Jack Hinman
Tape: 2.28.01.1
Starts: 1:00:00

Interviewer: Kathy Hersh
Recorded: 2/28/01

Q: Can you start out with you very first memories of ou boyhood and what it was like here?

A: Yes. We originally lived at a hundred and...Homestead and moved up to Kendall. I mean up to 136ty Street. From there we moved to to North Kendall Drive when North Kendall Drive was just a dirt road and we turned off the highway at...off of U.S. number one and came through some pine trees up to my grandmother's house that my dad had built in 1922, I believe. And after that, as I told you before, he built the house in 1923 or '24, also. Now what was the other question you asked me?

Q: You were born here in South Florida?

A: Right where the Burger King place is at 136th Street. That's where I was born.

Q: 136th and U.S.1?

A: Yeah.

Q: It was a hospital?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was the name of that hospital? Do you know the name of the hospital?

A: I wasn't born in a hospital. (LAUGHS)

Q: You were born at home?

A: Dr. Mary Freeman was the only doctor that there was in the area beside Dr. Smith at Homestead and I forgot the doctor's name up in Miami. But there's only about three noted doctors in the area. And Dr. Mary Freeman was the best. She was just like a member of the family. Whenever one of us was sick or anything she come and sit with us just like your sitting. And I remember the days when there were office calls to her office, was only fifty cents. Yeah, uh huh, I'm telling you the truth. And it didn't matter what race or creed you was, or how dark the night was, if somebody called for...Dr. Freeman she got in that old Ford Model T and went out through the pine woods to where they was.

Q: Wasn't it pretty unusual to have a woman doctor in those days?

A: I don't know whether it was or not, but I know that she lived at Perrine, right at Fern Street. I can visualize in my mind just exactly what her house looked like. I visualize in my mind going into her office 'cause I hated that. Because she would give us vaccinations and...

Q: What kind of illnesses did you get in those days?

A: What kind of what?

Q: Illnesses. Were they anything...

A: The measles. The measles. We didn't have...what was that bad one they had back in the '30's.

Q: Yellow fever? Malaria?

A: No.

Q: Whooping cough? Tetanus? Diphtheria?

A: A lot of people died from it.

Q: Influenza?

A: No.

Q: Diphtheria?

A: No, it wasn't diphtheria. I can't think of it now but I was out in Mississippi and working at a packing house and we got notice that there were going to quarantine the state, us boys did. So that night we took out of there. We got out of the state. They were going to quarantine the state and not let anyone out of the state...Strange I can't think of the name of that. Anyway, it was...

Q: So, anyway, you were born at home, delivered by...

A: Dr. Mary Freeman.

Q: Dr. Mary Freeman?

A: Yes.

Q: So where did you go to school? When did you start school?

A: At Redland. Redland School. And then we moved up to Kendall from Modelo, right where Schreibers eating place is on the highway at Modelo. You know where that is? Right in back of it was where we lived at.

Q: And then, you said your father bought some land where Dadeland Mall is now, where the Burdines is.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: When was that?

A: I suppose that he must have bought that land about '15, about '15, I believe. He bought it from the state for 400 dollars. Fifteen acres in there. And later in life he gave my wife and my heir a little over an acre and all the other children he gave pieces of that property to. And I had a wonderful dad. He was good to all of us and he took care of all of us good. I had a wonderful mother, also. And a...It's a lot of miles back there.

Q: Now. Your father was he connected in any way with the Flagler. with Mr. Flagler.

A: No. The Flagler Railroad? No, no.

Q: What did your father do? How did he earn his living?

A: He was one of the largest tomato growers there was in South Florida. And that was in the days before they other tomato sections like Immokalee and those places that hadn't opened up yet. And he was very successful in his farming. He had 100 acres at Modelo, that he farmed a 100 acres of gradeland.

Q: Rich soil? Rich farmland?

A: Marl. What they call marl soil. Yeah, but we didn't have no drainage in those days. And whenever they came a flood, like a low pressure area, well the land flooded. I remember one time we had a bean crop there that there came -- I forgot what month it was -- and it flooded all the land and took about three weeks for the water to go down before it ever...or could ever replant. And then he farmed on the East Glade also. He had a lot of land on the East Glade beside the Homestead Airport property. He must have had, oh I guess, forty acres on the East Glade. That was right, just south of where the airport is now. But, he did own a section, which is 640 miles...I mean 640 acres in those days. But he put it up for collateral with Hector Supply Company on a potato crop and that Spring...when it came time for the harvest the potatoes, we had a flood of a flood. And so he, he lost the piece of property. He lost the piece of property that way.

Q: So it was kind of risky? Farming. It's always been.

A: Oh, in those days, yes. Well it's not as risky now-a-days because they have irrigation and the farming down here in South Florida has moved to higher ground. Nobody farms the old gladelands any more. They all farm...All this land on North Kendall Drive, out here, (COUGHS) excuse me, is all...is all made-lands. Manufactured land. Had a machine that dug a ditch this wide, a foot deep, and the rocks, they were all kind of big rocks in there, big holes where the rattle snakes were, but that machine would creep along like very slowly and grind up the rocks and, on a conveyer, lay it over. And as it moved across the ten acres, well it was manufactured land. It didn't have nothing in it -- rocks over that big, after it went through that machine. That was an interesting period of time. And ah...

Q: About when was that they started using those machines?

A: ‘36...I suppose it was close to the 1940, forty-two, along in then...I’m trying to think if it was before World War II. I don’t believe it was. I believe it was right after World War II.

Q: So you must have done a lot of farming yourself as a young boy?

A: Yeah, I farmed in this area. also. Yeah.

Q: But as a young child, what was your life like?

A: Just like any other kid. We’re all in mischief, all the mischief we could get into.

Q: What kinds of mischief did you get into?

A: (LAUGHS) Now you’re getting personal. (LAUGHS) No, we just rambunctious. You know how boys are.

Q: What kind of games did you play? What kind of things did you do?

