

Joy Parrish
Tape: 4.2.1.1
Starts: 1:00:30

Interviewer: Kathy Hersh

Recorded: 4/2/01

Location: 12222 S.W. 77th Ave., Miami

Q: I'd like to talk to you about your father's farm and where it was located and your early memories of the farm? It was right around here, close by?

A: It was right over there from 124th through to almost 112th. Actually, he farmed...he farmed around in a lot of places that he didn't actually own. But he owned that piece of land and that's where he had his houses, and his animals were kept there: the horses and the mules and pigs and. ah, some of the field hands stayed down there. Others went, during busy season, he'd go down on a...Oh, I guess every morning he went down with a truck and he picked up help to come farm. He went down to Perrine.

Q: And they would be standing out on the corner?

A: No, they'd be...there was a...he farmed with a man who was, Mr. Kerr, I don't really know what the relationship was, I guess Mr. Kerr, maybe, put money up front and...and Daddy hired the help. They'd come congregate there at Mr. Kerr's...I think it was a commissary he had there. My sister would know more about this than me. She'd remember it. And Daddy would go down there and he'd pick up whoever wanted to help, you know. A day's work, and they'd come farm throughout the season. But, as I said, some stayed down there in the houses. He had about three little houses down there that the help stayed in. and we weren't allowed to go down there. We...we never went down there.

Q: Why weren't you allowed to go down there?

A: I don't know, we just...we just didn't go. Which is...it was not, you know, strictly prohibited, we just...we just didn't go. If we got any tomatoes my mother would have to keep hounding him, "Hey, bring home some tomatoes, we need some tomatoes around here." And then at the end of the farming season, not when we were real young, but after I was up in

High School, and actually my sister was married, we did, we were allowed to go down there then and pick from the remaining fields and we sold the tomatoes over here on the highway. Right over there at Suniland, near the park with the little rock pit is. We sold tomatoes. There wasn't a building anywhere along. Sold tomatoes, 25 cents a box until the season was totally over.

Q: So passing motorists going down U.S.1 would...and was that you spending money, then?

A: Yeah. A little spending money. We made as much as a couple of hundred dollars in the late season.

Q: That went a long way in those days?

A: Yeah, yeah it sure did.

Q: so you were able to buy your clothes or...what did you spend the money on?

A: I...clothes, I guess. I guess we did, clothes.

Q: And where would you go to shop in those days?

A: Down in Perrine, mainly, Perrine. there were two stores down there. One, which my sister worked in, one was called Sterlings, and the one was called Barfields. Two little department stores. And in South Miami, on Sunset, there was another department store. We did our grocery shopping, we drove in to Coral Gables to do our grocery shopping, down on Ponce de Leon. Ponce de Leon was developed and there was a couple of little grocery stores down that way. When we do major...major shopping. Other than that there were little gas stations along that had...and there was a little grocery store out here at Kendall where the car wash place is now. The post office was originally there on the corner where that car wash place is, across...

Q: The brushless car wash?

A: Um, huh. The brushless car wash. There was a little grocery, a small little grocery store there. We'd get our week's groceries. My mother used to spend like three or five dollars for a weeks groceries, I remember.

Q: So, you were telling me about going to school in Perrine. Would you tell us what the name of your school was and who all went and the bus ride as you were describing earlier?

A: It was Perrine Elementary School. Ah...we all went there. My two...my two older sisters, of course. One sister is eleven years older than me and one is eight years older than me, but we were all picked up by the school bus out on the corner, there, at a 124th and 77th, early in the morning and took the route East, all the way over to Old Cutler Road, turned South, went by Chapman Field, picked up...along the way picked up one or two, only one or two, picked up at Chapman Field, then along on Old Cutler Road, one or two more, turned down Franjo Road, and, occasionally, one or two here and there, then went in to Perrine Elementary School, and from Perrine Elementary School, the same bus, took off North to the High School and dropped off the ones going to High School. Same driver. Two drivers we had throughout our lifetime -- Mrs. Hazelip...can't remember the man's name. Yeah. Same two drivers throughout our lifetime. Late in my school years I thought I had really arrived when the school route changed and I didn't have to get up so early. I was in High School and the school bus came directly from the South going to the High School and picked me up. I was the last one to be picked up and then went to High School. I didn't have to get up...get out until eight o'clock then.

Q: And where did you go to High School?

A: Ponce de Leon High School.

Q: And how many were there at that time? Was it a big school?

A: No, it was very small. In my graduating class -- 211. Two hundred...and it was four grades, nine through twelve. I would say less than a thousand. Eight hundred, maybe.

Q: And that's where the Middle School is now, Ponce de Leon Middle?

A: It changed to the Middle School. I graduated in '49 and it changed to Coral Gables in '51, I believe. I was in the next to the last graduating class of Ponce de Leon High School.

Q: So, getting back to your father and the farm, was your father a native Miamian?

A: No, he and my mother came here in 1919. I think he came first. I think he came first, in 1919, and he liked it down here for some reason, maybe it was a new adventure for him or, I don't know what he saw of interest, but he came here in 1921, they both came with my sister who was born by that time. She was born in South Carolina, that was their home in South Carolina. So the three of them came down here and he started farming around -- spot farming. First, you know, one little place and then then another.

Q: Is that what they called it, "spot farming?"

