI justsa kept on praying." And they stayed there all night. [GMC and JAD laugh.]

But anyway, I was a telling another fellow about it and he said this old man was kink of a character. He came in, had a real bad winter, and this old fellow had died. And this fellow came in that I'm speaking of, thought to get the casket, or coffin, they called it. Well, they took him back in said he didn't get in till way midnight or after. And they were all just a sitting there. There was snow on the ground. Said he come in and he got pretty high, the fellow had. And he had a quart of whiskey in his pocket. Well, they got ready to put this old man in the casket, said this other fellow got the casket and says, "Oh, wait a minute, wait a minute." Of course, he (the corpse) had done froze stiff. Said he took him and set him up in the corner and pulled out his quart of whiskey and said, "Here, have a drink!" Said, "You know, it's the first time you've ever turned me down." [GMC and JAD laugh.] And such as that. Now, that's supposed to have really happened. Like I say, I don't know much of stories,

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but most of them are really true. Course, those last two, I guess, were just fictitious. I mean the ones about the marriage and the old age. But,

But we had another little fellow over here by the name of Wiley. When they called in the gold, my mother was living at that time and so he was supposed to have had some gold. Well, this boy came hold with my brothers, spending the night, so he asked my father, he said, "What about Joe's gold?" Aw, he said, "Yeah." Said, "They took it in and turned it in the other day." Said, he brought it over here, said he had it in a flour sack. Course, you know a flour sack of gold, you couldn't pick it up. He said he called it -- told everybody -- it was dried apples. Well, my mother just pulled him said, "You know that boy tells them." So he went on home, told his father about it. Well, the old man was crippled up and so Lynwood's grandfather was a going by the house with this boy's father. They passed Joe's house and was going to this boy's -- They came out and said, "We're going to have a wood cutting." The people would gather in and cut wood for Mr. Wiley down here, wanted to know if you could come. This other old man said, "Let him cut his own wood," Said, "The man could take a flour sack of gold to Tompkinsville up in the bank could hire a woodcutter."

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[GMC and JAD laugh.]

Well, so, the old man died. My daddy, back then they didn't have no ambulance to get them back in the woods, hilly place. So my daddy told my brother, said, 'You all take a team of horses. You might have to take Joe to the funeral, to the graveyard.' But when we got over there, and he'd cautioned them, said, "Now drive easy and don't drop him. Take it easy. Don't be a hoolering or nothing." Funerals for the dead. Be kind of more quiet." But my brothers laughed about it, because they got over there, well, Lynwood's grand father had come in. He had a nice big team. So they got him to take him. So Mr. Chapman, they said, got on there, popped his whip, and said took off.

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Them old boys down there (?) said, "By golly, that's the fastest that old man ever went out of this hollow. [GMC and JAD laugh.] Something like that, you know. Something that kind of causes a laugh, yet it's serious too, I guess.

JAD Sometimes those are the best stories.

GMC Oh yeah. Well the ones like I told them when we was on that video, most of your good stories, alot of them, are on yourself. What you ^{really} ~~may never~~ just don't say much about, you know. Always ^{been} something around here that some fellow will usually say, "Well,

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he was a character," or something. "But he always pulled something pretty good, you know."

Like this old boy went in, he was a married and this woman was very well off. But he'd never had a whole lot. Anyway, he got out and he went in one day and he told his wife that he had been called to preach. Said, "The Lord had called him to preach. After dinner, it was getting time to back to the field and she said, "I'll tell you what's called you is the cornfields! You go back there and go to work." [laughter] That's supposed to be true, too.

You sit around, you know, and you'll get in kind of a bad position. This fellow Kirk I was telling you about. Was a sitting up there with his brother one day, and he said this lady's husband had died up here in the courthouse yard here in Tompkinsville. Said that and his brother was a sitting there with him and this other old man was a sitting there. And his sister went up through there and her husband had died. Hadn't been too long. And this old man that was a telling me said -- his brother was sitting there -- and said, "Look there, look a going there," she'd been married two or three times. Said, "Her comb's a getting red, so she's wanting to marry again!" So there, brother said, he just kept punching him and his brother just kept a talking. Said it had him in an

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embarrassing position. Yeah, you can get in some jams sometimes. If you don't watch what you say.

Well, I told another one about the religious lady at a revival meeting over here at Glasgow. They kind of had a revival meeting -- I heard some Barren Countians tell this one -- and said they was in the, back years ago, in the wholesale business. Selling coal and stuff. This preacher came in there and was a very good preacher and big revival and there was three of the boys that was in the business. And two of them got converted and they kept after the other one. They couldn't get him to ever make a move. And the meeting was just about over, had a big two weeks' revival. Finally, they said, "We need to do better." Said, "Why don't you do better?" Said, "We think we've met our Savior and been accepting Him," and said, "Why don't you?" well, he said, "Boys, I'll tell you, I was just a wondering who would weigh the coal!" [delayed laughter from GMC and JAD] The coal; need him to weigh the coal.

