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AN ORAL HISTORY
with
MRS. J.R. BOUTWELL & MRS. J.W. HOVER

Interviewer: Dr. Charles Bolton

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An Oral History

with

Mrs. J.R. Boutwell and Mrs. J.W. Hover

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi. This interview is with Mrs. J.R. Boutwell and Mrs. J.W. Hover and is being recorded at their home in Pearlington, Mississippi, on May 14, 1993. The interviewer is Charles Bolton.

Bolton: First, I want to thank you both for letting me come to your house today and talk to you a little bit. I thought I'd just start off first by just asking you a little bit of background information. Tell me a little bit about when and where you born and where you grew up. I guess I'll start with you first, Mrs. Hover. Where were you born and when?

Hover: Nicholson, Mississippi. I was the only one in the family that was a half-Yankee and half-Southerner.

Bolton: (laughter) What do you mean half-Yankee?

Hover: My folks were from Minnesota.

Bolton: OK. Would it be an offensive question to ask you when you were born or about when?

Hover: April 22, 1897.

Bolton: Eighteen ninety-seven. OK.

Hover: I'm ninety-six years old.

Bolton: Well, you look great for ninety-six. How about you Mrs. Boutwell?

Boutwell: I was born in Old Napoleon.

Bolton: OK.

Boutwell: Then four miles from old Logtown.

Hover: Above Logtown.

Boutwell: Yes, I guess it would be above, wouldn't it? Anyway, in 1919, and I'm seventy-three years old.

Bolton: OK. Where were both of you living before the space center came into being?

Whereabouts were you living?

Hover: Well, I lived in Napoleon and she lived in—

Boutwell: Our home was where the lower test site is now. Our home, you know, was there.

Bolton: Was it outside of Gainesville?

Boutwell: On this side of Gainesville. Between Napoleon and Gainesville.

Bolton: OK. And you lived in Napoleon?

Hover: Just a little country place. We loved it.

Bolton: OK. How much land did you own at the time or about?

Boutwell: Well, I had sixty-two acres, but it was school land, you see, so we were only supposed to have been paid for the improvements on the place. But, of course, I didn't get very much, even on the home that was on it, much less the improvements. There were eighteen bearing pecan trees. There were fourteen acres in field, fencing for our cattle. We had forty acres in new creosote posts and barbwire fencing for the cattle. We had a big barn plus our home there and outhouses.

Hover: And artesian water.

Boutwell: And then they offered me \$11,500 for all of that and a \$1400 flowing well. And that well was gushing like this when we left there.

Bolton: Let me just back up a minute. When did you first hear about that there was going to be a—

Boutwell: Stennis called us and got the word out that we were to meet in Logtown, a certain date that he wanted to talk to us. And then he came and made the announcement for this.

Bolton: Did you know what he wanted to talk about?

Boutwell: No. It just startled—some of them were just screaming, “Oh, pay us off,”—people had just been here a little while, you know, and didn't know anything about it. They had maybe moved in, in little trailers like that, was screaming, “Oh, when are you going to pay us off?” and all this, you know. And there we were standing just shocked to death, thinking our homes were going to be taken from under us.

Bolton: So a lot of people were pretty upset, a lot of the long-time residents?

Boutwell: Yes, the older people that hadn't had anything but their homes. One of our old friends and neighbors that lived just beyond me said to his wife, "Honey, we don't have any children and this was my home ever since I was born. I've lost my mother and daddy and I don't have anybody in this world. I did have my home and I'd rather the Lord would take me on before we have to move," so he did.

Bolton: He did?

Boutwell: Yes. He didn't have to leave it.

Hover: Then another fellow at Napoleon died just a week before he did, and they claimed it was his heart and that it was caused from worry.

Boutwell: Mama, he went home that night after they announced it. That night he died with a heart attack.

Bolton: I heard something like that, that somebody had died the night after the announcement.

Boutwell: That was this boy that lives right over here, that was his father, Ray Smith's father.

Bolton: OK.

Hover: I had sixteen acres in fields and corn and all.

Bolton: Were you farming the land?

Hover: Yes.

Bolton: What were you growing?