A: That's what we referred to it as. He'd farm on some little piece of land that he got permission to use or paid, I don't know how, but he farmed all over, different little places, until, and he lived all over. He lived...first he lived in Hialeah and then he lived in Cutler. And the storm of 1926 was a really bad storm and I remembered them talking, my mother in particular, talking about the water...their house was really badly damaged and -- I wasn't born then -- but my mother and my two sisters were in the big coral rock house and a lot of other people were in the big coral rock house that is still there as a nursery now. I think its Foster's nursery. I don't believe they've torn that down.

Q: Where is that?

A: On the corner of 168th and Old Cutler. There was a coral rock house on the southwest corner that was there for many, many years. I believe it's still there. Coral rock house. But any how, my mother spent that...and the water came up like it did in hurricane Andrew. The water came up high. But after that, my Daddy came up into this area and first...I was born, not in the house on the corner where my sister is there now, on the corner of 77th, but a house across the street. But a, Daddy didn't own that house and I think they sold it, then, and Daddy built a house across the street for us. I remember the house went up really fast. I was only three or four years old but I can remember moving into that house, which stayed there for many years until she built her house there in 1958 or '59.

Q: Is the original house structure down?

A: Oh, yes. There are not many houses left in this area, but at that time there were only five houses out here. Five houses. There was one up on the corner at 112th and 77th -- a coral rock house. It was hand build by the owner there. He would sit out on this mound and he'd chop away at these coral rock pieces until he got them to fit exactly. We used to go by and see him out there chopping away on the coral rock to fit them together to build his house. That little house was there many, many, many years then someone came in bulldozed that. It was a lovely little house.

There's another old house, as old as our little house was, that's right over here on 124th street. Still standing. A very small little house. A real tiny little white place with the big play yard for children in. Would be of interest to you.

Q: 124th Street before you get to U.S.1?

A: Yes, it's about...about 80th. About 80th Avenue.

Q: You remember that from your childhood?

A: Yes, it was built after our house, and a family lived in their. Their name was Williams -- Mrs. Williams. She used to come over visit my mother. And then, when we moved out of that house and Daddy built our house, a family moved in there. They'd moved here from New England. Their name was Arthur Simmons. He developed a chicken farm. And this is what I was telling Carl. Many people don't know that this area had three large chicken farms. Big, big operation going in there. Chickens to sell eggs and also they sold live chickens and slaughtered chickens. They killed the chickens, dressed them, and sold them and moved them out of here.

There was another chicken farm right over here on the property just south of Palmetto High School. Two chicken farms owned by a couple of men from downtown Miami. Their names were Compton and Owden...furniture store. Compton and Owden were partners and they developed, built two houses over here, and operated two individual chicken farms. They didn't live their, they'd come down on weekends. And they had a little dirt road that came off 77th to get back into their chicken farms. One of the houses from that chicken farm is still standing over there. Right on 77th. A portion of that house on 74th Avenue you can see the wooden structure part of it.

That part...that house belonged to Compton. And it was part of the chicken farm.

Q: So, you were surrounded by chickens, then?

A: Yes we were. We had chickens all around us. Chicken farms operated for many years. And then, in later years, when the chicken farms died away, there was a large grove planted on the property which is now Palmetto High School. big grove with oranges and grapefruits. I think that's a ten acre tract. Maybe more. But it was a big, big grove and only a few years did they actually harvest the fruit off of it. And after that it was just left to lay there in ruin.

Q: Anybody ever know why?

A: Nobody knew why. It was just abandoned. Just, you know, different people would come in and take the fruit off. Later, Palmetto High School came in. 1959, Palmetto High School was built there. It was '59.

Q: What was it like growing up in this area?

A: Oh, it was lonely. We used to play -- I skated a lot. I got roller skates for Christmas. Every year I got roller skates. I skated in the street. The street was not smooth. We looked for a smooth place, you know, my younger sister and I. She'd get a tricycle and I'd get roll skates, I remember. I loved to skate. We played in the street. We played ball. Back and forth we played ball. We played ball over the house. We'd throw the ball. We'd say 'hail over.' That was a game we played, 'hail over,' and we wandered. I was just talking to my husband this morning about that, how we wandered and we found things and it was so safe. Nobody bothered you. We wandered all over everywhere, all these...there was a little road, a little dirt road that came out from over there where my Daddy's property was and came across 77th Avenue and wound down, and we used to out looking for wild flowers.

We had fires in those days too. For no reason a fire would break out and that was always a fear.

Q: It was pine lands?

A: Yes, it was pine land. And sometimes , I understand now, that it was, maybe, done deliberately because it was, you know, they wanted to get the undergrowth out of there and...But we always feared as youngsters, you know, you fear. 'There's a fire, there's a fire.' But Daddy kept our property cleared quite well so never endangered the house. And then...

Q: Did you ever get caught in one?

A: I'm sorry?

Q: Did you ever get caught in a fire?