A: Well, we didn’t have no TV in those days. And some of us had a radio. And ah...there’s four or five of us boys had a little shack built in the woods where we would stop the ice man and get a piece of ice and then one would steal the eggs from the hen nest and another one would get the milk and we’d all pay for a twenty-five cent piece of ice that was about fifty pounds (LAUGHS). Because we had ice boxes in those days. Didn’t have refrigerators. And we would take it off to the woods and we’d cover it up with saw dust to keep it from melting and we each had a six quart ice cream freezer and we’d make ice cream and sit out there and eat it until our brains hurt...(LAUGHS). And of course our folks didn’t know what we were doing but (LAUGHS) we having fun.

Q: Where’d you get the sugar.

A: Each of us, we’d get a little bit here and there. And...

Q: I bet that tasted good.

A: That was good ice cream. Yeah. That was good ice cream. And I’m trying to think if we put any peaches or anything in it. I don’t believe we did.

I believe in those days that it was only vanilla ice cream. Then they started coming up with all this mixed fruits in the ice cream. But, anyway, it was an interesting time of life, and a...we had lots of fun. And, my dad won a ‘lectrical car from Hughes Hardware in Homestead. In those days. And it was run by a battery. And we played with that up and down North Kendall Drive. North Kendall Drive wasn’t only but about 20 feet wide and it was pretty bumpy in places. But, anyway, where the expressway is at North Kendall Drive now, there was a hill like this. It went over the road. Not what you call a big hill, but it was that much higher than the road level. And we’d roll down that hill and...We had lots of fun in those days.

Q: Did you go swimming anywhere?

A: There was a beach. I wasn’t much of a swimmer, but we all did go to the beach at what they called Tahiti (pronounces it: tee-HIDE-a) Beach down at a...at Coral Gables. Do you know where that was, about? Yeah, we went down there.

Q: That was out the canal? Or was it a canal then?

A: I think...I think...No the canal wasn’t there then, I don’t believe. I know we...My dad had a boat and we used to go up to Coral Gables Canal out to the bay, and he also had a boat wherever we went out from Snapper Creek -- where Dadeland is now. And that wasn’t no canal like it is now. It was just a ditch. But we went out to the bay, oh, once a week about half mile off-shore and we catch a lot of sand perch. I don’t know if you know what they were. There little fish about this long. And it had a very sweet taste. But there was a nest of them out there and we knew right where to go -- to catch sand perch. And barracudas. we caught a lot of barracudas.

Q: You ate those?

A: Oh, sure. Barracuda meat’s good. It cuts off just like steaks.

Q: Could you fish Snapper Creek at all? Did it have fish in it?

A: Oh, yeah. Matter of fact, we had salt water up as far as the...up as far as, um...as 87th, at one time...before the water criteria was leveled. The salt water would come in. They hadn’t built a dam in Snapper Creek in those days but I remember seeing snappers in the canal up this far. And it

was loaded with mullets. We used to come in at night time with fire light on the front of the boat and the mullets would jump from each side of the canal and sometimes they land in the boat. We had a...my dad had a sixteen foot boat with a little outboard motor. But we'd be late getting in, we'd stay 'til dark out there in the bay and he'd bring us boys in...We had, we had a lot...they were good days. Just put it, they were excellent days. I have no regret of my childhood at all. And a...as I said before, my dad was a great dad, he gave to us, he cared for us, my mother was great mother. And God was good to us in all that we had. He blessed us abundantly.

Q: What kinds thing did you mother prepare? I assume she did the cooking? You ate a lot if fish, it sounds like.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what else. Did you live off the land, pretty much?

A: Pretty much. Chickens, fish, and beans galore (LAUGHS).

Q: And a lot of tomatoes?

A: Yeah, and those days, you know, a nickel bought a whole lot more. We bought a short loaf of bread for a nickel. A short loaf of bread like this, for a nickel. Five cents, in those days. And a...and during the Depression years we eat beans of a morning, noon and night. But they were good.

Q: Did you feel the effects of the Depression?

A: Personally, myself...no i wasn't old enough to really grasp it and understand it. But I know my dad lost a lot of money in the Key Biscayne Bank during the Depression. They didn't have no...no regulations, FDIC, like they do now, and they were privately owned bank, but they...he...I was told that he lost 29,000 dollars in the Key Biscayne Bank. which was a lots of money in those days. lots of money. But my dad was one who never gave up, he start right back over again. And he taught us boys a lot of good things. And I remember one time I told him a lie and I couldn't go to sleep that night. And I got up and went to the porch where he was and told him differently.

Q: And what did he do?

A: Well, he appreciated me telling him. He didn't spank me or nothing. He appreciated me telling him.

Q; You went through a lot of hurricanes in your time.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell us what kind of affect the hurricanes had on this area around here?

A: Well, as you recall, Andrew was the worst.

Q: You still think that was the worst one of all time, that you've experienced?

A: In history for here, because the area's so much more populated. Back in the days of the 1926, there was only a house here and there in the woods and a lot of pine trees. Big pine trees. Hard wood pine trees. There wasn't these little saplings. Of course there was a lot of saplings. You know what a hardwood pine tree is? They were trees that big...up to that big. And a...out there where junior college is...that was lots of big pine tree land in there, Us boys used to go through there years ago and...I remember the days that...that mister...Had a one-horse saw mill over here on North Kendall Drive. What was his name? His wife run the post office in South Miami.

Q: Deas? Mister Deas?

A: No. It wasn't. Mr. Deas run the post office at Kendall.

Q: Larkin?

A: No. The Larkins, I knew all the Larkins. I wasn't too well acquainted with Grandpa Larkin, but Sam Larkins and...and his brother, and I knew all the boys...all the Larkin boys.
Q: You mention that you knew Mr. Carl Whilden.

A: I wasn't directly acquainted with him, too much. But I know we bought milk from him and my mother would send us down to his house to get the milk every evening.

Q: So every day you went there and bought milk at the Whilden...at the cottage.

A: Yeah. At Mr. Carl Whilden's house.

Q: Did you walk over there?

A: Oh, yeah. How else could you go? (LAUGHS)

Q: Horse and wagon.