Hover: Oh, just vegetables, corn, and peas and such as that, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, all such.

Boutwell: Anything you'd need in the home for your freezers and like that.

Hover: We raised hogs, cattle.

Bolton: You had the open range back then, right?

Hover: We had our own meat, pork and beef, such as that.

Bolton: OK. Did Senator Stennis say anything about why they needed this certain area, as far as the land, for the space facility?

Boutwell: No, just said they needed it, you know, for the space center, that's all. That was the only word that we had.

Hover: They flew over everywhere. They said this was the perfect place for it there at Napoleon and Logtown. When they could have gone out to the Jordan River and just had all the space and water everything they'd have wanted out there, no houses, nothing they'd have had to bought. But, no, they had to take our places.

Bolton: Did you receive some type of official notification from the government that they were going to start trying to acquire your land? Did you have any contact with the Corp of Engineer people, the people that were involved?

Boutwell: No, I didn't. Some of them might have.

Bolton: OK. How did they go about acquiring the land? Would there be somebody who would come and look at your land?

Boutwell: I have a sister-in-law that had an aunt that worked in Mobile for the government. For ten years she had been typing up things pertaining to this very test site here, or to one anyway, I don't know where. But they wouldn't even let her know, you know, what it was all about. But she was typing this material for ten years, she had been working on this before they announced it here.

Bolton: OK. Before we started taping you said that some people got better deals than other people.

Boutwell: Oh, yes. Maybe just a little, small lumber house, and maybe they would get twice or maybe three times more than what ours appraised for at my home.

Bolton: Who would do the appraising? Would somebody come—

Boutwell: There was a little Ford fellow that came from Picayune. I'd love to face him, I'd love to talk with him again. That's Martha McQueen's—I hate to put this in here—but anyway Martha McQueen's son-in-law.

Bolton: (laughter) Well, did you get a chance to—

Boutwell: There was a government man that came then after that and sat down with me and talked with me at my home.

Bolton: So the appraiser was the first person that would come out.

Boutwell: Yes, and he appraised it. Then this government man to offer me the appraisal, see.

And when he told me that I laughed in his face. And he said, “Oh, well, we'll place it in court for you.” So I had to get a lawyer and all of this, you see. When I did, I didn't get a bit more anyway, because I had to pay a lawyer. They set it up for twelve thousand but then by the time I paid the lawyer, well, I didn't get much more.

Bolton: So you did eventually go to court over it, you had to take them to court.

Boutwell: Yes.

Bolton: OK. Was there anyway you could challenge the appraisal, like get a second opinion on the appraisal?

Boutwell: That's all I knew to do then, you know, was to let the lawyer—I had Phillips from Bay St. Louis. He was supposed to be one of the best lawyers, you know, around.

Hover: I had a niece that lived up there just top of her place. She had eighty-six acres and they only gave her \$10,000.

Boutwell: And she owned that, that wasn't school land.

Hover: You know it wasn't school land.

Bolton: What kind of settlement did you get for your land?

Hover: We got \$22,000 but he didn't offer but \$16,000 to start with. And a fellow, August Holden, come down and told Mr. Hover, he said, “You come go with me. We're going to go today and see about it.” So we went down there, and he got him \$22,000.

Bolton: Are you talking about Mr. Holden?

Hover: Yes.

Bolton: OK.

Boutwell: You might have to work through some of this.

Bolton: Well, I knew he was one of the leaders of that landowner's group that formed to try to get better prices. I guess he was one of the leaders of that. Were either one of you involved in that in anyway? Did you go to any of those meetings that they had?

Boutwell: No, no, I didn't.

Bolton: Do you think that they got better deals, maybe, those people that were involved in that?

Boutwell: Yes. He did, he helped my daddy get a little more for this home. See, they leased—now they still own their land.

Bolton: You were in the buffer zone, right?

Hover: My son owns it. We turned it over to him.

Bolton: OK. So you were in the buffer zone. You just had to give an easement right? OK, OK.

Hover: We've never been happy since we've had to move.

Boutwell: Well, what difference would it make, you know, really?

Bolton: Pardon me.