A: No, no. No, there was never a fear of caught. Somebody would come and a...what did they call it, 'backfire it', 'back set it', or something to start fire so it would burn close and then it couldn't come close up on you. But, ah, after a fire. A few weeks after a fire the plants would start to come back up, and it was really interesting to go out. There beautiful little wild...little purple, we called them daffodils. They weren't daffodils, but pretty little bell-shaped flowers, native little things that would come back up through the parched earth, and then palmettos would start to come back. And the pines...the fire never got high enough to kill the pines out completely. My mother used to fear that. If the fire was bad, she'd say it was going to be a 'crown' fire and it would get up in the top of the trees and that would kill. But the fires never got that bad. They were always usually put out or wind swept and different people would come help, you know, backfire it. Before farming season, too, they burned off the fields. My Daddy did...I had forgotten about that. They would burn, deliberately burn the fields to get rid of as much of the growth they could before they put the tractors and plows in there to start planting. And it was big time planting down here. After...after the tomatoes -- it was always just tomatoes that he planted during the early part of the season -- they picked them, hauled them away in big boxes, took them down to Perrine to the packing houses. There were several packing houses down in Perrine area. And they packed them...repacked them and sent them out of here. Prior to that, though, way back before we moved into the little house there that my Daddy had built, my Daddy used to pack them individually because I can just remember my mother standing out there packing tomatoes. She was pregnant with my little sister at the time and I can remember her fatigue at standing there packing these tomatoes and there would be lush, beautiful tomatoes wrapped in pink papers and put into these beautiful boxes. Daddy took

them down to Cutler Dock. The old Cutler Dock and put them on the boat and sent them out, wherever they were going. Whoever he'd sold...

Q: That was before the railroad, then?

A: Yes. No, the railroad was here. Flagler's railroad? It was here, but for some reason he took them down there and put them on a boat. The railroad was here. The railroad was destroyed in 1935. Well, maybe it was about the time the railroad was destroyed.

Q: Maybe these were going to Key West?

A: They may have been. I'm not sure where those tomatoes were going that they stood there packing. But after that, then he started taking the tomatoes and the big crates down to the packing houses and they stood down there and wrapped them into pretty little pink papers and shipped them out.

Q: You said that it was lonely. You had your sisters to play with. What other aspects of it were lonely? What did you do to entertain yourself?

A: Well, we read. I was an avid reader, I remembered. We read. We went to the movies on Sunday. And the movie was Coconut Grove, the only movie house down this way. Every Sunday we went to the movies. And we didn't care what time or what movie was playing, we went. We'd walk in, maybe toward the end of the movie, we'd see the end and we'd see it all the way back through until we got that part and then we'd leave. And we'd go down to South Miami to Dorin-Martin (Sp?) Drug Store for ice cream. Every Sunday that was a ritual. Oh, and another thing we did on Sunday's - - we had fun -- we went to Matheson Hammock swimming. The park was developed. I'm talking about when I was eleven, twelve...ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen years old. This is war time. We, ah, we swam, and of interest at that time, we had a POW camp right out here where Dadeland Station is now, and these good looking -- and I was like twelve, thirteen years old and beginning to notice boys -- and these good looking German POW's are over there in the water. They were doing their beautiful pyramids. Handsome men. These gorgeous...and all the girls around watching the men. They also did that up at the park up at 80th Street, Fuchs Park. We swam there too. And these POW's, they were trusted, you know, they'd have, I'm sure, people go along with them to watch them,

and...but they'd get out there...and we were always amazed at the pyramids that those POW's made in the water and their swimming abilities and how handsome they were.

Q: You didn't have any contact with them?

A: No, none at all.

Q: You watched them from afar?

A: We did. We sort of...we feared them. Very definitely, we feared them. And then, occasionally, we'd go over to Miami Beach if somebody maybe felt, you know, we'd go over to Miami Beach and over there we had -- this is during the war time, in the '40's -- we had maneuvers. Marching maneuvers along there on Collins Avenue. Clark Gable was over there on the Beach and we'd all, you know, starry eyed, hoping to see somebody of some importance.

Q: Clark Gable was was a soldier, right?

A: Yes, Uh huh, he was in the...

Q: So he trained over there?

A: Yes, he trained on Miami Beach

Q: So you all went over there hoping to have a glimpse?

A: Hoping to see him. And it was so hot. And they were out there marching in those heavy uniforms they wore in those days. And they'd pass out. They'd faint in the heat and they'd just march right on and leave them there. And we're all standing along on the sidewalk and they'd finally come to on there own. Early memories. My daddy was, during the war, in the '40's, he was air raid warden. And this is of interest. We had to put black covering over our windows and our car lights, we painted them black and there would be drills. Air raid drills that daddy would have to go out and warn people and tell them what they should be doing. One thing and another. My husband's very interested in this too. We had ships that were right off...German ships that were right off the coast out here that were torpedoing our ships as well. When we'd go swimming at Matheson

Hammock there would be tar washing up. We had...many, many times we had tar on our feet, tar on our bathing suits from the shops that had been torpedoed out there.

Q: Was that scary?

A: Yes it was. It was scary. We didn't know at the time, though. how bad it was. We didn't...we had no idea.

Q: How old were you around then?

A: I was about ten, twelve. Ten, twelve in the war. I was born in '31. The war started in '41. Ten, eleven, twelve.

Q: So you were aware that there were German submarines out there?

A: No. Not really. No, not really. We didn't even know where the tar was coming from.

Q: Did your parents tell you?

A: No.

Q: The kind of sheltered you a little?

A: No. No, they didn't. They didn't. There may have been talk but, maybe, you know, it didn't register with me.

Q: Until later, then you realized?