A: Wasn't but a half a mile.

Q: But you had to carry milk back.

A: What was a quart of milk for a boy that was 12, 14 years old (LAUGHS). Or two or three quarts of milk. There was five of us children at home. Let's see: Jim, myself, my twin sister, and my older sister, and my younger...Yeah there was five of us. They all deceased now. I'm the only one of the Hinman generation that's left. And...thank God that he's seen me through these many years. I give him thanks every day for his goodness.

Q: You said you had a twin sister.

A: Yeah. She deceased a couple of years ago. She was out in Heartland...Heartland Nursing Home.

Q; Did you and your twin sister do a lot of things together?

A: No. We just a separated as that. (LAUGHS)

Q: Was that because she was a girl and you were a boy.

A: I guess so. I presume that (LAUGHS) might have been the reason. She...she had here ways. I remember one time that, when she became thirteen years old, well dad was out there and she thought he was out there to spank her or something or other. And she climbed up a tree and dad had her come down. He said "I just wanted to tell you something, Iola, I got something here for you." And what do you think he gave here in those

days. A hundred dollar bill, and Iola's daughter still has that hundred dollar bill.

Q: So, she always kept it, then. She never spent it?

A: Kept it in the safe deposit box. And it was there when Iola deceased a couple of years ago. And in those days they were up...they were that long, a hundred dollar...a bill. You remember? You don't remember them, but they were big bills. They three times as big as a bill is today.

Q: Let's go back to the hurricanes. You said that you remember, especially, the hurricane of 1926. You were about 8 years old. And you remembered seeing the effects...

A: Oh, absolutely. I remember the wind. I stood in our front window and I watched pine trees fall over and just like that. They were on shallow rock, you know. And the was hard wood trees and that would be right where Williamson Cadillac place is on North Kendall Drive, now. 'Cause the house we lived in would have been just across the street from that.

Q: Did that cause any hardship for people back then -- the hurricane?

A: Oh, sure. But they did have the Red Cross. The Red Cross, as a matter of fact, they didn't lose no time in getting out there to where we lived at. And...But we did not have to accept anything from the Red Cross, but it was kind of them to see. They got out...The Red Cross was out in all the area around here immediately after the hurricane. And then the hurricane of '34, where Doctor Smith at Homestead was the first one to cross...cross Dig Boat Creek to go over to Matacumbia. He was the first individual to cross in a boat, by himself, because the waters were rough and he came back and told the situation. There wasn't no communication at all. No one had a short wave or anything like that. And, as I recall, nearly everybody was lost...lost their lives down there, then.

Q: Down, south of here?

A: Yeah.

Q: In the Keys?

A Yeah.

Q: Were you scared, as a little boy, about the hurricanes?

A: I didn't have sense enough to be scared. (LAUGHS) But a...

Q: What did people do. Did they know they were coming? Could they prepare in any way?

A: Not in 1926. We didn't have no...no hurricane warning. We didn't even have a weather bureau except that at Lakeland, we used to get a weather forecast from Lakeland, in those days. And whenever the...when the train would come down -- old 97 train on the Flagler Railroad -- well the engineer would stop at the packing house at Kendall, say "cover up your seed beds, fellas, because the cold is on the way." That's the way we got the weather report. And...in those days -- I don't know if you know what a seed bed is -- but we all had seed beds where we planted rows of tomatoes like that, and when the plants got up that high then we took them to the field and planted them. But a...that's the way we got the weather report in those days, from Lakeland by train. And a...I guess maybe they might...they didn't have no radio to know...radios in those days were...that was real early. And a...but anyway...we all survived it.

Tape: 2.28.01.2
Starts: 2:00:00

Q: So, first you went to Redland School and then they built the Kenwood Elementary School and you went there.

A: No, I went to Larkins.

Q: Oh, you went to Larkins before Kenwood.

A: Yeah. I think I was probably in the third grade at Larkins. Second or third grade.

Q: That's the Sunset School, now.

A: Yes, Sunset.

Q: The old wooden building, back there. That was called Larkins School?

A: It wasn't a wooden building, it was a block building.

Q: Okay. So what was it like going to school back in those days? Were the teachers pretty strict?

A: Well, we had respect to the teachers, and they don't have respect now. I got two daughters that are school teachers and a...of course Jacqueline, she's fortunate to teach kindergarten, so that don't make it too bad. And the other one teaches art out here at a Christian school on a hundred and...I don't know where it's at. Out Sunset, there, somewhere. Is that thing taping now?

Q: Yes. So the kids respected their teachers?

A: Oh, absolutely. You didn't talk out. You raised your hand like this if you had a question. And most of us didn't have no questions because we're scared to death (LAUGH).

Q: Did you ever get taken to the principles office?

A: Yeah. That's what I was fixing to tell you. At Kenwood School, I must have been about -- I don't know -- ten or eleven years old. We was all out on the north porch, one evening, and there come up a tremendously black cloud over toward Hialeah. And a...I said to the boys, I said, "It looks like there is hail in that cloud." And this one little kid run and told Greg (LAUGHS) that Jack said (LAUGHS) "Jack said hell." (LAUGHS) And Greg came out and didn't question me, but he took the kids saying, called me into the office. Said "Jack we don't talk that way around here, like that." I said "well I didn't say nothing except 'it looked like hail in that cloud' and he said...and the kid misinterpreted it to be hell instead of the hail." And so I got a paddling for that.

Q: For talking back...For explaining yourself you got a paddling?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Q: This was from the principle?

A: Yeah, because he took the kids word, and I didn't mean it that way at all. But anyway, that was the judgment that was got (LAUGHS). And a...then I got a paddling one time at Larkins School (LAUGHS) -- this is a funny one -- I used to carry a harmonica in back pocket, and if we didn't get our lessons like Mr. Harriet...Mr. Hayes told us to we got a paddling for it. So we stood right up in front of the class and he gave me a paddling...And I carried that harmonica back here. Every time he hit it'd say 'ding, ding, ding, ding.' (LAUGHS)

Q: Did you laugh?