Boutwell: What difference has it made, you know. Just like they told me, I was in the buffer area, too, just across there from that lower test site office. See, it was in the buffer area. And they told me I could stay there, I wouldn't have to sell—I mean I could keep my cattle in there. That's what they said, I could keep my cattle and all. I said, “Yes, I'm sure I could. Maybe for about two weeks I'd have a cow.”

Bolton: You've got to be close by.

Boutwell: Yes, you have. And back then, you know, there was trucks going through, and they'd just pick one up overnight and go with it. So I knew better than that. I had a few head of sheep. I had a full-blooded Brahman bull. I had a horse and cattle. And that's what we had saved every dime along that we could while my husband was driving for Greyhound, because he had planned to be a cattleman. See, that's what he really wanted was a ranch. And all of it had to just go overnight. We just sold them for what I could get out of them. I knew it was better than just letting somebody steal them.

Bolton: Right. So it didn't matter if you were in the buffer zone or the fee area.

Boutwell: It wouldn't have mattered. If you had to move out, you might as well move everything else out.

Bolton: OK. How much time did they give you before you had to leave your land? How much time was there between, say, when you first found out and when you actually had to leave?

Boutwell: Do you remember?

Hover: How much—

Bolton: How much time between when you first found out you were going to have to sell your land to the government and when you had to actually leave?

Hover: I don't know, I don't remember.

Boutwell: I can't remember either.

Hover: It wasn't too long, I know.

Bolton: Did you move your improvements off the land or did you just sell—

Boutwell: I couldn't move that big flowing well.

Bolton: Right.

Boutwell: And I wouldn't have had any use for all the field fencing. And I sure couldn't uproot those pecan trees and some of those big outhouses and that barn. I wouldn't have any use for that big barn, you see, anymore without any cattle or sheep or anything else.

Hover: We moved this house, our house, up there down here.

Bolton: This house was moved?

Hover: Yes, but we made a change in it. This used to be a big back gallery with a big flowing well with water running in the sink all the time. And a little bedroom on that end where she has her—

Boutwell: Utilities.

Hover: Yes, utility room now, with washing machine and stove and such as that. Then we glassed in the front gallery where it was open. Just took the kitchen for a bathroom and that was the living room in there. We got three bedrooms.

Boutwell: Anyway, it was the same house except they just moved some partitions.

Hover: There's three walls and three floors in this house.

Bolton: OK. Earlier, Mrs. Hover, you said you had never been happy since you moved.

Hover: Said what?

Bolton: You said just a little while ago that you hadn't been happy since you had to move. I guess what I'm asking is, are you still angry that you had to leave your land?

Hover: Oh, I never was angry about it, we just hurt.

Bolton: OK.

Hover: That was all.

Bolton: OK.

Hover: To think we had to leave our old home.

Bolton: What would you have hoped could have happened differently? Do you think that the facility was useful or that it should have been here?

Boutwell: I think that it should have been put in this other area instead of being put here and make all of our people move out like they did.

Bolton: You think they didn't consider the people enough?

Boutwell: No, they didn't consider the people at all. They didn't care, they just wanted the land. And they saw how nice it was with the rivers and everything. That's what they wanted, so that's what they got. They didn't consider the hearts of people and how disturbed they would be. It was just like when we came in here and took the land away from the Indians.

Bolton: That's a good analogy. Looking back, do you think though that having the facility here has helped this area at all? Or is it hard to see the benefits opposed to the pain that you had to go through? Do you think that it's helped this area?

Boutwell: Well, it's furnished work for people all over the country. You know, they've come in from New Orleans, Gulfport, Bay St. Louis, Hattiesburg, and they come in from everywhere up there now. Now, there was some of our boys that couldn't get work for years up there. I had one young man in our church that had tried for three years before he got a job there, and he had lived right there in the test site. And that's what Stennis promised, you see, to start with. He said, "Now your sons will be the first ones that will have opportunities for the jobs when this opens up."

Bolton: But that wasn't the case?

Boutwell: Not the case everytime, no way.

Bolton: OK.

Boutwell: And this boy had a pretty good education too. It wasn't for that, for the lack of an education.