A: Yes, yes. Until much later. And then my sister was working with the Navy. She first worked in, uh, Key West with the Navy. She had worked at one of those little department stores that I was talking about that was where we used to go shopping and both my sisters worked in one of those little department stores. Stirlings. And then later she got the job with the Navy. She worked in Key West. And then she came up when the air base was developed out here on the property where the Metro Zoo is. They had that big air base. And that was a major construction that went on there for a couple of years before that base...It used to tie up traffic out here on the highway. So many workmen going back and forth, you couldn't...U.S. 1 was

just two lanes in those days. You really didn't want to get out in that traffic at the time. They were either going to work or coming out of work in the afternoon. So then she moved in there with the air base. And when those...when the blimps started going out then and they could spot those submarines. It put an end to a lot of that bombing of our ships that were going out there.

Q; So building that hangar for the blimp down there...

A: Yes.

Q: Richmond Airfield was a response to the loses of ships and men out at sea?

A: Yes. And we would all hours of the day and night we could be outside and...The sound of a blimp. The motor in a blimp is very distinctive. It's different from a plane. You can hear that and some..."There's a blimp, there's a blimp." And we'd be look...There's a big blimp just really down very close down on us. Just hovering over us. Moving along slowly.

Q: Did that fascinate you or scare you?

A: Yes it did. No, it fascinated us.

Q: That was dramatic?

A: It was. It truly was. And here experience there with the Navy was too. But then in 1945 the air base burned in the hurricane. All three of the bases caught fire. I mean the hangars caught fire. At that time our house was a wooden house and during that hurricane my daddy...Most of the hurricanes we would sit in the car out in the front of the house and my daddy he was afraid the house might go. And we'd sit in the car and he would turn the car so it would be in the direction of the wind coming. This is some of my earliest recollections. And to this day I am still very frightened and never sleep during a hurricane. And I always have my shoes on. My mother said in that hurr...horrible hurricane in 1926 she didn't have her shoes on. So she'd never took her shoes off. So I always keep my shoes on. But daddy would put us in the car. All of us. And move the car into the direction of the hurricane until the hurricane was over. But when that was...In 1945 was coming, which was a really bad one, we went to the school house out here

at Kendall. It was then known as the Kendall School. It was a little elementary school.

Q: It's Kenwood now?

A: It's now Kenwood, right. I had forgotten about that when I said that Pine...that Perrine was the only elementary school in the area. That one was in the area, but we were in this Perrine district on this side of U.S. 1. But we went out to that school because it was a stronger building. And someone came in and said the blimp base was on fire. The blimp base was burning at that time and we walked, as many of us as could get to the back door, and you could see the red glow out there. The red, red glow that all three of the hangars were going up. And the wind was blowing. The hurricane was in its mightiest.

Q: So you went out in the hurricane?

A: No, we just stood at the door. The doorway. The doorway of the school.

Q: And from Kenwood Elementary you could see...

A: We could see the...the red glow. The red glow of the base burning. And that was the end of that. My sister had a new car at that time, a Studebaker. And her car, there were, I don't remember how many cars, private cars, were in there as other blimps, how many blimps, there's a lot of history about that, the loss the tremendous loss there. But she was staying with a friend up in Coral Gables who was alone, so her car was saved, or it would have been in that base...blimp base to have kept it out of the horrible winds from the hurricane. So that was in the '40's.

Q: So, fires, hurricanes, German POW's that sounds pretty dramatic?

A: Yes it was, it was. The '40's were really interesting and we had more hurricanes in the '40's than in any other era that...of that time. The '40's produced more bad hurricanes. There were hurricanes in the early part of the '40's. There were many, many hurricanes. Bad ones.

Q: So your father decided it was safer to sit out in the car...

A: Than in the house. It was a wooden house.

Q: Didn't he fear the car being moved or blown away?

A: No, he felt the car was safer than the house.

Q: Did people have any kind of underground shelters or things they could get in?

A: No.

Q; So, do you have any other memories of hurricanes in the '40's that you went through?

A: Only the high water that came up in a lot of them. We would have...and sometimes we would have extended days off from school because the school bus couldn't get through. Many, many places along on Chapman Field Drive, going over to Chapman Field, totally underwater and stayed underwater for several days or a week or so until the bus could get through. School buses couldn't run and we couldn't go to school. Even though we could really get out. Maybe we were even taken, I think. Maybe momma took us to school. I believe she did because we didn't...couldn't get the school bus through. High water, what else. There was no real danger. I remember just even more recently when my children, we were in this house, we had high water come up and there was a...a fear of typhoid or something that was associated with the high water. We went over to the school. All of us went over to the school and lined up for typhoid shots. But we never did that back in the '40's.

Q: Was there a danger of electrocution with wires down in the water?

A: No. No.

Q: Like this is a thing we're all warned about nowadays?

A: No. Not that I can recall. Nothing of...

Q: And what was the educational system like?

A: I thought we got a good education. We had teachers...we had really great teachers stressing penmanship. My children today, my grandchildren,

my own children, they don't write. Like we practiced ovals and push-pulls and penmanship was so very, very important. And reading. We read. We couldn't wait until...new books to come into the library. We, we read everything we got our hands on. Which our children today watch television and play video games, and it's such a different world. And we enjoyed that, we enjoyed the reading. And our teacher...I, I was especially good in some things. I was good in math and it was because I had a man math teacher that was terrific. He drilled us over and over and over and over. I was also good in spelling. My children are lousy spellers. But we got drilled. We had...and sing. We sang. We had programs at school. We had plays. We did so much. We had wonderful teachers. Inspiring. And we kept up with them. The principle of our High School was still calling us just to chat with us until he died. Different ones of us. And he did it with all of his students, you know, he could keep up with. From Perrine Elementary School, his name was Tom Holton, and his wife. So, our teachers had a very strong influence on us and, and...