A: Well, I don't think I cried, but remember getting that paddling and I remember Greg paddling me and a...and the first day I went to school, I remember that, because I called the teach an old pig. And she took me home. (LAUGHS) She took home and I crawled underneath the cot. My dad came in that night and talk my mom about it and he said "Jack come out of there." And I got about half way out from underneath the cot and he come down with the razor strap on my south end. (LAUGHS)

Q: What made you call the teacher an old pig?

A: Her name was a...I can't think. She put me in that old open air car of hers. In those days they didn't have roll-up windows and carried me home and told my mother. And I...It was something she must have asked me that I didn't like. I said "you old pig." (LAUGHS) That was in the first grade...in kindergarten, I guess it would have been.

Q: Guess you hadn't learned to be afraid of your teachers yet?

A: How's that?

Q: You hadn't learned to be afraid of your teachers yet.

A: No, no. We were just kids.

Q: Did you ever see any of the native Americans around here?

A: Any what?

Q: The Seminoles or the Miccosoukees?

A: No, but I recall Mr. Killian, he would tell me the Indians had just left, or something. They would come up from the Glades out here, up Snapper Creek and they would dock their canoes at the trestle just a little...right where the Metro garage is over there now. And they would walk up to Killian's store to get their supplies. And I don't know whether...whether they brought...I don't think they brought any "exchanges" I don't know how they got their money, even. But I guess they had some money, but they rolled in from way out West. Well about 107th street, just a little past 107th street out there the water was high enough in those years, that's where the Dade County Hospital was, in those days. And I remember the foreman that was foreman to build that hospital -- I didn't see them building it -- and the old folk's home was there. There was four frame buildings that...where they put the old folks in those days and cared for 'em -- some. And a...but I remember him telling me about the Indians coming up to buy. Old Mr. Killian, he was some man. They'd go in the store...people'd go in the door and they'd say "give me fifteen cents worth of cheese." You know they had big (INDISTINCT) blocks like that. And they come in say "give me give me 15 cents worth of cheese." He didn't weigh it. He just put it up there and put his hand on it a little bit. (LAUGHS) Whacked it that way. He had scales but he didn't weigh it.

Q: And what all did he sell in his store?

A: A line of groceries. But you didn't go in and pick them up yourself. There was a long counter, like that counter there, we stood on one side and all the groceries was on shelves behind like beans and peas and they had barrels that had the rice in them, they had the grits in them, and corn meal and stuff like that. And the rats. Oh, there's plenty of rats in the store. And, so...

Q: Inside the store there were rats?

A: Oh, sure. It was plain buildings in those days and there was lots of rats.

Q: You saw them when you went in?

A: Oh, yeah. Sure. Every now and then you'd see one run across the floor. But they didn't bother us. And a...

Q: What other things did you see? Did you see a lot of wild animals around here?

A: Yes , I used to walk from North Kendall Drive to 97th street through the woods to buy eggs from Mr. Claude Smith and there was a loggers trail where they...where they snaked the logs out of the wood to the saw mill to Mr...can't think of his name...Palmer, Palmer. Mr. Palmer's saw mill and I'd walk through there and there was lots of cotton tails in those days. And I don't remember whether I ever seen a fox or not, but there were plenty of foxes in the area, I knew that. But there was a path through there and I'd walk over there and buy the eggs and then I'd stand out there on U.S. number one. My dad would give me the tomatoes that he brought up from the farm and I'd stand out there after school with a four quart basket. You ever see a four quart basket? Are this wide, that long, and that high. A four quart basket of tomatoes, I'd stand out like this here, on the highway and the tourists that came down from other parts of the country, mostly New York, and they'd drive down to as far as Florida City or Homestead. About as far as they could go. And I'd stand out there and sell them for a quarter a basket.

Q: Did you get lots of customers?

A: Well, not too many. We didn't have no traffic in those days. But most everybody that passed by would buy something because they were people that were living in Miami or Miami Beach in the hotels and for them to see tomatoes out there. Well they thought...And I sold eggs and tomatoes.

Q: Now, did you contribute that money to your family or were you allowed to keep that money yourself?

A: I was allowed to keep it. Yeah.

Q: And what did you do with it?

A: I buried some of it in the ground. (LAUGHS) I had a gallon jug buried and I had it right in my garden and I would take the change and I'd drop it

down in the hole in the gallon jug. And then of course you bought little knickknacks that you wanted to have, like a harmonica or...or something or other like that. A new comb to put in your pocket, or something or other like that. And a...

Q: Did some of that money go to getting stuff to make ice cream with?

A: Oh, yeah. Sure, sure. Yeah, we...and I had a wagon that I pulled from the house down to the highway each evening after school except the evenings that dad had us picking out sand spurs and weeds out of the yard. And a...he'd tell us boys he said "now boys I want you to clean this yard. When I come home I want it clean." It was clean when he got there, too. Or we knew what...Lots of fun. Lots of fun. But all these families, I didn't never give you the names of them and about them. But a...I was acquainted with all the Dice family and all the Rice family. The Rice family owned the Flagler Grove.

Q: Tell me a little bit about the Flagler Grove?

A: The Flagler Grove was a grove of grapefruit and oranges. They picked the fruit, packed it right there at Kendall and it was shipped from Kendall. And a...it was kept up a good many years until the bird...there come a bird farm moved in there. I forgot the name of that bird farm. Maybe you know of it.

Q: Rare Bird Farm.

A: Rare Bird Farm. Yeah. It moved in there and then they...they sold out and they built Howard Johnson's Motel in there...I don't know how big the grove was. I suppose it could have been probably forty acres.

Q: And it was grapefruit...

A: Grapefruit and oranges.

Q: ...and oranges.

A: Yeah. and in those days -- you don't know -- but Redland...Redland produced a lot of oranges, citrus, in those days. That was before they started growing citrus in Central Florida.

Q: When did the mango groves into being around here? We see a lot of mangoes today, still.