Bolton: OK.

Hover: You can't raise cattle on this land, it's so poor. Just old clay, hard clay.

Bolton: So this land is not as good as the land—

Boutwell: At home, see, you could just plant anything and it would grow.

Hover: You didn't even have to have fertilize if you didn't want it.

Bolton: Did you have to pay more for land when you moved? Because I read that the price of the surrounding area, the land prices, were going up and yet the prices people were being paid for the land was based on the price of land years before. Did you find that to be the case?

Boutwell: (to Mrs. Hover) You all had to pay what?

Hover: Where?

Bolton: When you moved out here.

Boutwell: What did you have to pay for this land here? A thousand dollars a lot, wasn't it?

Hover: No. Seven hundred and fifty dollars.

Boutwell: For what? For how much?

Hover: A lot, and we got seven lots. Four lots over there and four here out to the street.

Boutwell: Seven hundred and fifty a lot, and eight lots. Eight times that.

Bolton: Would that have been pretty high for the price of land?

Boutwell: Oh, yes.

Hover: No, that was cheap to what they're selling it.

Boutwell: Mama, they never had got that kind of prices in Pearlinton for land though before, you know that.

Hover: Well, I guess not.

Bolton: You told me that your husband was the pastor of a church. Tell me a little bit about that church and what happened to that congregation.

Boutwell: I wouldn't want to go into that. See, we had already left here. We were in Mobile, pastoring in Mobile at that time.

Bolton: OK.

Boutwell: And there was another pastor there.

Bolton: OK. I thought he was pastor when that happened.

Boutwell: Split and everything. It was just a big mess. Oh, it was a terrible thing that happened there because it just hurt so many of the older people, you see. And it had them nervous wrecks, and it just caused them to split and just tear the church up. Part of them did take some of the money and built Grace Memorial. Some of them took the old building and some of the money and went to old Corinth there at Nicholson. But then Napoleon church, now, came down here and took their money, for what they allowed them on Napoleon church, and brought it and put it into the building here, and then they built this church. The Logtown people what they got for their church at Logtown and what Napoleon people got for theirs, and they all went together, see, and built this church.

Bolton: OK. They combined the congregations.

Boutwell: Yes, and built that nice church there.

Hover: You might have seen it.

Bolton: Yes, I saw that coming in.

Boutwell: And they are building an addition now, you know, on to it now. The other part has stood there for all these years, see, since '64, I guess.

Bolton: The Gainesville community and Napoleon, what were those places like before all this happened? What kind of communities were they?

Hover: Quite a few houses. They had a couple of stores there at Gainesville.

Boutwell: Let's see, how many stores did you have in Napoleon? You had Uncle Dave Hover's store and you had another store. You had a little store that cousin Martha and them had up on the corner, didn't you?

Hover: Ettie Miller.

Boutwell: No, not that one, Mama. That was years before.

Hover: Two, I think, was all.

Bolton: So they were small communities, in other words.

Hover: Yes, just country places.

Boutwell: And then you had your mail route. They didn't have a post office. You had your mail route.

Bolton: OK. There was a post office at Logtown, wasn't there?

Boutwell: At Logtown.

Bolton: I remember seeing a picture of the Logtown Post Office.

Boutwell: Yes. Oh, Logtown at one time was a booming town.

Bolton: A sawmill town.

Boutwell: Logtown and Pearlington was the largest in the world at one time.

Bolton: Right. Had the sawmill business kind of died down by 1960?

Boutwell: Oh, it was great because they had these great trees of the yellow pine, see, at that time that they were sending all over the country, I guess maybe all over the world I don't know. And the Portmans [?], you see, and the Westons and the Otises. And there were several stores in Logtown, the post office and hotels and homes just up and down, all the way into Logtown now. See, there was just one home after another through there. There was the Methodist church and a big lodge and a Baptist church.

Bolton: So it used to be a very thriving community when the lumber industry was going good.

Boutwell: Yes, yes. Well, not only then, even after.

Bolton: Even up to 1960?

Boutwell: Years after that, yes.