Q: Sounds like you had a relationship with them?

A: Yes, yes. I think our kids today miss that. They don't even get to know their teachers and they change teachers so often. We had...we had the same teachers. You know, we very seldom had a new teacher. We just knew who our teacher was going to be in the next grade until I got into High School and even then we had the same teachers.

Q: And what kind of courses...?

END OF TAPE #4.2.1.1

Joy Parrish

Tape: 4.2.1.2

Starts: 2:00:30

Q: Tell me about the open stand.

A: Well, there was, as I said, that we visited the families that did live out here. We would visit back and forth and the only other young person out here, my age, was a girl right down the street here about two blocks South, and the name was Mott. The house later sold and the new occupants opened a little fruit stand. At first they were just selling tomatoes and whatever else was locally grown. And it enlarged and they started selling juices. Orange juices and bread and it was a wonderful little store. Everyone loved it. We had another one up here near the Methodist Church. A little open stand. On your way home from work you'd stop by and pick up what vegetables you needed and fresh things. Wonderful. But, obviously developers came in and people objected to the commercial area they feared was going to happen. Like Norman's, that was compared to it was going to turn into another Norman's so suddenly we lost the little fruit stand down there. but that was long after the Mott family had moved out. That house stayed there for many, many, many years. It eventually has been replaced by a modern, ugly, boxy, piece of architecture. That one is gone.

Q: Tell me. Did you attend the Kendall United Methodist Church or did you go to a church?

A: No. We went to church at the Church of God in South Miami. We started going there through a friend of my mother's and my sister's too. We started going there to church when I was very, very young and we went there for many, many, many years.

Q: Where is that now?

A: It's no longer there. It...now it's moved over on North Kendall Drive. It's a large church over there on North Kendall Drive now. Very large. Kendall United...Kendall Church of God.

Q: But it was located in South Miami?

A: Mm hmm. At that time on the property that's now the South Miami Hospital. And also the Baptist Church was right there in...At that time it wasn't when the Church of God. The Baptist Church was in another location. I can't remember where that was but it later occupied the corner where the South Miami Hospital is right now. The Baptist Church.

Q: In one of the hurricanes I remember seeing a picture of the original Meeting House of the Kendall United Methodists. I think was a hurricane in the '20s that blew over the whole structure. Do you have any recollection of that?

A: In the '20s. No. that would be before my time, the '20s. that bad storm. The '26 storm. Probably. I can almost. I can't quite though. I can't put the Baptist...I know the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church were right in there, but I'm...I'm not quite sure where they were. She would remember.

Q: Tell me about the...You said you worked at the rare bird farm. Would you talk about the rare bird farm and tell us about that? Not very many people know about that.

A: It was a big attraction down here, along the highway. And it was there long before the Serpentarium or anything. Had birds and monkeys and I think he had a gorilla in there. And it mostly...mostly exotic birds, though. And they were fascinating. Beautiful birds and the lush grounds. Beautifully landscaped. Operated as a very interesting attraction for many, many years. Many, many years. Well it must have been thirty years or more.

Q: So you've been there?

A: I worked there. I worked there two weeks. I left there. I wasn't very happy there. There was reasons.

Q: Describe the grounds to us and what area it occupied?

A: It occupied the area where Denny's is now. Denny's and...just recently left there, the Howard Johnson's. It occupied all of that area and it was all fenced -- a high, nice open, chain link fence all around it to keep the birds and animals in. They were all in cages. Everything was in a cage in those days. The grounds were particularly pretty. They had beautiful poinciana trees. I think at one time one of the poinciana trees on that piece of property was named...they used to go, during Poinciana Festival time, we don't have that any more, but we used to (INDISTINCT) a beautiful poinciana tree and that would be the poinciana. And then they would have a Poinciana Queen. I don't know what else, but I do remember the giving...

Q: So they had a beautiful poinciana tree there?

A: Yes, beautiful poinciana trees. More than one, but one in particular was the one of the year. For that particular year.

Q: They had a pond. I've seen a postcard of it.

A: Of the Rare Bird Farm, yes. It was a popular place. And big. It was...and well tended.

Q: So, I wonder what happened to the pond?

A: You mean a pond like...ah, no...there was not a...I don't recall a pond down there. No. I don't.

Q: And what all kinds of birds did they have?

A: Oh, parrots. All the things you have: the macaws and the cockatoos and...

Q: This was contemporaneous with Parrot Jungle, or did it predate Parrot Jungle?

A: Ahhh...Contemporaneous with it. About the same time he developed that, the Rare Bird Farm. In the very beginning he may have been there before. He may have been there before Shear opened the Parrot Jungle. I believe he was. Shear was very small over there on Red Road in the beginning operating out of that little house right there on Red Road. But it grew in time and surpassed anything down here. Became magnificent. I don't know why the Rare Bird Farm closed. I wasn't happy working there and never kept in touch with anybody. The Serpentarium over here was another major attraction and a wonderful place. Really fabulous. But going back to some history, the poinciana tree reminded me of the different locations of our post office here in the Kendall area. This was Kendall...(PHONE RINGS)...He'll get that back there.

