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INTERVIEW OF

DR. WILLIE G. ADAMS

August 30, 1974
Vapaa: We have an interesting program I think for you today. Let's see, what is the date, Willie?

Adams: This is the 30th of August 1974. Yeah.

Vapaa: August 1974. And ah, I want to introduce you first of all or let him introduce himself ah, the man that we're going to have present the program here today. All right. Will you introduce yourself, please.

Adams: Yeah. I'm ah, Dr. Willie G. Adams at Delaware State College. Ah, I'm ah, with the Farm and Garden Improvement ah, Office at Delaware State College. Ah, we are connected with the Extension Service co-operating with the University of Delaware and ah, the United States Department of Agriculture. Ah, my present job covers both Kent and Sussex Counties and ah, I'm working with ah, people with limited resources mostly in the rural areas. However, I have given some assistance to ah, people interested in gardening in the ah, small towns and cities around Dover.

Vapaa: That's real good. Now ah, I'd better introduce myself, Willie, if you don't mind

Adams: All right. Go right ahead.

Vapaa: This is George Vapaa your narrator as usual on this series of oral histories that we're making for Dr. Monroe at the University of Delaware. And we're going to try to find out as much as we can about Dr. Adams and ah, his background, his training and wh--and so forth and where he's from. Did you tell us where you came from?

Adams: Well, I came from a small town in ah, Alabama down in Marrengo (sp?) County. Little town is Linden, Alabama. Ah, about 100 miles south of Birmingham. Ah, I was born to a large family. In fact, I'm a member of a large family--a farm family--about 1922.
Vapaa: The exact date, Willie.

Adams: Ah, June the 6th, 1922. Ah, there were 11 of us--4 girls and 7 boys. And we worked on the farm until we came of ah, school age. Of course ah, ah, I mean college age rather. We worked during our high school days on the farm. But after completing our high school work we left the farm and most of us went to college. In fact I had ah, 4 brothers and ah, 2 sisters to complete their college work. Ah--

Vapaa: Out of ll children. Are they all still living?

Adams: Out of ll children. Ten are still living. We had one ah, ah, oldest brother to ah, ah, lose his life in the mine. He was working in the mine in Birmingham. A little town out from Birmingham, I believe it was Hemore, Alabama--where he was doing coal mining.

Vapaa: How do you spell Hemore?

Adams: H-e-m-o-r-e, I believe is Hemore.

Vapaa: O.K. Well, we can check it.

Adams: Yes. Ah, I ah, did my early education at ah, Linden Academy. This was a ah, denominational school--a Baptist School for several years, spon­sored by the Baptist ah, ah, a missionary ah, association. And ah, eventually--

Vapaa: So you didn't go to public school?

Adams: The public school--it was the pu--it was the only high school in the town. But it was operated at one time by ah, the Baptist Association.

Vapaa: O.K.

Adams: Ah, but ah, the ah, County finally took over the ah, complete ah, financial obligations and took over the ah, high school. And ah, when I com­pleted my high school work it was ah, being ah, completely funded by the
ah, the County and the State. Ah, my granddaddy who was ah, a Baptist preacher ah, gave the land for this ah, school. And ah, he was the first principal of that school. Ah, and he lived to get 98 ah, years old. And ah, he saw a lot of his dreams come true. Ah, I--I became interested in agriculture--I guess I should mention this--even though we didn't have a vocational agriculture department at the ah, at the high school. But we did have county agents coming to ah, the school to hold meetings, organize 4-H Clubs, and hold monthly meetings. And ah, I have a very close relationship with the county agent and no--. I really was inspired to ah, be a county agent because ah, ah, I--I ah, ah, liked the way he conducted ah, the program, meetings; and ah, he helped me to get a project started. Ah--

Vapaa: Do you remember his name?
Adams: Yes. His name was Heel. He is Dr. Heel now.
Vapaa: Um-hum.
Adams: Who I believe is at Auburn University--a Director of the ah--well, he's working in connection with the extension program. He--at that time was Director of the ah, Negro part of the extension service.
Vapaa: Yes.
Adams: Now, I don't know what his title is now. Ah, he moved up from county agent to Director of the extension program. Ah, so I got my inspiration from him. However, after going into ah, to the Army and staying there for about 3 years and 9 days, I--
Vapaa: When was this?