Bolton: OK. So even up to 1960 it would have been a pretty—

Boutwell: Pretty good little area and community, yes.

Hover: Now, my youngest son that's building his home out here on the highway, back away from the highway, he got logs up out of the river at Logtown. The board, when they sawed them, the boards was as wide as this bar.

Bolton: Really?

Hover: Great enormous things that had been down in that water for years.

Boutwell: Preserved.

Hover: These cypress trees.

Boutwell: They'll stand up forever in that home.

Bolton: You probably remember when there weren't any timber companies in here. When they first started coming in, they used to have the timber camps all around when they were cutting over the pine.

Hover: Oh yes, oh yes. When I was just a young girl, I guess about twelve or thirteen, up there right where the test site is, they had Negro quarters, just houses in rows where the Negroes dipped turpentine.

Bolton: Oh, off the pine trees.

Hover: Yes. And they had crepe myrtle trees and big deep springs. I can remember all of that.

Boutwell: And springs, deep springs is what she means.

Hover: We had a spring at our old place, well, two of them. And that water was just as ice cold as it could be in the summer, and in the winter it would be warm.

Boutwell: See, we could still get water off of the old home place now, you know. It would be as pure as any you could buy in these bottles.

Bolton: Bottled water.

Boutwell: If the test site hadn't come in and messed it all up. But see, they messed it all up.

Bolton: Well, they had to build that new canal and everything. So that kind of affected the water table and everything.

Boutwell: I don't know what they did to it.

Bolton: Well, what do you think the communities would have been like without the space center? Do you think they would have gone on much the way they had for years and years?

Boutwell: I imagine so, with people moving in and out, and maybe would have developed more. There would have been more people coming in and building because of just space. They've had to cram into Slidell and all because there wasn't any places for sale hardly anywhere.

Bolton: Where did most people go, say, your neighbors and friends, did most of them move to Pearlington or did they—

Boutwell: Well, there were a lot of them—

Hover: A lot of them come down here.

Bolton: OK, because I guess this would be one of the closest places, right?

Boutwell: A few of them—

Hover: Some went to Bay St. Louis and different other places. My daddy sent off some of the water to have it analyzed. Is that what you call it?

Bolton: Right.

Hover: And they said that that was the most pure water they had ever tested.

Bolton: Really.

Hover: And we never knew a sick day in our lives, none of us, the family. There was seven of us.

Bolton: I bet that tasted good.

Hover: Yes.

Bolton: So people just kind of moved all over the place when they had to be relocated.

Boutwell: Yes, they moved. Most of them came on down here because they were real close. The families were close and all. The Murphys and the Hovers, the Holdens and Dawseys and all that group of people came down here.

Bolton: Has the NASA facility done much for, say, this Pearlington community in terms of helping—

Boutwell: Well, there's a few working.

Bolton: A few people that work there.

Boutwell: My daughter-in-law works there. She's been working there for years. My son worked there until he wore out with it. He was working for General Electric and then they were moving somewhere else. So then he was supposed to have gone with them but he wouldn't leave. He wouldn't go and be sent way off somewhere because this is where his family was.

Hover: Do you know Roy Baxter?

Bolton: Yes, actually we did an interview with him also, out at the marina.

Hover: Big pictures of NASA, all different things.

Bolton: Right.

Hover: Beautiful.

Boutwell: My son's the one that took the pictures. He handled those thousands of dollars cameras, you know, that took those big pictures when they were testing to the moon and all this. I've got one that he made for me out there on the porch, not of the moon, but anyway, a picture that he did for me.

Bolton: After you moved, did you go back out to where your home place was and see what had happened to it or was it difficult to go back out there?

Boutwell: I bought the house back for about a hundred dollars and bought my mother-in-law's house back and had them torn down and brought down here. Then I had a little old house built right behind the church over here for a rental house. But then everybody I would rent it to—I even furnished it and oh, it was the cutest thing you've ever seen. And everybody that would rent it would move off, maybe in the night owing me several hundred dollars. So finally I just went ahead and sold it to them for a song, just to get it off my back.

Bolton: Was it difficult actually going back to the land?