STOPS

A: My earliest recollection of our post office was on the corner there where the car wash is, the Busy Wash, now. Next to the little store. No, take that back. My earliest recollection was back there on Killian on the drive where

the historic little house is now. And that reminded me because there was a poinciana tree back there also that was named as the most beautiful in all of Dade County. And there was a picture of it in the paper--not in color, of course--but just a picture of the poinciana tree. And our little post office was there. It was real small. Right back there where that historical house is now. There it moved there beside, on U.S. 1, beside the Busy Car Wash and had the little grocery store. Then it moved across U.S. 1 and occupied the building where the fish house is now. I can't recall that fish house and the restaurant there.

Q: Captain's Tavern?

A: Captain's Tavern, occupied that for many, many, many years. The post office was there. Kendall Post Office, we had post office box 95. I can still remember the dial and the numbers to get into it. Then it moved over here to Suniland.

Q: So, did you go get the mail?

A: Yes, yes I did.

Q: Was that one of your jobs as a child?

A: Yes, yes we needed to get the mail. I - G and a half - C and a half. I can remember that combination. I - G and a half - C and a half. Post Office Box 95, Kendall, Florida. We were not Miami in those days.

Q: So, pretty exciting to get mail?

A: Yes , yes it was.

Q: Not like today?

A: Yeah, I know. Oh gosh. Today's mail. We didn't get anything like that. Mail was from relatives and, I guess, bills. That's it. We didn't get anything like today's mail.

Q: So you would hear from relatives in South Carolina?

A: Yes, yes. And we had some in Georgia. Mother's sister in Georgia and...

Q: Of course people wrote back then?

A: Yes they did...And we used to get telegrams back in those days. I'm talking about before telephones. That was our way of communicating was...and the postman used to bring the telegrams out to us. And I can remember, you know, when maybe some relative died or something, someone would come with a telegram. That was...

Q: It was usually bad news, wasn't it?

A: And then we got a telephone and how exciting that was to get a telephone.

Q: Did everybody get them about the same time?

A: In this area they did. Uh huh. And then we got a television. Ooh, in the '50s what an excitement that was. We sat up all night. Red-eyed all night watching that television all night. Channel 4, Ralph Rennick was on all night. Not all night but different...different programs.

Q: So, he was your local...?

A: Oh, yes. Ralph Rennick. And Skipper Chuck for the kids. We didn't get a TV right away. We got...TV came out about '47, '49. Not until about '50, '51 I think.

Q: What was it like in the early '50s around here.

A: In the '50s? Let me see, '49 and '50s. '50s, '50s was when I worked. That's when I went to work. I graduated from High School in '49 and I worked...Okay, my daddy moved away from here for two years. We stayed here to continue our education. He bought a farm up in Carolina and it was a remote farm. You couldn't...sometimes in bad weather you couldn't get out so he thought it was best that we stay here. And we stayed here with my sister and my younger and I continued here and we'd go up there in the summertime. That was in the early...that was early, early '40s. Then I came back down here and my first job. What was my first job was working out there at Kendall Drugs. Kendall Drugs in the '50s.

Q: Where was that located?

A: Right on the property where the Captain's Tavern is now and the post office was Kendall Drug. A big, very nice modern, for our day, drug store. Had a luncheonette in it and at that time Shorty's barbecue was built. Shorty's, and he and his wife used to come in for breakfast every morning when I was out there at Kendall Drugs. I was only there...I was cashier there for about a year and standing on my feet and then I had qualifications that I got a job working down there...My sister got me the job down there at the University of Miami on the grounds of the old air base. And I went to work down there. I worked there for a year, year and a half, and I left there. I got replaced by our then governor, out-going governor. I can't...Caldwell I believe his name was. His secretary was looking for a job and she had more qualifications than I, so I relinquished my job to her. She took my job. So from that I went to Florida Power and Light and as I said, that's where I met my husband there at Florida Power and Light. And I worked there for six years until we started having family, and I retired with family and he worked there forty-two years.

Q: And where was the headquarters, then?

A: Florida Power and Light? Downtown Miami, the Ingraham Building that's on S.E. 2nd Avenue and Flagler Street. Flagler Street right next to Walgreens. You traveled all the way in...for a good job you had to travel for it. It was a good job. Then we built this house. I laid out this house. Drew this house out and we took it to an architect and he modified it and we built it. As I said, my mother gave the piece of property and here were are for 44 years.

Q: Let me ask you if there is anything that's particular to your family history that we need to touch on. Or something that you participated in that you think's important to mention in this?

A: Early history, you're talking about. Pinecrest early history.

Q: Either social or political or economic. What was the Depression like around here?

A: I was born in the Depression and from what I heard it was rather pathetic but, you know, people worked the WPA. But my daddy grew tomatoes. He

was a grower and we always, we always had plenty to eat. My daddy always had a new car. We didn't suffer too bad. And during the war when there was a gas shortage, we always had gas. Daddy...and we traveled. We went to Carolina. I remember every year a couple of times a year we'd go with the gas that daddy had from the farm. We were able to travel. We didn't suffer too badly.

Q: You went to visit relatives in South Carolina?

A: Both my mother's and his. We used to go up there and spend -- and of course he didn't farm in the summer -- he would after the tomatoes were over sometimes he'd put out squash. He'd have a season of squash and that would be it until the whole summer. And he and my mother used to play cards a lot. That was another thing I didn't touch on. We did games. Board games: Chinese Checkers, cards around the table. We played a lot of things like that.

Q: The whole family?

