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Leon Heyward

Ishmael Lewis

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Leon Hayward

2013

Interviewers: Ishmael Lewis and Deborah Oden

Date: Unknown

LH: 25, 35...

IL: OK, I would've went out there and watched them playing...

LH: I had a picture, but I was looking for that... uh, we had an interview before with him on it. Cause I called him and asked that he get down here, yeah. He said no, he... then he had to go to Estell(?) to pick up soybeans.

IL: OK

LH: He needed 15 more bags.

IL: We're here, in the Arnett House on Penn Center, in uh, South Carolina, St. Helena Island, South Carolina. I'm Ishmael Lewis.

DO: Deborah Oden.

IL: And today we're interviewing Mr...

LH: Leon Hayward

IL: Mr. Hayward, will you start off by telling us date of birth and where you're from?

LH: Uh, January 21st, 1945. Said, 195 Eddings Point Road, St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Which is a part of Beaufort County.

IL: Born and raised here?

LH: Yes I was born in proclely [properly] *halfway* raised here. I attended St. Hel -- well, I attended Mary Jenkin Elementary School, which was a two-room classroom. And in 1953, we moved to Penn Center. Stayed here about six months or less. And then we moved: the new school was completed, which will be St. Helena elementary high school now. And I attended school there until... 9th grade? 9th grade, I went from there to Philly to live with my aunt and I went to Germantown Elementary... well, Junior High for a while. And I went to Gordin Spring Garden which'll be Benjamin Franklin high school in Philly. Graduated from there. I went from graduation day, I went to Cedar Rapid Michigan, for Heavy Equipment Mechanics, completed that... uh... where did I go? Uh, I moved around, and went to New York, I worked at the New York City Housing Authority for about six or seven years, and I moved back south, I went to Savannah, worked over there, operated my own repair shop, and from there I went back to Beaufort, joined up with uh, Lady's Island/St. Helena Fire Department as a volunteer, and went from there paid federal. Twenty two years at Federal, and in between I was farming, and doing everything else that I could do to survive.

DO: So what year did you move back here?

LH: Uh, 70 something, 75, 76.

IL: Could you tell us what life was like on the island when you were coming up as a child?

LH: Uh, as a child we were coming up, we had to farm, my grandfather's' only survival was farming, sharecrop, and uh, fishing crabbing, picking oyster, hunting, and we have animals that we raised that we would have to sell during the winter months to survive, and it was just a hard time. And we had to tend to all these animals and move them around, make sure they had water, feed them and make sure they had everything else. And I wanted to get away back then, but it took me to the 9th grade to get away.

IL: Could you tell me something about your grandfather, or your grandmother?

LH: Yeah.

IL: The elders of that time, how they raised you?

LH: Well, they only wanted for us to get whatever. Well, my grandfather did not have a complete education. My grandmother at that time I think sixth or seventh grade was a high school education, and uh, they wanted us to my mother and those to get a coll -- well, high school which at that time was twelve. And they wanted the same thing for us. And they would go under any circumstance to obtain this information or to make sure that you get this. And, uh, it came from my grandfather and my grandmama. And father, and mother. Uh, Julia Hayward, Thomas Hayward, and my father was Paul Seabrook, and my mother was Laura Seabrook. I was uh, happened to be born before then and my grandmother raised me. Before they got married.

IL: Could you tell us the type of crops that you grew on the farm?

LH: No problem.

IL: The sharecrops?

LH: Peanuts; Sweet Potato; cotton, which I hate today; uh, cucumber, tomatoes we had to pick, uh, any vegetable that you could purchase at the store today, they usually try to grow there. Didn't have a whole lot of fertilizer, they did a horse manure, cow manure, this uh, these crops was uh, planted. The sharecropping is that you could borrow... I get the seed from the guy that you takes the crop to and y'all would split the difference, and a lot of time they were paying a penny a pound, they would cut you a half a cent, whatever. So you could pay them back and they would make just as much as you did. It's just like some of the stuff on now, a big time ripoff. But it was a way for the older folks at that time to keep food on the table to make sure you have something to eat and one pair of shoes to wear to school.

IL: Can you tell us about... did your grandparents take you to church?

LH: Every Sunday.

IL: Where did you attend, can you talk about that?

LH: Every uh... our church is right up the road, Ebenezer Baptist. Uh, some of my family members went to St. Joseph, some went to Ebenezer, and a couple went to Brick. But I went with my grandmother, she was a member of Ebenezer, my grandfather was a member of St. Joseph.

IL: How were those types of services? All day processes?

LH: It was half a day. And if you're using a count number on it or time, say from one to maybe two, I think it was like eleven o'clock to three. And you come home, eat, and then you go to a small prayer house that night and you have gospel singing, just er, community gospel singing and shouting and dancing and praising to the Lord. So usually a whole day on Sunday to serve the Lord, uh church service.

IL: Since we come down here we heard about seeking, did you have to do that process?

LH: Yes sir.

IL: Could you tell us about it?

LH: Uh, while you was trying to get in, well, not trying but becoming a member of a church, uh, at a certain, a week or so you would be by yourself, you would have to go to the wood and pray, you had a, uh, a towel or something tied around your hair, couldn't be with any of your friends, and so it's just that at a certain time you would have to come in and all the kids being out there playing until you're baptized, and then once you're baptized there's another week of continued servin. It's been a while I've been baptized a long time [laughs].

If you are becoming a member you would have to attend praise I think it's twice, three times a week. The deacons would be there and stuff and they would take you in prayer and read to you and just go through the whole chapter with you. Until Sunday, and then they bring you into the church. Uh, they would uh, preacher would talk to you and then they would take you down to the creek, I got baptized in the creek there. The causeway at Penn. Between, uh, Penn Center and Ebenezer Baptist and the creek. And they would take you all down from the church to the creek... [unclear]

Uh, a partial, it's not the one that our grandparents took us to. It's a partial there. Because if you're trying to get into the church to become a member, they'd kind of want you to be quiet, and you can't run out to the clubs and stuff like that.