Boutwell: Oh sure, it hurts, sure it does. We had a big mayhaw pond, you know, just at the end of the field.

Bolton: Oh, really. I love mayhaw jelly.

Boutwell: Oh, just trees after trees and every year we'd go gather the mayhaws, and have all the jelly we'd need.

Bolton: Is there anything else you could tell me about your experience of having to leave your home to make room for the NASA facility? Maybe something I hadn't asked you that you wanted to add to this.

Boutwell: There were a lot of dreams there for the future and what we'd planned for our home and for our life. And, you know, when all those things go falling, tumbling down, well, I don't know, it does something to you that never can be rebuilt again.

Hover: My daddy bought this eighty-six acres with a two-story building. That was the old timey ceilings, twelve foot, you know, from the floor to the ceiling. And twelve foot from there on up. And we used to have a big board rope swing, and me and my boyfriend would get in that swing and go clear to the eave of the house. My sister said, "Pearl, you all are going to get killed. Stop going so high." And we'd try to go still higher.

Boutwell: Yes, she won't tell you all the things that she did though. It might be a bad influence on you. Oh, she did some stuff. She would have killed us if we had pulled some of the things she pulled. That's right.

Bolton: That's great.

Hover: I was a tom boy.

Bolton: Really?

Hover: I would climb a tree good as anybody.

Boutwell: She'd take an axe and go out when she was just a young girl and go out and find an old hollow log and a rabbit in there and she'd chop—the dog would find it, you know—and she'd chop into that and get a hold of that rabbit and carry it home, and they'd have rabbit for supper.

Bolton: What did your father do, Mrs. Hover?

Hover: How's that?

Bolton: What did your father do?

Hover: Farmed.

Bolton: He was a farmer. Did you help him on the farm? Would you help on the farm?

Hover: When I had to.

Boutwell: He was a big wheat farmer up in Minnesota. They came from Minneapolis.

Bolton: When did you come down to Mississippi?

Boutwell: Just four months before she was born.

Hover: About 1892, no, 1902.

Bolton: Do you know why he came to Mississippi?

Boutwell: Yes, his crops failed up there. He had a great ranch.

Hover: No, I was born in 1897, and they had been down here about six months so you can figure about—

Boutwell: I thought you had always said about four months before you were born.

Hover: Yes, something like that.

Bolton: OK. So his crops failed and he moved down to Mississippi. Did he continue farming in Mississippi?

Boutwell: Then he had a friend, too, that was close up there that had come on down here and kept writing to him and telling him what beautiful weather it was down here, because they had such terrible snows and ice and freezing weather so long up there, you see. And it persuaded him to come on, and so that's what he did.

Bolton: Did he keep farming down here?

Hover: Yes.

Boutwell: Not the same thing.

Bolton: No, not wheat obviously. What did he grow down here? Was he just a vegetable farmer?

Boutwell: Vegetables, corn. The rest of it, he just didn't have any use for.

Hover: Used to take the horse and wagon and go way up the country and buy sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, chickens, eggs, anything they had to sell. And he'd bring them down to the house, and my mother and an old colored woman, old Aunt Caroline, would take them to Bay St. Louis and sell it. Like he'd pay seventy-five cents for a bushel of potatoes and he'd sell them for a dollar.

Boutwell: Make twenty-five cents after she rode with a horse and buggy in a wagon all the way to Bay St. Louis, you know.

Bolton: Well, twenty-five cents probably went a long way back then.

Boutwell: Must have, undoubtedly.

Hover: It took two days to go to Bay St. Louis from Gainesville.

Bolton: Two days?

Hover: Two days with an ox team.

Bolton: Was there just like a dirt path?

Hover: And mud holes that you'd bog down in about forty times before you got there.

Bolton: Would you see a lot of wildlife on the way?

Hover: You ought to get some of those Thigpen books and read them.

Bolton: Oh, yes, I know Grandpa Thigpen. I've read some of his stuff.

Hover: You'd learn something.

Boutwell: I guess you remember the first car you ever saw, don't you?