A: The mangoes came into being before I got here. (LAUGHS) The place where I lived at Howard we had a mango tree in the backyard. And I remember the name of the mango. It was called Mangovia mango. Mangovia, and they were very delicious mangoes. It was a big tree and it produced a lot of mangoes.

Q: Did you ever make mango ice cream?

A: No, not in those days. But if we'd had sense enough to we would have. We didn't know to squeeze them, make it.

Q: What about organized sports? Did you have any baseball teams, or anything like that? You play?

A: There were baseball teams at school and I didn't participate much them. I was never much of a sportsman. I was just a plain old country boy just as plain as I could be. (LAUGHS)

Q: You probably had a lot of work and chores to do after school.

A: Yeah, I had to take care of the chickens and the pigs and a...and keep the yard clean and those kind of things. And window glasses, we had to putty them every now and then to keep the glasses in. And a...so...

Q: Can you remember any event in your lifetime that was the thing that people talked about the most?

A: Not in particular. We didn't have anything to talk about in those days except the storm and that had just passed and what we are growing in the field. 'Cause...excuse me...because all those young boys knew that when the weekend came that we were to go to the field and get a hoe in our hand and start to work. We didn't even have a...didn't have a tractor to cultivate with, then. Everything was done with the hoe. And, so...but we was all happy. We wasn't aggravated about it, we's happy about it.

Q: Did you take your lunch with you out to the fields when you worked?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: What was it like, your lunch?

A: Well, our mother would pack us some sandwiches-- a ham sandwich, or something or other, or when I went to school...That's changing the subject. You asked me about the field. We'd all sit down. And the Black people, they would build a fire and they'd have these little tin buckets, like this, and they'd have rice in them, put them on a stick and hold it over the fire to warm them up. In those days it was much colder than its been in recent years. Oh, we used to have some hard freezes , back then. And a...I recall one thing about a Black man telling my dad -- and I'll never forget it...(COUGHS) Excuse me. I need a swallow of water.

Q: You were going to tell the story of the Black man in the field.

A: Oh yeah...Now, one time we had a hard freeze and dad lost all the crops out on the East Glade. Now, the East Glade was close to the bay, so that had to be a hard freeze. And I remember as we all went out to work that morning that the crop died and my dad stood there on the road. And this old darkie said, "Mr. Hinman I want to tell you something. the same God that giveth is the same God that..." I mean "the same God that takes away is the same God that gives again." And I never forgot that. That God is the same God who takes away is the same God that gives again. And it encouraged dad. Anyway, he was ready to go back to planting anyway, but I remember him saying that. And that was it. I know that was encouragement to him.

A: So, did he just have to plow it under?

A: The crop? Yeah, had to plant over.

Q: Just plowed it under and then planted over?

A: Yeah, we didn't plow with a tractor in those days. We planted with a horse...with a mule and a plow.

Q: That was a lot of acres.

A: Yeah. Course you didn't plant it all in a day, you know. I remember dropping tomato plants like this here and we put what you call 'bull' on the roots in those days. That was horse manure. And a...he used to order car loads of it -- freight car loads. Open cars. It came down to Modelo. We had to unload it and take it out to the field. And make a huge...huge pile of it. A couple...he'd get a couple of flat cars and that was a lot of manure.

Q: Did you like that job?

A: Huh?

Q: Did you like that job?

A: Didn't bother me at all. I used to go out to Pendry's. Out to McDonald's Dairy out here on 97th and a...and buy the manure from the cows. He'd sell it to dad. We'd use that also. Speaking of the dairy, did I tell you that where Pendry's...where the hospital is now, was Pendry's Dairy.

Q: Where Baptist is?

A: Yeah. And a...there used to be a little dirt road turn off of North Kendall that went up to...to the barn where the...the dairy barn. And there was a water run through there that some darkie got stuck and bogged down, but a...That was a longtime ago. But I remember the barn. I remember the road that went up. And a...and Mr. Pendry, I remember him and his son Gilbert. But a...but exactly where the Baptist Hospital stands at now, there was a dairy barn there. There was, I believe, four big dairies in the area. Pendy Dairy and Solice (Sp?) Dairy -- old man Solice (Sp?) he was...he was a wizard. (LAUGHS) He wanted to collect his money for his milk two or three times a week. (LAUGHS) He was afraid somebody going to beat him out of his money. (LAUGHS) So we bought milk from him for years.

Q: But when you needed a little extra you went over to Mr. Whilden's?

A: No, we bought...we bought from Mr. Whilden first.

Q: First?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, who were the characters in the area? Who were the people that...

A: Most known?

Q: Most known and that you remember the best?

A: Well, the Dice family. I knew all of them: Mr. and Mrs. Dice. I knew all the Roger family, and they came here before the Dice family did. Rogers. I know...even remember all the names of them, except one. I remember their names: Bernice and Bob and...I went to school with Bob and Ordelle Rogers and the fire chief of South Miami...I can't thing of his name, he was fire chief. I knew all of them. And Jack. That was the youngest one. Jack Rogers. I think there was five of them. But a...I knew the...the Reisenberg family. they were pretty early settlers here also, but they didn't come as early as some of the others. Mr. Reisenberg was the foreman that built Dade County Hospital out here. I knew him, he used to...used to be on the job where we...I worked on the construction job up there where the circle is on Sunset, where those Dayneau (Sp?) Houses are built on the left hand side. I worked on that. And a...Old man Reisenberg would take a box of these little aspirin like this. He didn't take two of them he just take the whole box, through it in his mouth that.

Q: and what were they? Little...they were pills?

A: Aspirins.

Q: Aspirins.
A: Yeah. You know, those little flat boxes like that.He wouldn't take one. He'd just take the whole box. Open it up. Through the whole thing in his mouth. (LAUGHS)

Q: Now. Speaking of settling, you told me that your father was born in Ohio. Did he every tell you what made him decide to come down here?

A: No. But I know he come through Columbus, Georgia and that's where he met his mother and brought her on down here.

Q: His mother, or your mother?