IL: Did it stop you from doing those types of thing once you did that?

LH: Yes, it slowed me down a whole lot because the older people would call it to your attention, son you just got baptized you just got your head out the water and you're doing some of the same old crazy stuff again? Go over there and sit down, something. You know, something in this manner. You might even get a whoopin if it's a bad words you use or something. They kinda follows you around for about a year, so... yeah.

IL: Can you tell us uh, thinking back, can you tell us a little about your childhood? Any lessons, or stories, kinds of stories you might think of? Stuff you think you learned from that?

LH: Which one of them do you want me to give to you?

IL: As many of 'em as you got.

LH: [Laughs] which one? Cause there used to be a [unclear] but I had good days and I had bad days. But like I said, a minute or so ago, spent a lot of time with my grandmother, and grandfather. There. And uh, I also said earlier that we used to pull some crab, uh, my grandfather used to take us, take me and my, uh, uh, one of my uncles out to crab. And he would get up into the front of the boat. And we used to crab with a crab line, not a crab net, dip net. That was... crab line. He made his own crab dip net. And um, he would sit up in the front and he would, I would, we would go drop the line. We used boat nose, which is a type of meat that comes from a cow nose. They keep it for about three weeks, and on the salt, and it would develop an odor. And they would knot it into a line and the line would be about a mile, a half mile line, it all depends on creek. And what we would do, go out to the far end of the creek, drop the line, wait for about an hour or so and then take the line and pull it, pull it up back into a barrel, and diggin' the crab, I got knocked over boat about nine different times in my life because if you miss a crab, that's money. So if you would take those, uh, something something push you back and knock you over. Uh, fishing that ball game we would have some of the same problem. Because the rest of the kids have gone ball game but they work you all day. Then you had to get up and go cut moss and stuff for the horse and put it in the store. And you, by that time, ball game is about getting ready to be over with uh, you know it's up and downs different rules story or sometime you do something they don't want you to do, you don't get nothing to eat, had to wait until the next morning unless somebody'll slip you a piece of meat or chicken or whatever you having or something and uh. So we had good days and bad days, uh, shoes you only had one pair for church and one pair to go to school and the rest of the days these skintight boots, which is bare feet, uh, you had some more shoes with holes all though and paper in it, uh. It's, it develop a fact that when you get grown one day you want to have the best, but a lot of times you don't get to the best. So you gotta sacrifice, with what you got. And today I don't want very much to live with but I try to enjoy living with what I got, because back then they didn't have anything, see how they live, and the world we live in today... two different story.

IL: Explain.

LH: Uh, back then, for them, and all, to buy shoes or something, they had to ride on, get on the car, a guy had uh, one guy had a truck, and they would have to take you about ten miles, which is from Penn Center to the foot of Beaufort Bridge, you had to take a boat or ferry over into the city of Beaufort, buy what you want, come back to the landing get on the boat, come back to the other landing and get on the horse or the cart, and I think back then it was uh, 50 cents a quarter one way and a quarter the other way. Today is about twenty dollars to go from where we at right now for you. And you might get to go to Beaufort, uh, doing the during the lifespan from one to fifteen, you might go two time out of uh, fifteen years to Beaufort, they didn't care to take you to Beaufort. Uh we had one doctor over here, which is Dr. Billy, black doctor. He was real good. And um, few years ago there was a hospital we didn't know anything about. Uh, undertaker was on this side. Uh, so wasn't much use of going to Beaufort cause it was nothing, you go to Beaufort you get lost. Uh, country boy into the city. And uh, it was just uh, a good life experience, this, today it's a beautiful one for me because it learned me a lot, how to maneuver, how to protect myself, how to stay out of trouble, and all through school didn't want to become involved in gangs or shooting or anything like this if something start, uh, we'd grab our hat and start running.

IL: Was there a lot of violence when you were coming up?

LH: Never. Only baseball, if we beat that team, we went to Scott, which is another plantation on St. Helena, we went to play baseball and if we'd win they'd maybe have a fight, or there would be a mount, went to Coffin's point, or other plantation on St. Helena, would be like, they had uh, they would come to us and, um, beat us or something, it would be a fight. But there wasn't no guns or knife, or anything like that. I didn't get into a lot of it, and a lot of people in my age bracket didn't get a lot into it.

IL: Can you tell me how things have changed since? What changes did you see when, prior to the bridge? And once the bridge was built, and after the bridge was built.

LH: Well, back then when, when we were talking about, they were going to and from Beaufort on Saturday, which is, um, it's a week trip, um... there, we had only dirt roads. We had a wooden bridge, eventually was built but when you got to the bridge you had to wait until whoever was on the bridge first crossed over, then you crossed over and then they decided to widen the bridge, and then that's when we started to get a lot of uh, people comin' in, and um, start buying and purchasing property. Because back then, a lot of time the property was going up on short sale and it was going through a little small clerk or coat here on the island and we had people -- some people like, I can't call them lamb (?), they were buying three and four hundred acres for about, uh, 80, 90 dollars, a hundred acres. So, a couple of guys over here got like, um, little or nothing off a sheriff sale. Tag sale. And from that point it just start developin', developin', ninety eight percent of the roads and streets over here are paved. Uh, back then, we might've seen one truck or horse and cart or a buggy. Today, you can sit on your front porch and you can't even keep a record of how many cars go up and down the road, that's all been developed into, uh, people movin' in. Uh, buyin' land, movin' next door to you. And they're taking a lot of the farmland, since they quit us from doing any major farming.

IL: How did they go about doing that?

LH: Uh, start, uh, cuttin' the price, also tellin' you you had to... stuff on plastic. They came out with stuff that only the rich and famous could continue farmin.' And the plasca is like, three four years back, is like three, maybe four thousand dollars to make and now it's about seven, maybe eight thousand dollars per acre. And an individual just can't afford to plant that. Still allowed to plant, uh, garden, ground crops or truck crops, which truck crops you're talking about a little small pickup, something you wanna sell and then growin. Which I still do, I still plant like corn, watermelon, and uh, uh okra and stuff like that for my own personal use or my family's use.