Hover: Yes, and I run up on the front gallery and I thought, "Well, my Lord, what's that coming with no horse?" I thought that was the funniest-looking thing. Some of the Westons and Otises at Logtown owned the first cars, you see. And then one of Willie's uncles owned the one at Napoleon, and Mr. Hover owned the next one.

Boutwell: I've got a picture, in my baby cap, sitting on the fender of that first car.

Bolton: About what year would that be when Mr. Hover got the car?

Boutwell: Well, let's see.

Bolton: Was that in the '20s?

Boutwell: That would have been about 1919 or 1920.

Hover: No. My daddy died in 1917, and we had the car then.

Boutwell: Oh, did you?

Hover: Yes.

Boutwell: Oh, OK.

Bolton: Well, you all were one of the first, because a lot of people didn't get them until the '20s, right?

Hover: Yes.

Bolton: Yes, OK, that's great.

Hover: Mr. Hover owned, I don't know how many cars after that.

Bolton: He liked the cars then once they came along.

Hover: And he had trucks that he worked on.

Boutwell: But he was a natural born mechanic, Papa was. You could drive up out there, and he could tell you what was knocking or just what was wrong with your car nearly just by listening to it as you drove up. He was just gifted, and then my son took after him. He has a shop behind his house. And he's just about that good now too.

Bolton: How did he feel about you having to move from his home?

Boutwell: My daddy?

Bolton: Yes.

Boutwell: Oh, he had enough Indian blood in him, you see, for it to nearly kill him. It really hurt him. He never was happy. And in fact, my brother, the baby brother now, he said if they gave the message that they would turn the land back to the people, why night wouldn't fall until he had a tent or something up at home. That's right.

Bolton: Do you think that they should maybe return some of the land since they have such a huge area?

Boutwell: Sure, they ought to, certainly. They don't need all of that. They just took it in. They knew they wasn't going to be too much damage done but look at all the houses they left there for offices. And not one bit of damage in the world's ever been done to any one of the houses that's been there left.

Bolton: So you think they probably took more land than they should have?

Boutwell: Well, at least they should turn it back to the people.

Bolton: If they're not using it.

Boutwell: But now what's happened, see, just like mine that I had, there's a fellow that's gone in there and leased the land, cut all the trees on it, even though it was school land he cut every stick on it looks like. It's just a big clear space out there now. And they wasn't supposed to do that if it's still considered school land.

Hover: And my second son—how much did he own up there?

Boutwell: And I still hold all the old deeds and everything to that land up there.

Hover: How much did Willard own, how many acres there by yours?

Boutwell: He had one forty and then I believe he went and got—didn't he take in some more?

Hover: I think so, yes.

Boutwell: Anyway, all of our family is the one that's owned the whole thing, you know, from that canal there?

Bolton: Right.

Boutwell: On back to Napoleon and through Napoleon.

Bolton: That was all land that was in your family?

Boutwell: Mostly, family-connected, just very few that wasn't connected some way or other with the family.

Hover: I was born in Nicholson. We were staying with this old fellow that had wrote my daddy and told him to come South. And my daddy would walk down to the river, it was close by the house. And he come back to the house and my mother's name was Orstella [?]. He said, "Stella, have you thought of a name for the baby?" She said, "No." He said, "Let's name her after the Pearl River. It's a beautiful thing."

Bolton: So you're named after the river?

Hover: Yes. He said, "It's the most beautiful thing I ever saw." You see, in Minnesota is where

the head of the Mississippi starts.

Bolton: Right, right.

Hover: And he said it wasn't over four foot long.

Boutwell: You just step over it there, you see.

Hover: Four foot wide and ankle deep. And he just thought that river with all those trees and bushes was just something.

Boutwell: Back then they had homes along the river.

Bolton: Down there in Logtown, Gainesville?

Boutwell: In Napoleon and Logtown.

Hover: So then the next day he said, "Have you thought of a name to go with the Pearl?" She said, "No." He said, "Let's name her after my first old girlfriend."

Bolton: (laughter) I'll bet that was a popular decision.

Hover: So that's my name, Pearl.

Boutwell: She said, "OK." I wouldn't have liked it myself.

Bolton: I don't think many people would. That's a great story.