Oral History Project of the University of Delaware
George K. Vapaa, Narrator
Adams: This was from 1943 through 1946. In fact, I—I finished high school ah, in '41 and I went to a, ah, Baptist College—Selma, Alabama. Ah, it was—it was called ah, Selma University. But ah, I studied for a couple of years there to become ah, an elementary ah, teacher. Ah, I ah, liked working with the young people—the small kids—and I decided to take elementary education to become a elementary teacher. But ah, after the Army got me, I changed my mind about ah, becoming an elementary teacher. Ah, however, I—I—I did ah, continue my interest in agriculture. And after I left the Army I enr—I enrolled at Alabama A and M College at that time. Ah—

Vapaa: Now wait a minute, Willie. You're going just a little bit too fast for me.

Adams: All right.

Vapaa: What did you do in the Army?

Adams: Well, I took ah, ah, signal corps. I was in the signal corps. So I ah, I was working with ah, ah, construction—signal construction ah, at that battalion. In fact, I ah, learned to climb poles and string wire, and drive jeeps and ah, ah—

Vapaa: Did you like it?

Adams: Well, yes. It was interesting. I liked it. It ah—it gave me an opportunity to develop some of my skills and ah, have a little fun all at the same time.

Vapaa: (laughter) Were you married at the time?

Adams: Ah, no. I was not married at the time. Ah, I finally got married after I got out of the service and after completing my ah, college work. Then I got married to ah, Eva Walker Adams. Ah, in fact, she was Eva Walker then. And ah—
Vapaa: Was she from your home town or something?

Adams: No. She was from a--a little town about ah, about 40 miles away.

Utah, Alabama is where she is from. And ah, she has completed her work for the Doctors Degree and is the head of the--now head of the Department of Home Economics at Delaware State College.

Ah, but back to my training. After completing ah, my ah, work or after completing ah, after being discharged rather from the service, I ah, went to Alabama A and M College as I just stated and enrolled in agriculture 'cause I still had that interest in agriculture. And ah, I ah, graduated from Alabama A and M with a BS Degree in agriculture in 1949. But at that time jobs were not available in Alabama for vocational agriculture teachers--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Adams: ...so I took a job as a coach and physical ed ah, teacher at--at ah, Scottsboro, Alabama. And ah, after leaving there to go and continue my work for my Masters Degree at Tuskegee Institute I ah, got a job in agriculture teaching vocational agriculture at Courtland, Alabama. In fact, I opened up that department ah, ah, at Courtland, Alabama teaching vocational agriculture. That was in 19 and 54.

Vapaa: All right. Now Willie, you've been telling me all about all of your farm experience, but you've never said what you grew or what you raised or--

Adams: Well, we--our major crop was cotton. That was the major crop at that time. Course we did grow ah, some corn to feed a small group of live sno--stock that we had. Ah, and we grew some vegetables. We--my--my Daddy was--was somewhat of a peddler. He liked to sell from his wagon corn and ah, peas. He was an expert I believe in growing peas ah, that he would sell to the people in ah, the little town.
Vapaa: Did he have any special training in his farm experience?
Adams: Ah, no.
Vapaa: That you know of?
Adams: He--he was only a third grade educa--had a third grade education.
Vapaa: Um-hum.
Adams: But I think that he ah, was pretty skillful. He had expertise in his farming that he didn't get from formal training.
Vapaa: Did you feel that you were deprived when growing up? I mean, did you feel poor? Or do--
Adams: Well, ah, I felt ah, happy and ah, somewhat poor. I guess it's--it's possible to be poor and happy. Course I--I didn't ah, feel too poor because most of the people wh--that we were associated with were also poor and so we didn't have too much comparison to make. Cause we didn't deal to--in fact we--we associated with poor whites--
Vapaa: Um-hum.
Adams: ...who was living next to us. Ah, but they didn't have anything either. So it ah, we all ah, (laughter) grew up poor together and ah, kinda liked it.
Vapaa: Um-hum.
Adams: Ah, course ah, the--the ah, the hurt or the sting from poor come when you ah, start to associating with people of the affluence. Then ah, you realize then that you are poor and then of course ah, you try to do something about it. I guess a matter of keeping up with the Joneses or getting the conveniences that you see other people have. And ah, that's the way it is.
Ah, did I answer all your questions? Are there any questions that ah--
Vapaa: Well, you've done pretty well. I wanted to get an hour of taping done if we can here. Ah, do you think we can talk an hour about your ex-
periences? I know for example that right this past summer you've been working some down at the Delaware State Fair. Do you want to tell us a little bit about that experience?