IL: Could you tell me about where you lived? Was it heir's property, was it passed down, or was it...

LH: No, it was not heir's property back then. It has now returned, some of it returned, for three years probably. It belongs to my grandparents, Thomas and Judy Hayward, it was about ten acres that their parents give to them. Uh, the piece of that I'm on living now, my aunt gave it to me. She had about ten, twelve acres. And my grandmother also left thirty two acres for my grandmother. Great grandmama for my grandmother. So we never had a problem with heirs but since my grandparents is deceased, her kids, uh, down to two right now and they're they've been trying to divide it up. My mother's on a piece, well she's deceased, but that piece is clear, all of it is clear to that extent.

IL: Do you all, have a uh, we went to different plantations, of course they all had cemeteries.

LH: Our own one.

IL: Oh, OK.

LH: Our own one and a prayer house. They were trying to get me with two praise houses.

IL: OK.

LH: [laughs]

IL: How do you all manage that?

LH: How did I manage that?

IL: Yeah

LH: OK. Man, you takin' me through the woods. But anyway, to answer your question... uh they had a, uh, land or property sale. It wasn't from tax, it was just... the family members could not agree to come together and sell the property and divide the money, so they take it through a property sale. And uh, they get lawyers and everything, they

come in and sell the property, they cut it into lots and but they, they wanna sell it. Then they'll auction it off to the highest bidder. And, whatever sold. The prayer house that I got, it's in Mary Jenkins, uh, it's Mary Jenkins Prayer House. And it's Mary Jenkins graveyard and that, the prayer house was on the land that they auctioned off, which belonged to Kit Chaplain and KC Chaplain. So they auctioned it off and I bid on it and I bought the Praise House for five hundred dollars and that little strip of land that it was sittin' on. Not knowing that when I bought the Praise House I interit the graveyard. So, uh, it went on for about maybe fifteen years or so, they sent me a letter a couple years ago saying I owe x and x amount of dollars on uh soil waste, some type of tax. Which is normally that, I gave it to the people that were having praise in there, and I forgot about it because it came to be a historical spot? Well they paid for the historical part but they don't pay for that other part. And last year I was doing so good on the piece of the graveyard and the Praise House that they try to give me the one out in Croft, too!

[all laugh]

LH: So I'm probably ending up with three praise... two praise houses and one graveyard.

IL: Is it hard to maintain the graveyard?

LH: I don't even wanna go in there. So, you know. It's, it's, it's not hard, people in the community will get together and pitch in, family members and stuff and clean it. But I felt like, uh, it's a community thing because uh, everybody's got family members somewhere down the line, maybe older younger or what, and they should do it. But to answer your question it's not hard, thank you. They do the Praise House, repaint it, uh, refurbish it, and uh stuff like that and it keep around it clean. But they won't go to the graveyard.

IL: So it's a little challenging getting them to go on there and do what they're supposed to do.

LH: Yeah, they scared they gonna fall in one of the holes.

DO: So you said that you have one funeral parlor down here?

IL: Back in the day...

LH: Back in the days, which was Chisholm Gallaway.

DO: OK, guess so.

LH: Oh, two of 'em, sorry. And Sherman, was right up by the post office, the brick building? Between where they sell the fruit out up there, and the post office. Yes.

DO: So what was the process you went through when someone died? And they'd come and get 'em, and they'd take

LH: Yes, they'd come out to the house and pick 'em up, and they had like a hearse or something. And if they had to go like to Charleston or something, they would take 'em by hearse, there wasn't no ambulance, no EMT, paramedic, nothin' like that.

DO: They did embalming, and all of that too?

LH: A very lightly embalming [laughs]. But uh, you had a two to three day turnover, turnaround. And they've been pickin' up people that had comas and all kind of stuff, and this is when the law came in. That you had, they had somebody to pronounce them dead, or then they got the, what'cha call the guy, uh,

DO: Coroner?

LH: Coroner, that's when they can start coming out with this program. I read a whole bunch of... well, I used to be in the EMT.

DO: But before they had coroners, did anybody...

LH: Before they didn't have a coroner.

DO: So who would pronounce 'em dead?

LH: The undertaker.

DO: The undertaker?

[everyone laughs]

LH: The undertaker [laughs]. And that's the truth of it.

IL: OK.

LH: And he'd ride around, we had the joke "I ain't never seen it, don't know nothing about it," cause they say they had a big meal and a thing, and you wasn't dead [IL laughs] it was about time you got out of there!

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: And this is when they brought this lawyer. That somebody, these are the, Ed and Helen are the paramedic. Are a doctor.

DO: So did they um, have a service afterwards, before, you know, you put em in the ground, did they have, you have, did you have a service three days later after the funeral?

LH: Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. They didn't have a funeral home. They used to bring em back they used the church, the prayer house, or to your house. And put 'em in the living room.

IL: Ok.

LH: Yeah, it was, you know. And now the law states that they can't leave 'em in the church themselves, uh, you can't take 'em back to the house and leave 'em in there for no period of time. You can leave 'em in an undertaker parlor, as long as it's being monitored and at a reasonable time.

DO: So before you could leave 'em in your house overnight?

LH: Yes, you could. Yes you could. Yes you could. I wouldn't have been sleepin' in there, but uh... [everyone laughs] actually I'm not scared, I'm not afraid about dead people.

DO: But people did that, have them in there.

IL: You mentioned that there was only one doctor. What would you did if the doctor wasn't around?