Boutwell: But that's the kind of people they had back then.

Hover: She was a beautiful woman. Had hair hung way down, beautiful, auburn hair.

Bolton: Well, I think that's about all the questions I had, if you have something else you want to add.

Boutwell: If Mama's older sister was living she could really tell you some things, I'll tell you. She was grown when they moved down here, and she kept a diary since she was a young girl.

Bolton: Oh, really.

Boutwell: And we have about twelve books now of her diary. And I'm reading on the fifth or the sixth one I believe now, and you can't hardly put it down it's so interesting. And my baby brother he couldn't put them down until he read every one of them. Because, you know, all the names

nearly of the families were mentioned in the books and everything.

Hover: She put the good things and the bad things.

Boutwell: She put it all in there.

Bolton: That's great.

Boutwell: About me.

Bolton: Oh, really.

Boutwell: Oh, she said, "That Pearl, oh my, that Pearl." Said, "If she don't kill one of them out there, maybe they'll make it all right." Of course, she was helping to look out for Aunt Emma's little children, you know. She was just a little bit larger herself.

Bolton: That's great.

Boutwell: They just did escape with their life sometime, I think.

Hover: We were having a little home dance one night and Emma said that Willie was sitting there watching me and wouldn't dance. He didn't like it, he said it looked silly to him. And Emma said, "Willie, you see your better half out there?" He said, "Yes, she knows she's cute."

Bolton: What's a home dance?

Boutwell: You are kidding. That's when they used to have the little parties in the homes. And you had all your mothers and daddys sitting around watching you.

Bolton: Kind of a courting party?

Boutwell: Had a little Victrola or either maybe somebody would come with a violin and the guitars and they would play. A home party.

Bolton: OK.

Boutwell: And they'd get up and dance.

Bolton: OK. Instead of the kids going out they would court in the house.

Boutwell: Yes. Sometimes maybe some would do the Charleston and everybody else would back up watching them. Maybe somebody could do a beautiful waltz, a couple would waltz beautifully where you'd back up and you'd let them maybe have the floor, and you'd just watch

them while they waltzed. And then everybody would come on in. Sometimes we'd have one of the old men to call the old time dance. What did they call it?

Hover: The square dance.

Boutwell: The square dance. Cousin Rube Landrum did that I remember one time. And then everybody would join in, in the old time square dance, you know.

Bolton: OK, that's great.

Hover: Used to have a lot of fun. They'd gather at my house sometimes on a Saturday night. And then they'd gather at my sister's, then up at Martha's and Rube's place.

Boutwell: Of course, the preachers then they didn't care too much about us doing anything like that, you know. But it was such clean fun and there were all your aunts and uncles and mamas and daddys watching every little step you were making, so how could you do anything that was wrong?

Bolton: Right.

Boutwell: So the preachers had to like it anyway.

Bolton: Probably most of the congregation was there anyway.

Boutwell: Finally it did disband though when most of us older ones then began to marry off and all and quit having them. And some of them started going to Uncle Charlie's and places like that. You know a few of them did, but anyway most of the young people didn't.

Hover: One of the church members one Sunday morning met with my brother-in-law, J. Hugh Murphy, and he told him, he said, "Now you're superintendent of the Sunday school and I'm going to have you turned in for having a dance at your house." J. Hugh said, "OK, go ahead." And oh, he meant it. So the next Saturday night they had another little frolic at my brother-in-law's and in the meantime J. Hugh heard somebody hollering out at the road and he said, "Kenneth," that was the oldest son. Said, "Let's go see who that is." Went down there and it was this fellow's son drunk as a fiddler down in the ditch and couldn't get up. So J. Hugh and Kenneth helped him up and got him to the house and gave him hot, strong coffee, got his clothes dried and took him home. And so the next day the daddy come up there and he said, "J. Hugh, I come to apologize to you. I'm sorry I said what I did, but I believe I'd rather had my son at your house in a little clean dance than to have had him in the ditch drunk."

Bolton: I guess so, yes.

Well, I appreciate you all talking to me and I'm going to stop the tape now. Thanks a lot.

(end of the interview)