Adams: Well that was a new experience for me because ah, I had ah, I've attended a few fairs. I--at ah, when I was at Penn State University working for the Doctors Degree ah, I attended the State Fair--the Grange Fair there at ah, out from ah, State College. And ah, it was intriguing. Really I hadn't--I had never seen so many people come to a State Fair to stay a whole week. You know they bring the--the campers. It's a--it's a large area where they park the campers. And then they have another area there where they ah, rent tent sites.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Adams: And they rent those ah, tent sites, put up their tent, decorate them and ah, and ah, do that--stay there for a whole week.

Vapaa: You're saying that the fair is on the Penn State Campus?

Adams: No. It's not in--not on Penn State Campus. It's on--a little town out from ah, ah, State College. Penn State is ah, is in State College, Pennsylvania.

Vapaa: Yes.

Adams: I can't recall this little town. Ah, but it's not too far from State College. And ah, that was my first ah, experience of ah, of that type of ah, you know State Fair.

Vapaa: Um-hum.
Adams: Ah, I ah, went through the agriculture building, the exhibits, and looked at ah, the blue ribbons, the red ribbons eh, that were ah, that the judge had put on ah, the vegetables and the different exhibits. Ah, and of course ah, I did get a chance to talk with some of the judges to find out what basis they ah, made their selection on you know. So I never had an idea that probably I'd be doing the judging myself one of these days. But I did want to ah, ah, kinda get ah, the swing of it and wanted to be as competent as possible you know if I should be called on to do--to do that job.

Vapaa: How would you compare the Delaware State Fair with what you saw up in the Pennsylvania State Fair?

Adams: Well, it's ah, it's a smaller fair and ah, I don't know, I believe they may have more rides. But I think ah,--

Vapaa: More what?

Adams: More rides. More--more--um, circus type ah, of different things for children to--to ride in and enjoy themselves.

Vapaa: Oh, rides.

Adams: Yeah. Different rides.

Vapaa: Rides. O.K.

Adams: Ah, I ah, I think they--they follow somewhat the same pattern. Ah, but ah, it's just ah, on a little larger scale I think in--in Pennsylvania.

Vapaa: Yes. Well Willie, I have a--happen to be a director of the Delaware State Fair so I'm very much interested in any comments that you might have to make. Particularly those that--where we can make some improvements about the Fair. I mean ah, now you judged ah, what did you judge there this year?
Adams: I judged ah, open vegetables at the Fair. And ah, ah, I hope that I didn't offend too many people. Course you know you can't please everybody when you come to judge. And you have to judge—use your own discretion and—. And I think what ah, ah, probably helped me to do a, ah, fair job—I did the best I could—

Vapaa: Yes.

Adams: ...I—I didn't know any names of anybody—didn't know anybody. I couldn't be partial—

Vapaa: (spoke at the same time as Dr. Adams, couldn't interpret)

Adams: ...because I really didn't know anybody.

Vapaa: That's right.

Adams: And ah, I think it's good ah, to ah, to be that way. You—you ah, don't show any favoritism. Course now, a good judge won't do it anyway.

Vapaa: No.

Adams: But sometimes that may enter in if you we—working closely with people. And ah, you almost know their vegetables when you see them.

Vapaa: Yes.

Adams: So you have a tendancy to kinda lean toward what you have helped f—you know, a person to produce. Ah, it—it wasn't that—that wasn't my case. And I don't think it was the case of any of the judges. So it's good to—

V-paa: Well, let's say—

Adams: ...get those judges who are—have no connection with the growth.
Vapaa: I have yet to hear the first complaint about anything you judged at the Fair, so you--. And I want to congratulate you for doing such a fine job. And we hope that you'll do it another year.

Adams: Well, thank you. I--I certainly be happy to do it. And I'm--I'm interested in more of the low income people participating. I--you know, said low--people with limited resources. Those are the people that I'm ah, particularly concerned with and I'm working with.

Vapaa: For their the ones your're working with.

Adams: Yeah, those are the ones I'm working with. And I--I will--you know, ah, even if they don't get the blue ribbon ah, it's good to kinda particate, you know. And ah, I--I hope to encourage some to participate ah, in the future. In the ah, Fair and feel that they are a part of it, you know. It's good for them to have that feeling that they are part of the Fair too.

Vapaa: Now we haven't talked about this at all yet, but can you think of any improvements that the Fair ought to make--from what you saw there?