LH: Doctor Bailey? You would've had to suffer. Uh, they would try to get you, uh, get a doctor from Beaufort and you would've had the same, OK, Doctor Black at the foot of the bridge. And if Doctor Bailey was out or tied up somewhere else and it was an emergency, uh somebody, you would have to get one of the kids or somebody to take the horse and buggy and go down to the foot of the bridge at one time, wait for him to come over in the boat, he had a battle, he would come over in the boat and get in the buggy and you'd bring him back over here. It's all time consuming. Because uh, with a car, it's about almost fifteen, twelve or fifteen minutes. With a, by a car. A buggy? Going about five miles an hour?

IL: Five miles an hour, right.

LH: It's uh, there, and the older people was not experiencing tourniquets, uh pads, uh anything to stop bleeding uh, you know kids have got cut, severe by workin' in the field, got hit and chopped with a hoe. Uh, bit by a snake, and it was... by the time they would go and come back, it would, sometimes they would've almost bled to death... uh, the price was alright though.

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: Was at a critical part. Or they were working with the horse and the horse kick 'em!

IL: Did you ever have like Home Remedies?

LH: That was one of your big top priorities over when you was home.

IL: Could you tell us some?

LH: Life everlasting, uh, moss, uh, it's some type of weed that you rub on it, like you get bit by a yellow jacket or a wasp or a bee, anything, you rub it on, don't know the name of it, it's a thing that you could draw, make. Uh. They used to take fruits and make uh, vinegar. Like pickle, they can keep it [something] for a period of time and it turns into vinegar. Uh, they used to make soap from hog fat, cow, when they kill animals.

IL: What's that process, do you know?

LH: Uh, yeah. Boil it. Then let it sit up, and it turns into a cake and then they would take it and cut it with a machete. And they would use that to wash clothes. They would put uh, like ashes in it. From the fire. And then they came to buy pot ash and they would put a little bit in there and mix it up. And this we'd use as a cutter in there. And um, they would take uh, moonshine, and use that for cold remedies. And stuff like that. Uh, you could buy black dross and mix it in that we'd use if a child had a locked bowels, we'd use black dross, moonshine, something in that case.

IL: How many stills did they have around here? Did a lot of people...

LH: Well, my uncle had about fifteen, granddaddy had five. [laughs]

IL: Cause I had an uncle we used to call uncle boot.

LH: Uncle Joe mine, but uh, yeah we had a lot of people, that was one of the main um, way of also bringing in money. You could buy a gallon of liquor for about seven dollars. And uh, my grandfather he could cook uh, he's dead so y'all can't lock him up no more.

IL: Huh, that's right.

LH: But he could, and he'd owe the tax man nothin' so. But he could cook, but he had enough barrels, they made barrels. So they bought barrels, so with stuff in it. And I think he could make about fifteen, twenty gallons, uh, every four days. Cause she had to put it in there, we put it in there, the corn and the sugar, let it draw. So that's like a few days, and uh, and then you go back and cook it through another big drum and then it all drippin', put the jug down in the ground and drip into the drum. After you move all the rats and everything else off it. Cause you know the animals are goin' in there trying to eat the corn. And get drunk. You have a lot of drunk chickens.

IL: [laughs]

LH: You ever seen a drunk egg, just rollin' all up? But uh, the marsh, or whatever you would call it, they'd take it. But once you'd broil it, some people try to squeeze it two times, but the best time, uh the best cook you could get is one of it. And you could squeeze it real good. Uh, they would bring that corn, take it and bring it home, and give it to their horse or cow. Yeah, man. If you hadn't had that, you're still drunk. But, it's survivin'.

IL: Did they sell it... ok, my question is gonna be... was it integrated over here, was it, or was it all black folks?

LH: It was at one time, it was like, 90, right at 90% black. And the other ten percent was white. A lot of the white folks back then, when they, they had some of the black families, making it for them.

IL: That's what I was gonna ask...

LH: I'm answering your questions for you!

IL: Yeah, you're answering it!

LH: They're making it, for them. They didn't go in the woods. Cause they had revenue. They would take it and sell it, and then, this is another type of share, they would give them a percentage of what ended up being what they'd sell. So that's basically what the sharecrop business is about. Uh they got a stole like Mr. Walpoole, JET Mad Share, which was a sharin' for years, He had, must've been about ten stills. But he would've had different people makin' it, the day, their tax man or their federal man's supposed to be comin' through, being the [unclear] of the sheriff, and the sheriff said, 'hey man, don't go in the woods today, let 'em break it up, you go back in the bunes tomorrow. You'll relocate it. And this is what was going on. The Walpoole, call him he was a, like a, a dissapointed judge by JET Mat. tier, and they basically did what they wanted to. And uh, if you get caught, they would lock you up in jail and um, they, the tax people would say oh he had so many, said we would charge you the very minimum, if they were paying, five dollars on a hundred dollars that's what you would pay to get back then uh, the jail-order sheriff wouldn't judge you. Then when they walk away they throw the paperwork away,, that's why a lot of the old people didn't have records, of what was going on. Cause all of them was involved.

IL: Involved in it, right.

LH: And it was there, and they didn't want you talkin, what was going on. So they ended up paying the man like you have.

IL: Oh, OK.

LH: Yeah. But so far as getting along, we didn't have all this stuff about prejudice, and all of this, you do what you had to do, mind your business, we didn't have this. And you know, wasn't nobody like somebody standin' over you with a whip, uh, like that, wasn't none of this when I came up. And it wasn't nothin' from what I understood, when my grandparents came up. Cause it was mostly at that time, it was the slavery was just about fading, phasing out. So. It's just kinda, gone, and then... a lot of my uncles and stuff, my brother here at Penn Center they got trades, they went into the military, my aunt Carolina Heyward, she became master teacher, I have an aunt Lucretia, which is a doctor, uh, I have uh, an uncle that works for the New York City transit authority, he

worked there for years until he died, we had one in uh, New York Ruffa licesne, Ruffa had his own business. Uh, we all did real good from this side of my family, and a lot of other family kids did real good, you didn't hear about all this jail time, and none of this time until the late 80s, early 90s, and now.

DO: Why do you think that's so? What was instilled in all of you? To make you wanna achieve?