A: Oh, I'm sorry. My mother. And a...and we settled first on North Kendall Drive about (INDISTINCT) blocks toward the East on the right had side, the little road's still there now. Don't know what the name of the road is. In a little...little frame house that was only two rooms. And those houses weren't painted in those days. I don't even think they knew what paint was. And a...in a way it don't seem like that long ago. But it was a long time ago. And that's where my older sister was born. I think she was born about '13...'13 or '15.

Q: So, looking back, you think you had a pretty good life?

A: I've had a excellent life. And I learned that God is a good God and he's a rewarder to all who will diligently seek him if we will allow him to reward us. And if we don't allow him to reward us, it's like casting your bread upon the waters. In the Book of Proverbs it says "cast your bread upon the waters and after many days will return to you." That means that if you cast evil out there in life, it's going to come back to you. If you cast good out there on the waters of life, it's going to return to you good. And I have found...I have tried to cast out good. 'Course I wasn't perfect. I made lots of mistakes, honey. (LAUGHS) I made more mistakes, probably, than I did good, but...but I..I know what I know now that I know God is a good God. I got that testimony that I can say.

Q: Did you always feel this way? Were you always religious?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Where did you go to church?

A: Well the first church I went to was the Methodist Church at South Miami, right across from where First National Bank is now. And a...I remember going to Sunday School there, and I still have a little Bible the Sunday school teacher gave me back then. I don't know where it's located, but I still got it somewhere. And (COUGHS)...I went to church there first, and then we had a church right there on North Kendall. I know we had one on...on 100th street, called Smoke Road. Incidentally, I didn't tell you nothing about the Smokes. I knew all of them. They were...they lived right on 100th street right there next to where that place is that they...That big company there.

Q: K-Mart?

A: No. That big building right in back of where Cadillac's building there building.

Q: Oh, the Mayflower Movers?

A: Yeah. Mayflower, yeah. I don't think quick sometimes.

Q: Now, was...were there denominations of churches?

Tape: 2.28.01.3
Starts: 3:00:00

Q: Were the churches segregated -- Black and White.

A: Pretty much, in the early days but now they're not. As a matter of fact our congregation is...is as many Blacks as it is White. I'm...I'm not a segregationist. I believe in integration myself. 'Cause God created us all the same and a...and their blood is the same color as my blood. But some of them came out of a darker part of the world.

Q: Now. Were you unusual in your beliefs, in the time you were growing up?

A: Yeah. As a matter of fact I was about the only religious one in the family. My dad was not religious. He was a good dad, but he wasn't religious. 'Cause I remember when we would have company come to the table, he would say "Jack you ask the blessing your the only religious one around here." That's what he would say.

Q: Now, why do you suppose that was?

A: Why? Well he believed...he believed that we should ask...give God thanks for the food.

Q: But why were you religious and no one else in your family religious?

A: Well, I really don't know. But I know that Jesus Christ predestinated us before the Father and knew of each of us...we were known of God before we became known by Christ and Christ predestinated are condition before the Father, whether or not we would be one that would be saved or one that would be lost. And a...it don't mean that any can't be saved , even the murders can be saved, if they're willing to surrender. But a...I thought as a young man one time of even going into the ministry. But I didn't have no education but one minister offered to...offered to help me get started, but I didn't accept it. And maybe I wasn't called. See? there are a lot of ministers out there that never were called by God. They went to college and they looked over a list of things they could take, and some of them say 'I'm going to be a minister.' And some of 'em (LAUGHS)...some of them said they going to be an accountant or something or other.

Q: So, you weren't a segregationist. Was your father? Did your father feel the same way that you did?

A: Yeah. The Blacks pretty much, in the early days, they kept to there selves and the Whites kept to...and pretty much, its pretty much that way in some areas of the country right on. I don't...I don't believe in being segregated because, Like I said before, God has made us all in his own image, regardless of nationality, creed, or whatever.

Q: Did you have any Black friends when you were growing up?

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Q: You played together?

A: Us boys could play together. Yeah, sure.

Q: And then what about when you got to be young men? We're you still friends?

A: Sure. I never was unfriendly to the Blacks. Period. 'Cause I was raised right up with the Blacks. All our farm help, we had about twenty hands that went to the fields every day, and I was right in amongst them. And...

Q: So even though your father owned the land and he was the big tomato grower, you still went out and worked just like anybody else?

A: Yeah. Be one Black man hoeing on this row and a black lady on this row hoeing, and I'd be right in between. When it got to the end of the row, went around and caught another row.

Q: And you'd have your lunch together in the field?

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Sure.

Q: Did anybody ever make 'hoe cakes?'

A: Hoe cakes? Oh, yeah. My mother...my mother cooked a lot of pan cakes. You know what a pan cake is? (LAUGHS) As a matter of fact we even had to take some of the cold ones left over to lunch sometime. Whenever I was in the grade school at Kenwood, well that was a...a lot of the days were...I just had folded over pan cake with peanut butter and jelly on the inside of it. And there was a boy by the name of Junior Bethe (Sp?). The Bethe family was a great family at Kendall. But, he lived with his day. I don't know whether his mother was dead or whether...whether...whether he lived...But his dad didn't prepare him no lunch and...I ought not to tell this on myself but...Junior couldn't have no lunch. And I would always share my lunch with him. And forty years after we parted from Kenwood School he helped dig Tamiami Trail Canal. One day the phone rang. He said "Jack." I said, yeah. He "this is Junior. Remember me?"...This makes tears come to my eyes...And I said, "yeah, how you doing Junior?" He says "I just want to call you and tell you that I have never forgot...all of those days that you shared your lunch with me." And that was one of the greatest blessings I ever received in my life. At least forty years afterward, he said "Jack I just want to tell you, I have never forgot you sharing your lunch with me." And I ought not even told that there, but...anyway. Junior was a good friend of mine and...and a...and he was very poor. Very poor. And his dad didn't fix him no lunch. Just he and his dad lived together right there on 100th street and 79th street (sic) there in that...You know where that little corner house is there. Well there was a little two-room shack just East of it a few feet. And that's where Junior and his dad lived. Didn't have no porch. Just a open front door and a back door. And I guess they...I assume they had a wood stove, 'cause most of us had a wood stove back then. And I remember as a small boy we had a wood stove down at Modelo. And a...