A: The whole family...and visitors. And I remember one of the farms I was talking about, the two chicken farms. And I can't remember this woman's name and it's bothering me just trying to remember her name, but she taught me to crochet. She was not the owner, no she wasn't Compton or Ownden but one of the caretakers there. The wife taught me to crochet. And we sat for hours and hours and hours, and I still crochet. I still crochet from all that she taught us in the summers when we had long, long summers.

Q: What was it like, then, traveling up to South Carolina, there weren't interstates or anything?

A: No, it was a long hard trip up there and we always made it, you know, straight through. We would stop in Jacksonville. I remember we looked forward to stopping in Jacksonville to get fried chicken because there was a place up there that had the wonderful fried chicken. But, we slept in the car -- the younger ones. We'd get on the floor board. Two little ones would cuddle up and two older sisters are on the seat, but all six of us in the car straight through. It was like a ten hour drive -- ten, twelve hour drive up there to South Carolina. Sometimes they didn't know we were coming, you know. We'd surprise them. That was a big thing, you know, to "here we

are". It was...that was summertime. We didn't stay long, you know. We'd stay couple, three weeks visiting different people.

Q: So your father...did your mother know how to drive?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: So they would swap off driving and you guys would just sleep in the back?

A: And then my older sister started driving too. And they did the same thing going up to my sister...my aunt. My mother's sister was in Georgia, way across Georgia and we used to drive up to see her sometimes. As I say, we had a car. We always had a nice car and gas, and we didn't have any really hard, hard times bad times that I remember. There may have been some before I came along, but...

A: You said you shopped in Perrine at the Stirling Department Store and you'd go up to South Miami, did you ever go to downtown Miami?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes we did and we had to go down to the Court House for various things and that was a special treat to get to go to the Court House. It was a big, you know, tallest, 26-stories tall and stood out like a magnificent diamond. We did shop downtown -- the dime stores mostly. There were wonderful dime stores down there: Woolworth's and Crese's and...not the big department stores that later came, like Burdine's came later but mainly they were little novelty shops along on Flagler Street. It was busy down there. Really busy. The streets were just packed with people that would come in because it was the only shopping, major shopping area. and my mother used to tell this story: We would go up Old Cutler Road along into Coconut Grove, Dinner Key, and I don't know how true this is, but she said Dinner Key got its name from early days when travelers would travel from Homestead to Miami for some reason, maybe to go down for business, the Court House, and they would stop off there in Coconut Grove, and that's how it its name, they'd have lunch. Lunch was then called dinner. They'd stop off for dinner at Dinner Key that's how it got...either way, going or coming, that's how Dinner Key got its name. That's what she told. And it was a lovely drive. I can remember looking forward to it because Viscaya was beautiful in those early days and the wall outside Viscaya, there was a fence -- the fence is still there, I think it's a coral rock

fence, partially coral rock -- but up above that is a draped wire structure, like scalloped structure, it had beautiful bougainvillea growing on it and the blooming time during the year that was so lovely. As a little girl I can remember looking at that beautiful bougainvillea along there and so dreaming that I could get in there, maybe someday I'd get in there to see Viscaya. Wanted to get in so much to see that beautiful...but we just heard about it, you know, we even saw pictures of it, but we knew something magnificent was back in there.

Q: It wasn't open to the public then?

A: Not then, no. No, it didn't open to the public until much, much later. I imagine it opened in the '50s. '50s.

Q: Your route to downtown was up Old Cutler?

A: Up Old Cutler Road.

Q: Was U.S.1 not built?

A: It was there, but I think we just went up Old Cutler Road because it was interesting. I don't know why. To this day, I still like Old Cutler Road. I'd choose that. I'd choose that over my husband. He likes to go straight. Go straight in and all the traffic lights. It didn't have the traffic lights that they had on U.S.1, and it was beautiful, beautiful traveling along there.

Q: I remember as a child sometimes entertainment was just to go take a drive in the country?

A: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I did, I looked forward to that, to drive and then the beautiful homes were being developed along on Brickell and there were mansions in there on Brickell that you could see into because it wasn't overgrown as later years it became very overgrown. It was...it was lovely.

Q: Do you remember any neighborhood characters?

A: What do you mean?

Q: Somebody that...?

A: A person?

Q: Yeah, a person that was a bit eccentric or a bit outlandish or somebody who was a leader or...anybody interesting?

A: Hmm. I should, shouldn't I? Or should I remember?

Q: Did Kendall have a mayor or anything like that?

A: Not that I knew of. Not that I knew of. At one time, Perrine incorporated one time. It was a failure. Um.

Q: Was your father involved in any local politics?

A: No, I don't think so. No, I don't recall that he was.

Q: There was a school board, I presume?

A: I'm sure there was. But I don't recall that he was involved in that.

Q: Would you have been involved in the desegregation of the schools at that time? What was...?

A: Do you mean were they bussed out of here to permit their...? Yes, uh huh.

Q: And what was that, was that a pretty difficult time?

A: Uh huh. For all of us. Me in particular. I had worked at the school. I didn't accept that at all. I was really unhappy about that. I had been working over there with the PTA, I had worked to air condition and I was over at school every morning at the school store and the school store made more money than other project that was going. We air conditioned each with the little units. We air conditioned every room at Palmetto Elementary School then suddenly at one meeting, I remember, we were going to making some changes and some of our students were going to be moved out of Perrine...out of Palmetto Elementary School across the highway, and this is why I wanted to be here. My family of course lived here, but my kids could walk to school and then suddenly my youngest child had to go across U.S.1 here to Vineland School. That was for one year while other students

were bussed in. And then the following year he was sent down to Frank C. Martin in Richmond Heights. I quit all my PTA work at that time. I wasn't very happy about and it didn't work. It really didn't work. Maybe...I don't know. I just have that sad, sad recollection of it.