LH: Imma add on a quick, a quick note to you. If you didn't do what those folks say, you would've been dead [everyone laughs]

IL: Right.

LH: And if you didn't meet their criteria, or whatever you wanna use, you would've been dead. So you didn't, just like I said you didn't get all of that thing, they didn't hold chain, chain and ball on you. We used to come from Eddings Point over here to play basketball to Darrel Hall at night, ride the horse. Uh, and stuff like that. Because they go to bed at eight o'clock.

IL: Right.

LH: So they didn't, my uncle used to have me to lead the horse down the road, and stand up, and then they organized so we gone. They jump on the horse and go. And come back, they'd be snorin'. So we don't... nobody said anything. And...

IL: Did you all have police? Or anybody like that?

LH: Same thing that was... about the doctors in Beaufort. They'd have to come over here. By boat. Until they break, uh, built a new bridge. Then we got JE Manch here and couple of deputy sheriffs over here. This is a sheriff territory, not a police. Then the police within the last ten years or so, they start annexing, they start movin' across the bridge on this side. But they're not, way down here. We were raised up on the Beaufort County sheriff.

IL: If you had disputes, did you all handle it yourself or did you...?

LH: Basically, you did. Basically you did. Because um, everybody knew everybody, and if I went to the yard, me and you were out there in the yard playing, and I slap your sister and me and you got into it for slapping her, I gotta whippin' there, and then your parents would tell my parents, and I got another whippin' when I got home. So [laughs] they cut it real short to that problem, keepin' it, keepin' it down. That's what I'm sayin', we had a real good time, fun lifetime growin' up. Yeah. And uh, kinda rough and thing but I made good for my life cause I went to school and stuff, and then I came out and what, with the Ladies' Island Fire Department, I stayed over there, volunteer and farm, I did uh, I think it was two hundred and fifty acres of meat, vegetable and stuff, and it started gettin' down, back in the 80s, 84, 85 then I went in with Paris on the Fire Department. Uh, full time pay. Wasn't a lot of money but I moved up, and I got uh, I

think it was like twenty two years, twenty three years out of it. And retired, I was one of the first black fire inspectors, and also our assistant fire inspector chief. And I had a nice time. I don't looking forward to redoing it at my age, but if I had to I think I still could.

IL: Could you tell us uh, we had learned about the... each community also had a Juke Joint?

LH: Yeah.

IL: Where you'd go for entertainment? Could you tell us about that kind of experience?

LH: Well, I don't think you want any... I don't think you wanna hear anything... [IL and LH laugh]

IL: C'mon, we want know. We wanna know the real -- the island... no phonies. Now we have our spiritual, we need to get a second, you know...

LH: Oh, OK now we're getting into the Juke Joint. Juke Joints was a rectreation that we would go to after the baseball game, on the weekend, sometimes during um, school period, in the, you know when you reach a certain age you could go? And um, each community had their own Juke Joint. And this, like I say, the fighting and arguing was minimal, unless you take one of the boys in that community, take girls away from 'em. And that happens and a lot of times they either get married or move away or whatever, but it wasn't like a pistol or a shooting or a knife or anything like that's going on. It was just um, uh, like a family thing and after once you get into, like if I go into Scott and try to get a girl from there, try and go with her or antyhing, then the guys would recognize me and I would, when I'm in Scott, I would've had to be a part of Scott. And when I'm on this end then I could be a part of this end but I couldn't fight against Scott boys. And uh, they didn't, we didn't have a lot of that growing up, but each community had a joint or a place to dance, or a dance hall, a place you go to drink alcohol, like beer or liquor, scrap, uh, the biggest thing over here then was scrap pine. There was no one the rocks and all of this. It was just out of a corn jug, put it in, drink it... uh soda water, pop or something like this. Fried chicken, ahmburger, lot of times at night we'd go to the club and get uh, a chicken dinner. For a nighcap, go home, especially if you don't plan doing nothing. We had some girls wanna ride all night long from club to club and by that time you hungry so... [IL laughs] we go out to get a big chicken sandwich with some potato salad, like something to eat, when I... cause with other kids in the house, if you one of the older kids and you go out, and you come back, either the dishes gonna be washed, there ain't nothin' going to be in the pot. So.

DO: How many siblings do you have? Did you have?

LH: Me? I can't get into that now.

[someone walks through the door]

LH: Hi, Dr. Sanders. I know you're in, cause I ain't going back. That's one of my aunt there [points].

IL: Oh, OK.

LH: I don't know where I'm going.

[Unknown, probably Dr. Sanders]: I'll tell you where...

LH: No you ain't!

IL: Could you tell us about how you met your wife?

LH: I've been married a couple of times, but the last one I met in uh, I was doing some work... the first one I met in New York, I have uh four kids with her. And we got met through one of my friends that left from um, left from St. HElena, went to New Yorkk and we met at a party.

IL: She from here too?

LH: No, she was from Baltimore. And, we um, started goin' out, dating and stuff like that And um, second one, I was over there, uh, I, me and my brother took tractor over there doing some work for my aunt over there uh, Levy, And I met her over there. And uh, we started going out. Uh, we got three kids together. And uh, we've been together, it's going on 31 years now. About ready to put her out [IL laughs].

DO: Back then, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

LH: I had uh, I think it was six of us. There's only three of us living now.

DO: What were your parents names?

LH: I gave 'em to you.

IL: Yeah, he did. Could you, if I asked you what is Gullah, or Geechee, or your culture, lowtide country living, what does that mean to you?

LH: To me...

IL: Yeah.