Q: Did you have to chop a lot of wood?

A: How;s that?

Q: Did you have to chop the wood?

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah. My brother and I, we...we...after the ‘26 hurricane a lot of trees blowed down and we had to go out there with a drag saw and saw off a chunk. Have the wood cut up. But as I say, it got lots colder in those days than it does now. Lots colder. We get a cold spell here every now and then, but nothing like it was back then.

Q: So you really needed to put in a store of wood for the winter?

A: Yeah. we had a fireplace. It’d burn wood. And a...

Q: We started talk about church a minute ago and you said everybody pretty much went wherever there was a church. It didn’t matter so much what denomination it was.

A: That’s right.

Q: And what were the services like.

A: I don’t know. (LAUGHS) But I’m sure that they talked on salvation and...

Q: You don’t remember...No preachers stand out in your mind?

A: Yeah...Can’t think of the man’s name at the Baptist Church in South Miami. But, anyway they gave an invitation one morning and I went up. By the invitation I accepted Christ as my personal savior with a remission of sins. And, there was only two of us baptized down at a...We were baptized down at...What’s the name of that...Tahiti Beach.

Q: In the water?

A: Yeah, oh yeah.

Q: How old were you?

A: I was about...then I was probably about sixteen, seventeen years old. And a...the girl that was baptized with me married one of my brothers. And a...Ann Shacklford. But I haven't seen her in recent years. They got a divorce and Jim, that's my brother, he died. I think Mrs. Shacklford probably lives at Ft. Myers. Talking about the fireplace and not changing the subject, but you see this table here? I built that when I was seventeen years old. Solid oak. I built that table. It had leaves...it had extended leaves on the end and the little house that my wife and I built on North Kendall Drive where the Williamson Cadillac place is now. It was so small that my wife had me cut off the table. But anyway, that's how much of it is left. But that's an old, old table. I done all the carving work on it, up here. And I turned out the legs on a lathe. And a...I built that while I was in manual training in high school.

Q: Where did you go high school?

A: Ponce de Leon. But I never did graduate, I just walked off. (LAUGHS) My dad tried to get me to go back in, but I wouldn't. And a...

Q: What made you walk off?

A: To be honest with you, I was a slow learner. I guess I still am. (LAUGHS) Took me a long time to get to where I'm at now. (LAUGHS) But a...the teachers were all right, but one of them told us boys...told the class one day. Said "now if you don't want to learn this Spanish, well just get out." And William Larkins and myself, we (LAUGHS) were mean as the devil, I guess, we just got up and walked out the door. (LAUGHS) They were starting to teach Spanish back then in the schools. It all sounded like Greek to me. (LAUGHS)

Q: And that's the day you left?

A: No, that wasn't the day I left. I left school because whenever I was in the 10th grade, I'd just had enough of it. So, I told the teacher that I was leaving, and a...I think she had me go by the principles office, I'm not sure. And I can't think of his name right off hand, but he was a good principle. He gave me a couple of talkings that I learned about. One of them was because, one of the boys I was with had wrote a evil note about being at a park. He gave me a copy of it and be dogged if I didn't pin it on to my English report. (LAUGHS) And didn't know it. And Grandma Ingraham,

which was a wonderful teacher, wonderful Christian, she told the principle about it. And, one day Grandma Ingraham said “Jack, Mr. a...(INDISTINCT) wants to see you in his office. And I went there, and he gave me a good lecture . (LAUGHS) He didn’t paddle me, though. He...but, anyway. I learned to be careful what you say and careful what you think, and careful who you talk to. (LAUGHS)

Q: Now this teacher, everybody called her Grandma Ingraham?

A: Grandma Ingraham.

Q: That’s what people called her? Pupils? Students called her that?

A: No. We called her Mrs. Ingraham. But she was a grandma, anyway. I always called her Grandma Ingraham. She was a wonderful person. Wonderful person.

Q: Did most everybody know everybody around here?

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah. All of us Kendallites. That was as far out as 117th and as far as Sunset and as far as Ludlum Road, over here. We all knew one another. We had a house here and a house over there and all out in the woods. They weren't congregated like they are now. Didn’t have no condominiums or anything like that. But a...we all knew one another and everybody was neighborly. I don’t recall anybody not being neighborly in those days. You seen somebody, you spoke to them with courtesy and respect. And...just a joyous time of life.

Q: What did people do to socialize?

A: How’s that?

Q: Did people socialize? Did they get together and have...

A: Oh, yeah. Every Saturday night we had a square dance barn...square dance right there where...What’s the name of that...that moving company over there?

Q: Mayflower?

A: Mayflower. Right there on the corner. (INDISTINCT) Killian's store set right over here like this. And a...on Saturday nights we'd all gather up there and we'd have a...a country barn dance. Somebody'd play a guitar and we'd just got together, just to be together. I don't know if it was every Saturday night or not, but I recall us getting together there. And there wasn't no traffic so we just go right out there on that corner where it makes...corner off of 100th Street to go on...that would still be 100th Street when you turn 'til you get up to 77th...97th and 77th Avenue.

Q: By the Dice House?

A: Yeah, yeah. It was just a few feet down from where the Dice...Dice House is now.

Q: How did you meet your wife?