Well, I told you that one over the phone the other day about that old man that come into Rockbridge a selling turnip seeds.

JAD Oh yeah. Tell that one again!

GMC But anyway, they claimed he came in there and he was

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always -- they called him "drummers." And he'd always have a new story to tell.

JAD That (drummer) meant "salesman," right?

GMC Yeah, a salesman now, but back then they called them drummers.

JAD And they sold a number of different things.

GMC Oh yes. Just they call on all these local country stores. They just have a whole line of hardware, and whatever you used.

JAD Travelling -- by the way -- on horseback?

GMC Horseback.

JAD What did they have? Like a wagon?

GMC Usually horseback with what's called saddlepockets, come over the -- you ever see those?

JAD Something like that, uh-huh.

GMC They fit over your saddle. You could sit on them and you had bags.

JAD Pouches on either side, uh-huh.

GMC But anyway, they claim he came in there selling turnip seed. He was selling everything, but he was telling them about it, he said, "Yes, I sold a seed to a fellow back in some other part of the county or state or something." Said, "You know what? Just one of those seed came up in his garden and that thing just kept a growing until it pushed the fence out."

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Well, this old man a sitting there has always been some good stories. He could always top everything. So after he (the drummer) left, they got to laughing, telling that old man, said, "Boy, he raised a turnip, didn't he?" Well that man, I guess he'd stood it up anyway -- [a loose screw fell from the reel-to-reel tape machine at this moment]

JAD Ooops! I'm sorry, uh, as you were.

GMC But anyway, he said he really raised a turnip, didn't he? Well, he came back again and he got in there and he came in and some of the people at the store asked him, "What are you doing?" He run a blacksmith shop out there. "Oh," he said, "I'm a working on that kettle. Yeah." Said, "My partner, he's a putting the other handle on it." Said, "Well, I don't hear it." "Oh," he said, "he's on the other side," says, "it's so big so's that you can't hear him working on it!" That drummer looked up and says, "Why, what would you want with a kettle that large?" "Well, to cook that big turnip!" he said. [JAD: (laughs).] Yeah.

JAD That's great.

GMC In my lifetime, I've known several that you could tell something and most everybody would ("get it"). Like there's one a fellow told about this fellow that was sitting around that worked at a sawmill. He got to sitting around and a telling about how many

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logs that he got off of a tree. Oh, it was a big number. Well, he said this fellow had always been able to top it. Said that fellow (GMC coughs) cleared his throat and directly he told one, and oh, it was a waaaaay -- just ungodly how many logs that he got off that tree. Well, he said nobody said nothing, said he finally turned around and said, "I'll tell you something (GMC again clears his throat), this tree I'm a talking about was a forkéd tree." [GMC and JAD laugh] One fellow had told of a big long one, but this was a forkéd tree. They always top anything somebody else would tell.

Well, anything else that I could help you on, I don't know. I've about covered everything, I guess. That I can think of right now.

JAD That's about it for right now. I'll tell you what. It's getting a little late, but with your permission, I'd love to come back here and put some more of this on tape.

GMC If we can think of anything else that we can put on!

JAD Oh, I imagine we probably can if we set our minds to it. And as a matter of fact, let me save for that time this list I have to see what Keyes from my family you might know. Would that be okay?

GMC Oh yes. That would be fine.

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JAD We'll do that sometime, And then maybe during the day and you could show me the, uh --

GMC Mulkey.

JAD Yeah, yeah, uh-huh. I couldn't think of the name.

GMC Old Mulkey, yeah.

JAD Would that be okay?

GMC Oh yeah, yeah, as far as I know. Well, as long as it's pretty, you know, good weather.

JAD Okay. Let's see. I guess that's about it for this time, then.

GMC Well, it's been a pleasure to try to tell you here what little I know about my life. There's some things I'm sure I left out and some things I don't want to tell. [GMC and JAD laugh] But if I can think of anything else and you would like to --

[END OF CASSETTE TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE]

[BEGINNING OF CASSETTE TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO;]

[Fifteen second overlap with cassette tape three, side one.]

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-- come back, why, you're welcome to come. We'll try to go through it again. You might want to try to see that, you might want to cut out a little something that's not too good; get you a little better tape or whatever you --

JAD What I'll probably end up doing is just that some of it will get what they call indexing and some of it

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will get transcribed entirely. Oh, what I want to ask you. I think I've mentioned this on the telephone, and so I'll mention it again. And that's Mr. Miller.

GMC Norman Miller.

JAD You mentioned a while ago [before the interview session]. Dr. Montell had suggested that perhaps the three of us could get together.

GMC Yeah, well, we could, yeah.

JAD If that would be a good idea. Okay. Well, I guess I'll end this by saying the delay that happened a little while ago was "one of my screws came loose," so to speak. My mother's been telling me that for years. But on the open reel deck and we lost nothing of the story, I don't think. No problem there. And it's about -- oh, shoot -- it's about a quarter till ten. That's close enough. So that will be it until next time then.

GMC Okay. Glad you came and I hope you have good luck with your project.

JAD Well, thank you.

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