LH: and being around, Gullah is from a, uh, a low, uneducated community I would say. It's not a bad thing at all, but... it's like when you live in this square block right here, we don't get out, and we talk to each other, in one language uh, boy don't mess with that or girl don't mess with that. And then it develops, spreads through that one block. And it's just an isolated area or side of speech. But it's not, it's not from an educated, directly educated part, it's just... because sometime I get into Gullah myself or I'll get to the point

where you don't understand me, and say "what did you say?" [laughs]. Especially if you're angry or something, you know what I mean? It was just that we were raised on this island, and amongst the people there didn't go a man, I didn't know that, or a boy performing the help on that or something that you didn't know. And then after we moved out and going to the big bright light city, people start laughing at you, or looking at you funny, then you start correcting yourself. But It's not, it's not from that reading the book or being able to read or whatever. It's just...

IL: It's a form of communication amongst each other.

LH: Amongst each other.

IL: Do you still speak today, understand it today?

LH: Very little, very little. I try to stay away from it because I have, talkin' to you starting to get up all in it and now you can't, now you can't understand some words. SO I try to stay away from it. But um [shrugs] that's all that is, you know. It's nothing. And it's nothing to be ashamed of! I got a little two year old grand, um... colt... slow down when you talk, because you go brrrrr... She'll slow down. Or grandad, I need some, I need some stream, I need that. But when hse goes, she start running off in the mud then she start pointing. It's just that, you know, how to do it. When they start learnin' how to talk, they do it real fast.

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: And then they hear somebody else talk, and they wait to to clear their words. I got another five-year-old granddaughter.

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: Oh man she... she look like she been to five colleges already, how she space a word, pronounce a word, and bring it out crystal clear. So, you know, it's just, how they're raised. Now the two year old, they're sisters, I thought that she and the five-year-old was gonna get together with that pretty atmosphere the five-year-old got. Uh, she got a different attitude. Cause she in a different class than the five-year-old. But no, it's nice.

IL: Based on what you were telling us, seems like your, your grandparents and everybody understood the value of the land. You might not have had a lot of money but you had land. Where did that come from?

LH: From their parents. Back then uh, it's... it's... like a community thing of trying to protect... we were always told that whatever we have or whatever we got is y'all's, but then try to always protect it. And try to always stay on top of things. And, they kinda like beat it into our head, their parents beat it into their head, my grandparents said, my grandparents said, my grandparents beat it into my mom and my aunt and in those day. Then they turn around and did the same thing. And um, like when my mother's passed, we didn't know where all the stones and stuff for the land, my daughter wanted to move

over there and we had, they had a, we had an old house over there, so I went out and um, got us over there, cause she had, wanted to put a mobile home over there. So I said, well you're gonna have my piece, and use a separate tank over there, and um, stuff. Cause they wants, uh, for you to take uh, the same, right here in this area, put em uh, a mobile home there. They want an impact for your three thousand dollars. Good off the rip, that's what the county want. Plus all the little taxes, plus uh, you gotta put in a separate tank, if the land per acre ain't a thing, which is another about, two thousand. So you end up between seven and eight thousand dollars, putting a house on a piece of land. This is why the blacks are losing land and moving away from this island. Because it's too expensive, the job over here is not paying enough, uh, you had to go to Hilton Head, Hilton Head and Beaufort, it's about forty-five miles apart, hour away.

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: I can go to Hilton Head and I have done that. I can work, moving away from one question answer now...

IL: Just go.

LH: But I move, I can go to Hilton Head and make fifteen dollars an hour, and then Beaufort, the same job, they wanna pay eight. Beaufort has a lock, right here in the area, and both of them in Beaufort County, this area has a lock on what they wanna pay. And when I'm saying a lock, they pay you just above minimum wage. And here is in Beaufort County also. But it's operated by Yankees.

LH: Mm hmm.

LH: They don't have a lot. They don't deal with the wages in Beaufort. And Beaufort don't deal with the wages in Hilton Head.

IL: Hmm.

LH: That's why you got a lot of people, a lot of people wanna work over there. If I work over in Hilton Head, I'm going to Hilton Head. You spending more, and actually Beaufort has got it fair there, because by the time you drive from Penn Center to Hilton Head, you gonna burn that up in gas.

IL: Right.

LH: So if you stay in Beaufort, you might spend a dollar in gas, Hilton Head is three to four dollars per day. About the same thing.

IL: So the cost of living is a lot higher.

LH: Yeah. Yeah.

IL: Do you think this island is gonna retain the way it is? Or change is coming?

LH: Change is coming every day, because you're getting people that have move away, went up north times, or three times harder up there. Now they're moving back to the island, bringing all the gang busters, all the kids or they're sending their kids because they got into everything that was possible up in New York, or Philly. They sending them down here with relatives, and within six months of being down here, they gonna shoot, rob or kill somebody. And um, no.

IL: So what's the remedy, how do you fix that?

LH: The sheriff don't even know. Tanner don't even know. Tanner's got a program which you might wanna attend tonight, and take your cameras and everything. It's in yesterday's paper.

IL: Now this is, this is the New York Times, it wouldn't be in here.

LH: Oh.

IL: We heard about it inside the schools.

LH: At the St. Helena school in the past day. Uh, he had about four different aces on their own here, and none of it had been resolved yet.

IL: What kind of cases was he talking about?

LH: Uh, killing.

IL: Wow.

LH: Uh, guy, uh, one guy uh, some over drug related, some of em, they went in there and, uh, kill a guy, the guy pull up in a driveway, he went outside to the car and he shot em in the head. Another guy, they caught him, and burned him up in the car. They saying that was the guy who shot the other guy, and they saying and nobody has been arrested yet for that.

IL: Are these people from here, or are they

LH: Yeah, they are right from here. Uh, about three weeks ago, uh, they were at the club there in Land's End, which is the last end of Land's End, uh they had a shootout down there and two guys got killed down there. And one of the brothers shot the other brother. Well I don't know, I wasn't there, but two people died, and several people went to the hospital.

IL: So the problems from the city seem to be coming here.

LH: It's here already, it's not seem to be... uh they called that you have to wear a bulletproof vest in this area now. [laughs]

IL: Do you feel that way? Do you feel safe, still, here?