A: Well I had a...an old Ford. A Model A. And I...a friend of mine and I were going along right there south of North Kendall Drive and she and a friend of hers were walking home from school. And Robert said, "Let's stop and offer them a ride." So we did that and I didn't know her and so, later on, I asked the...her friend. I said "what's her name?" I told Robert -- I says, "Someday I'm going marry that girl." (LAUGHS) Yeah, I told him that. And that was when I picked her up. (LAUGHS) And I said someday I'm going to marry that girl. And I got acquainted with her. And a...and her mother and dad wouldn't allow us to go out together for a long, long time. I remember her dad used to sit in the parlor -- you know what a parlor is? (LAUGHS) And we would sit on the settee and hold hands and every now and then he would do like this. (LAUGHS) Look over at us. (LAUGHS) To see what we're saying or what we're doing. For a long time after that well her mother talked him into letting us go to church together and it was only a block from the house. So we started going to the...a little abandoned...abandoned church there on Smoke Road, which would be 100 Street. And a...then there come a time in life that I had to leave to fruit tramping. So I went out to Mississippi fruit tramping and while I was out there fruit tramping, well, she graduated. And I sent her a cedar chest. Still got the cedar chest in her bedroom there, now. I sent her a cedar chest from from Sears for a graduation present. As a matter of fact, I took my car payment. It was 25 dollars a month back then. I bought my first Ford new...new Ford car for 715 dollars. And it...it didn't have mechanical...they only had mechanical brakes in those days. But I had BK Vacuum brakes on that Ford and we'd

pull up to a stop sign and you how the bus goes “sssh”, like that. That’s the way the brakes would do it. And everybody would look at that Ford. (LAUGHS) “What kind of car is that.” (LAUGHS) Well, anyway, there was four of us boys went out to Mississippi to fruit tramp. I worked for 35 cents and hour. Some days I got in two hours and some days three or four hours.

Q: Now what’s fruit tramping.

A: Fruit tramping is following the packing houses where they pack tomatoes from Florida to different sections. We went from there to a...that’s where we left because of the...Trying to think of the disease. Anyway they said the State was going to be quarantined the next...that next day and we jumped in that Ford and we took out across the State line. We got out of there. What is that...so many people died from it? It wasn’t diphtheria. It wasn’t...

Q: Typhus. Typhoid.

A: Wasn't typhoid. No. I declare I’m ashamed of myself for not remembering. But any...

Q: How’d you get it?

A: Huh?

Q: How did you get the disease?

A: I don’t know, really?

Q: Polio?

A: Polio! Yeah, polio is what it was. Yeah. That’s what it was. People were dyeing like flies out in that part of the country. And so it was in 1934, I believe, that we were out there. And a...they were going quarantine...people were dyeing so we got the issue at the packing house that they were going to quarantine the State. Well, us four boys had sense enough to get out of there. And we got out of there in a hurry. I’ll never forget Mrs. Brown, she was a wonderful person who we boarded with. There was about eight of us set at the table every morning. She’d call us to breakfast. And you didn’t get a piece of ham this big. She had a platter of ham stacked up that way and this big around on the table. That’s the way

they...in those days, well that's the way they eat. And a...as a border. I think she boarded us for about 3 dollars a week. Something or other like that.

Q: So you earned your own living?

A: Yeah. And from then on, after I...Your asked me about Lorraine, my wife. I came back and...and so Mr. Ailey (EYE-ly)(Sp?), that was her dad. He had gone hunting with some other people and I had a cousin who was willing to take Lorraine and me to get married. And so...(LAUGHS) And so, while he was gone, we slipped off and got married -- went all the way to Boca Raton. They wouldn't marry us in Miami, because they said she was too young. (LAUGHS) And so we went to Hollywood, and they wouldn't marry us there. So we had to go all the way up to Boca Raton. And had man marry us there. A minister by the name of Hugo. And a...I remember going in his house and a...He had to go get a license. He had gone about two or three hours to get a license to marry us.

Q: How old was she?

A: Lorraine was only 19. And she wouldn't pass for 21. 21 was the days...in those days before you could get married. And I was about 22, I think. But Bill, my cousin, and his wife, carried us all the way to Boca Raton. We got married, came back that...late in the evening. We stopped at a little restaurant up here at Hollywood somewhere. It was just about as wide as this kitchen here. Was two or three tables in it. And I think all four of us eat for about 3 dollars. (LAUGHS) Nowadays that would cost you 103 dollars for four people. (LAUGHS) And so then we started...started...We rented a house for 7 dollars a month. No we lived in an apartment up at South Miami for about 2 or 3 months, then we...we found the house for 7 dollars a month. Had to use a coal oil lamp. Didn't have no electricity. But it did have a...There was four little houses together and between the four there was two out...an outhouse with a door on that side, and an outhouse with one on this side. Little wooden houses. And a...we used kerosene to cook with on a little stove about that big. You'd call it a camp size stove, now. And three years after we were married, well Jacqueline -- that's my oldest daughter -- was born. Then three years later my other daughter was born. And three years...(PHONE RINGS) after that our other daughter was born.

PAUSE

Q: So, let's start in South Miami and describe the corridor along U.S. 1 and describe what was along the East side and what was along the West side, as best as you can remember...Let's start with Fuchs Park, say, and work our way down U.S. 1 and you tell me what you remember used to be on each side of the highway there.

A: There were Australian pines on each side and Fuchs Park was...had small water hole in in and us boys would walk home from school and when we got to the part, well, we would strip off and jump in that water and take a swim. (LAUGHS) That was our main stop. After we played around there a while we walked on home. And a...walking wasn't no problem in those days. My goodness sakes alive. Nowadays a person gets out here and walks three blocks -- they thing they've done something. They got to get in an automobile to ride down to the store, or something or other.

Q: What did U.S. 1 look like then?

A: It was a two lane road.

Q: Was it hard pack dirt or was it concrete or...what did it look like?

A: They didn't build the concrete highway until 1934. I watched them pour the concrete to build that highway. I remember well about that. I remember the bridge...the bridge they had over the road...U.S. 1 and North Kendall Drive.

Q: There was a bridge over the road?

A: A bridge that they had built. I remember it well 'cause I hit that bridge a little too fast one day...one night. (LAUGHS) Coming from my girlfriends house. (LAUGHS) Incidentally, Chapman Field is in Pinewood (sic), isn't it?

Q: Chapman Field may be in Pinecrest. I'm not sure.

A: I got a little book here. I got a little book here on the table. It's in an envelope of a lady who grew up in Chapman Field.

Q: Yes.

A: And she has some of the history of Chapman Field in it. You're welcome to take it and read it if you like.
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