Q: How about your children how did they adjust to it?

A: They did it. They did great. As I said, it was worse for me than it was for them. My youngest child made better grades down in Richmond Heights that he'd been making at Palmetto. But he went to...here we live right in the area of all these schools. He went to four different schools in four years: Palmetto, Vineland, Richmond Heights, and then Palmetto Middle School. Four different schools in four years.

Q: He turned out okay?

A: He turned out fine. He's an electrician.

Q: Children are remarkably resilient?

A: Yes they are. He didn't mind the bus.

Q: So, was there a lot of turmoil around that?

A: Yes, a lot. A lot of unhappy people. They wanted us to...they didn't provide bus service to take our kids over the Palmetto, we could walk across U.S. 1 with them. Oh.

Q: You mean to Vineland?

A: Yes, to Vineland. We could walk over there. Fifth graders walk across U.S.1 which was four-lane busy? No, no way. I drove over there every morning and we had car pools and we drove over there every morning and went back...

Q: So they didn't provide bus service?

A: No, didn't provide busses for us. Then to Richmond Heights they did provide a bus, but it was way around the corner over there on 78th Avenue. It didn't hurt him, of course, but he walked all the way around the corner

over there to 78th Avenue. And the bus passed right in front of our house, but it didn't stop, you know, it just had majors. Not like it was in the old days when we used to stop at every corner in my time to pick up a different kid. No, just major stops that were made. But, it didn't bother them that much.

Q: What about...? Go ahead.

A: I was just going to reiterate that it didn't bother...it didn't bother that...he was the only one that was affected by it. My oldest was out of school.

Q: What about the field hands. Where did they come from in those days.

A: They traveled. They were migrants and they traveled with the crops. They would come out of North Carolina when the apples were on and guess...A lot of them stayed here, though, year round. They lived in different places that's how there's an area back over here near Dadeland. A lot of them lived in that area, you know, just off of 128th Street, there's a Black area over there. A lot of them came from there and others down in Perrine, on the West side of Perrine that was all Black in those days.

Q: So the agricultural workers were mainly Black?

A: Mainly Black.

Q: Not Hispanic?

A: No. We didn't have any Hispanics. Not until much, much later some Mexicans came in, but it was after my daddy's time. When he had field hands they were all Black.

Q: So tell us about peacocks?

A: Well we had a lot of peacocks in this area. Surrounding us with 9 acres undeveloped, beautiful native pines and palmettos and we found soon after we built this house peacocks were living all through...nesting and reproducing out there. And they would wander into our yard sometimes and other times they'd come flying and plop on the house with a big loud thud. And our middle child was a baby. When a peacock cries out it emits a piercing screech, like a woman screaming, and it's really quite frightening if you don't know what it is. And our Hank was so frightened of the peacocks

that were wandering around, and many times these beautiful things would come into our yard just feeding and looking and grazing about. We enjoyed it and they stayed around with us for many, many, many years until the developers came in and cleared it all and that was the end of our peacocks. And they have showed up all over the neighborhood. We have seen them down on Old Cutler Road, and out near Red Road, and all round. More recently, and we have some pictures to substantiate this, we had them come back to visit. And we wondered if they -- we really did -- we wondered if they remembered the area and came back to see what was left here. They came back into our year. They were out here on pool pump house. They had flown in and right there on our pool pump house we have a picture of the one male, big beautiful peacock sitting out there.

Q: Where do you think they came from originally?

A: I think they were escaped from the Rare Bird Farm. I think when it was maybe left there that, maybe, for some reason, they somehow got out and maybe went looking for food or whatever. I don't know. I don't know that. But we always believed that those birds were from the Rare Bird Farm. And it was not far for them to just come down here and these 9 acres were, maybe at that time, not the only property that wasn't developed, but it looked like a big tract of land that they could hide in and live happily. And they did, they did. But they came to visit quite often. They wandered in our yard. And our children, my oldest son, when the little one would get upset, he'd go chasing, he'd go chasing after them. You could hear him out their thrashing, "What are you doing? Trying to get that peacock, get that peacock." Chasing the peacock out of our yard so he wouldn't frighten his little brother.

Q: You must have had peacock feathers around?

A: There's some in my bathroom.(LAUGHS) There really are.

Q: From those peacocks?

A: No. No, not from...I have...I do have...I have a fondness for peacock. There's peacock bathroom paper back there and a peacock shower curtain. You know. Print of the peacock feathers.

Q: That's so unusual?

A: It is, and one of my earliest recollections...I do love peacocks. One of my earliest recollections my mother made a bed spread...We sewed a lot in those days -- I didn't touch on that -- but my mother sewed. She made our clothes with no patterns. She cut our clothes and on our treadle sewing machine that pushed -- peddled like this -- she made all our clothes when we were little. But she also did needle work and she made a bed spread, a beautiful bed spread, and a big peacock in the middle. And I can remember laying on that and picking at it as a little girl and admiring the beauty of that peacock, and at that time I had never seen one, I don't think. And later on they lived with us here. So, it was...

Q: That's the peacock motif in your life?

A: Yes, I do. I also like oriental things. I don't know if the peacock is an oriental bird. I don't know about the peacock. Maybe.

ENDS