LH: Uh, I have a skittish feeling going out at night, uh, you know we used to go out and go for, and like sit at the... any of the clubs. Now, you don't wanna be caught in the clubs. It's just like here and Savannah. I won't let dark catch me in Savannah.

IL: No, you won't let dark catch you in Savannah.

LH: I won't let dark catch me.

IL: I hear you.

LH: And it's getting basically the same way here. You don't, you don't wanna be out here.

IL: And at one point in time, you could be out as long as you want, whenever.

LH: You could stay out late, we used to chase the girls all night, jump out the windows all night, a little of this.

IL: A little of that, gotcha.

LH: Anybody tell you about a toilet baby?

IL: No, what's a toilet baby?

LH: [laughs] I'm goin, no... [laughs]

IL: No, go ahead, tell me!

LH: You don't wanna know that. No, [something] the camera, it's messin' up on the camera.

IL: No, it's OK. [adjusts camera]

IL: So go ahead, tell us what a... toilet baby?

LH: Yeah.

IL: What is that?

LH: I know you... y'all haven't heard about a...

IL: No, what is that?

LH: Wow, man, and I'm fixing to go, cause I ain't gettin in trouble like that. But anyway, this over... this is just a conversation.

IL: You don't want it on the tape?

LH: No, you can do whatever you want with it.

IL: OK.

LH: It really happened. The young girls... the boys could actually go to the club and go out, and most of the respectable girls could not leave the house. Parents didn't allow them to go out. And the girls, when they became, get in heat, or wanna mess with the guys, so... the guys would go around, cause the old people go to bed maybe six thirty, seven o'clock when it's dark in the wintertime? The girls would jump out, they had the bowed windows, they didn't have like glass windows, they had bowed windows. Girls would jump out. Or the girls would walk out the house. And the old people had like a slot jar, and out for them, and a little toilet for whatever they had to do...

IL: Mm hmm...

LH: They'd take that in their room, the kids had to get up and go to the outdoor toilet.

IL: Oh, I got you, OK.

LH: [laughs]

IL: I understand what you're saying.

LH: And these girls become...

IL: Right.

LH: Pregnant.

IL: Right.

LH: Then the old people... one of them on my road, became... now the old people, the people's parents say, were all how you, how you get pregnant? The girls won't say nothin', won't say nothin, and it took them a while to find out that while they were in the house sleepin', the ladies get up, go to the toilet, or call themselves going to the toilet.

IL: Right, right. I got you.

LH: And the mans meet them at the toilet, they got pregnant, get back in the house.

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: So, those are toilet babies.

IL: OK.

LH: [laughs]

IL: Did they have any other sayings, did they have any other sayings about certain things like that?

LH: Well, we used to take pork chops, and people who had bad dogs, take uh, we used to go upstairs, cut hog meat, cause we used to kill hog a lot, four or five months, cut off a piece, and put it in the bag and take it with you when you go to take the girls out, you throw the meat in there [IL laughs], you with em, then the dog come to be used to you, until this guy, the other guy gets mad, say "how my dog don't bark at you?" Dog be walkin' up to 'em, smellin'.

IL: Yeah [laughs]. I got you.

LH: It was a lot of little tricks we could do.

IL: OK.

LH: Do and uh, uh

IL: How was dating? How did y'all date?

LH: That was part of the dating gig, that was kinda the.

IL: All part of the dating, OK.

LH: And then uh, this other guy, he was older than us but anyway he was goin' with this man's daughter, and the man must've got up to use the bathroom or something, there was no bathroom in the house. So he used the potty. And he heard the man, uh, he jumped out the window and ran underneath the house. So we up beneath the house, it was dark, he butt his head. So, the man didn't know where he was at up underneath the house. So, the man said, "you sonofabitch, I know you go up beneath my house" so the man shot in the floor with a shotgun.

IL: Wow.

LH: And the bullet didn't hit him, but...

IL: Oh, OK.

LH: But he came out with knots out on his head. Cause he hit the silver, did that.

IL: Right, right.

LH: That was, those were some of the crazy mess we used to... or pickin' the girls up grocery yeah, pickin' the girls up at basketball, when we did, for saving about cars and stuff, we would pick em up, and take em, all the girls would catch a ride with us and uh, they didn't wanna act right, take 'em down to like Hunting Island beach and tell 'em, you gotta walk, they'd walk for a minute. They might walk for a minute and we're all down there. And then "ha, I'm gonna do it but I'm not ridin' with you no more." Those were... it was just fun and uh, at that time. And it wasn't all this disease and stuff like that. It was just kid stuff. Some of the girls got pregnant in different ways. And a lot of them got married to the guy. Some of em had guys all the way through school and still have em. And doin' real good. But uh, you know it's just, just school days. And all this child support and all of this, these are all stuff that came into law in the late uh, 80s, that you had to pay child support and stuff like this. And it was nothing to have by fifteen, twenty year old kids, fella used to go scooter racing on my rserve. He had thirty one had child with different ladies. He used to drop 'em off at the schoolbus. He was older than 'em. And these were young girls. Yeah.

IL: So a lot has changed.

LH: Yeah, a lot has changed.

IL: Some for better, some for...

LH: Some for maybe... that's correct. And um, all this uh, stuff, these people fightin' over land and all this, you didn't have all of this. You had more, you had ten acres more or less, fifteen acres more or less, that's where it was. When you went down there. But now, uh, she buys five acres when she end up, she end up with eighty acres. Cause she doesn't come in there, and I'm not talking about our people, but different people. Come in there and when they buy, they come in there wanna stray it, and then they put up a fence. On stuff that ain't theirs. So you gotta yeah, be aware of that. Uh, they'll tell you right now that you can't use this, you can't build nothin' to this. So you said OK, I'll sell it to her. She's white, they'll turn around. The next thing, she got a dock going up, she got a permit to build anything she wants.

IL: Wow.

LH: Yeah, they got two different sets of rules. Beaufort County always had two different sets of rules. I can go to jail for stealing a candy bar, I get nine months, she white, she go to jail for stealing same candy bar that I put back, and she gets a spank on the hand. Yeah. That's the same thing they're doing with drugs, or shooting, or anything else. Uh, had a rumor at one time if you gonna shoot a black person, you might as well kill him, you get less time.

IL: That's the mentality, that's the mentality they teach you.

LH: Mm hmm. Yeah. And the same thing they say about the whites. White children, they don't get no time. If you kill 'em. If you don't, then it'll be thirty years. I don't know. I'm too old to follow that.

IL: So how do you feel about ministers, since this place has a lot of churches, a lot of uh, do you go to church?

LH: Well, I believe in the Lord, I've always been raised up in a Prayer House, I own a prayer house, I love church, I love the Lord, I believe in uh Jesus Christ on my own behalf. No one can tell me no different that there's not a God out there. There's not. But we got some preachers in this area that gets in there, and they wanna flight slap at people. They wanna send out nasty telegram, like or, loan officer, you can pay your taxes or you can't, you ain't gonna be a member of this church. I've always been believed, that the house of the Lord, the front door's supposed to be open to anybody. Uh, whether you pa, whether you don't pay, whether you got what it means, or you don't have the money. No one ever stopped, actually, uh, you got lights, you got food, you got this... you don't send out letters like that. You, the house is open, you go to the person or you try to visit the person. The deacons, I'm going to my own church. They don't even let you come to their house. My wife had one of her ankles broken around maybe nine or ten years ago. And she was home for uh, I think three months? A deacon came up there, they took up some pennies in the church. They called the post-saved money or something like that. And it's not my pennies. And they uh, they brought it to the house. He, I don't have no dogs. I'm the only dog in my yard. But he came in there and blowed. And she got up off the chair. And hobbled to the door. Oh, I brought you some pork. You, uh, you want me, you wanna come get it? If you got a, if you brought me some money and I got a broken leg, why should I come down the same step I broke my leg on to get the money from you? And uh, you know I guess, she said no, you keep it. Give it to somebody who you can go to and give it to. She wouldn't even take it. That, you know. And this is a black, all black church. But uh. They got their own programs going on.

IL: Another thing we heard, we wanted to ask you about, something a lot of people going to churches. Anybody doing other things, other than Christianity like groups, and Dr. Buzzard?

LH: Dr. Buzzard is um, J, JT Mathes, which is the white sheriff that we had for thirty, forty years. He's been one of the big root doctors, uh, Dr. Buzzard which was Earl Gregory, William T Gregory, he's deceased. He's gone. Uh, son Buzzy was doing it, he's gone. His son Autumn is doing the same thing. And, to be honest with you, some of the root... these people using Dr. Buzzard, the original Dr. Buzzard's name, and getting people to come from north, or from Ohio, Cleveland and all of them out of town [laughs]

IL: [Laughing] probably not where we've come from. Ok, I got you, go ahead.

LH: Coming down, and he's still go out there in the yard and pick up a piece of stick or something...

IL: Uh huh.

LH: And uh, sprinkle something on it, and put it in the bag and tell them [IL and DO laugh] to hold this, and you gonna hit a number, imma tell you, two hundred, three hundred dollars.

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: And it's not I, don't let me pick on...

IL: No, I got you.

LH: From New York too.

IL: We understand.

LH: All over. And they'll come down, get this boy this money, and then hit the number, you play this one number, right here. Fifty five. He play fifty five over here and fifty five over here. Well, ook how much money you're gonna put on fifty five.

IL: Right, right.

LH: This is what's going on. Yeah. Now uh, the old man, the uh, the Dr., the daddy William T, the granddaddy, the top dog. He was in Court right in Beaufort, the old Courthouse right on Bay Street. And uh, I wasn't there. Grandparents told me. He, they had caught somebody or killed somebody or something there and they took him to court over in Beaufort. And uh, he got up there in the courtroom and JE Mattell, which is another root doctor, he was a white root doctor, he said he killed him and blah blah that. He says Mattell, I'm gonna tell you, you don't believe me that he didn't kill him? Twelve O'Clock? My buzzard's gonna row the boat and come pick me up. Boat came up, to pick up Dr. Buzzard, and he got into the boat and left. Twelve O'Clock. They dismissed the case. So, you know they had, they had a few good, another one that lived up there by St. Frances, or the thing or place up there. Thrift shop. He was a good root doctor. They had quite a few good root doctors. But they all seemed to go on down the road now.

IL: But people did go to see the root doctors for various reasons.

LH: Right. And that was another thing like, you were married, and you were saying the in-laws was getting into it...

IL: Mm hmm...

LH: Then they would go see the root doctor. These old people would give them something, and ninety percent of the time it works.

IL: OK.

LH: The other ten percent, maybe.

LH: Mm hmm.

LH: And it wasn't about using a name, an established name to take money from people.

IL: Ok.

LH: Alright, what else sir?

IL: Anything else we should talk about?

DO: Anything else? What do you think we should tell our young people? Because we're gonna be sharing this with them. What advice, or...

LH: Uh, to your young people, uh, I would, uh, that, get as much out of education as possible. And try to keep themselves in a position to stay out of trouble. If trouble starts, it's pretty easy to get into. And I'm not saying become a house mummy. Or a closet baby. But try to do whatever it takes to survive, cause somebody gonna have to carry the world on, after we pass on or move over. And uh, if everybody trying to get into trouble and play crazy and stuff, then I don't think it's in the... gonna be nothing left after ten years.

IL: Mm hmm.

LH: The way it's going right now. So, yeah. Just try to... do the right thing.

DO: Well, Mr. Leon Hayward...

LH: Uh huh.

DO: Deborah Oden and...

IL: Ishmael Lewis, and we'd like to thank you and appreciate you for coming by.

LH: Alright! Anytime.

IL: Thank you.

DO: Thank you.

IL: I'll get that for you [unclips LH's mic]

End of Interview