Adams: Well, I haven't given it any really serious consideration so I--I can't be to ah, helpful on that score right now. I would need to think over it awhile. And--and I--I'm not critical, but ah, I would need to--I would like to think over it and give it to you--give you ah, this at a later date. Because ah, I would like to--to give you my thinking of it and I haven't had time to think about it. And ah, I don't know. I--I want to give you any cri--criticism right now.

Vapaa: Yes. Well, that's all right, Willie. I happen to be Superintendent
of ah, one of the departments too and ah, as well as being a Director. But I'm only one of 80 Directors.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: And yet I think that it's possible, you know, for one person to make a tremendous influence or contribution in anything that we do. And ah, I think that you realize this. And the results of your judging certainly establish this fact, I think. Ah, at the F-air this year.

Adams: Ah, I certainly appreciate that coming you who ah, have been in this work for a long time and--

Vapaa: And I've been out of it now a long time.

Adams: Been out of it a long time too.

Vapaa: Since 1970--extension work I'm talking about.

Adams: Un-hun.

Vapaa: But I don't think, Willie, that I've ever had any work that I felt any more enjoyment from than cooperative extension work here in the State of Delaware. And I had better than 18 years of it, and I hope that you have a good long period of experience here. Because I think you'll find that the people are very easy to work with--in Delaware. Or do you?

Adams: Well, I haven't found too--too ah, difficult a task working with people. They're a little slow ah, a few, about giving ah, the result. I--I'm ah, I'm speaking in terms of some--some of the agents that--some of the people that ah, I call on for--to help the ah, limited resource farmer. Ah, I have to call on them 2 or 3 times. I guess that's--that's just natural. You--you don't get results
the first er--time. So I call on 'em the second time and maybe a third time to ah, try to get them to ah, to ah, do what they can to--to help ah, especially in the drainage problems. You know the limited resource farmers that I work with quite a few of them have drainage problems.

Vapaa: Do you know that a third of the farms in Delaware approximately need artificial drainage? Are you aware of this?

Adams: Well, I'm--I rode around with ah, the ah, Highway Department ah, and I find quite a few farms that ah, need ah, need some drainage. And ah, something is being done ah, to help alleviate the situation, but it's not being done fast enough. Some of the farmers have been told by me that it will take 6 years before the ditching program gets to their area. Which is ah, is not encouraging at all.

Vapaa: No it isn't.

Adams: And ah, it seems like to me that something could be done ah, on--on the federal or state level to speed up some help to these farmers who are struggling trying to make it and who need some assistance. And ah, really that's their salvation if they can get some ah, drainage prob--ah, comp--ah solved, and they can be able to harvest their crop after they produce it. A lot of 'em, you know, last year didn't--didn't h--r--

Vapaa: That's right.

Adams: ...all their crop because it was too wet.

Vapaa: Too wet. Um-hum. Well, ah, Willie, I think you'd of been surprised by the progress we've made in 20 years.

Adams: Um-hum.

Vapaa: Ah, it's been a tremendous program, because we have a unique system of tax ditches in Delaware that ah, I don't think I'll take the time to go into.
Adams: Well, I've been told about some of those tax ditches and ah, my--I think some of it--they are locally operated I think by--by a--
Vapaa: Yes. Local management.
Adams: Local--local management and ah, it takes some time to get--to get the work done, the ditches cleaned out and that type of thing. And some ah, Jew (?) farmers get a little disturbed ah, ah, because they figure they've paid their money in and their not getting anything out of it because ah, the ditches are filling up ah, and their not getting to 'em fast enough. And--
Vapaa: And they forget that these ditches have to be maintained once they are built.
Adams: Yeah. Righ.
Vapaa: Now these ditches I think we ought to explain, Willie, are probably--in Kent County at least--are probably--would average maybe--I'm talking about a farm ditch now--
Adams: Yes.
Vapaa: Would average maybe 8 ft. in width and probably 3 or 4 ft. in depth in actual use.
Adams: Right.
Vapaa: Now ah, when they're dug they're dug a little bit deeper and some of our farmers, I'm afraid, think that we're digging our ditches too deep. That ah, deeper than necessary. In other words, overdraining. Now what they're forgetting is that while the ditch seems to be deeper on their place, the person on the upper end of the stream needs a deeper
ditch in order to get the water off of his land down to the ah, actually out to the watershed.

Adams: Yeah. Yes. I understand that. Ah, but I think the Highway Department can do something ah, with their--their highway ditches to help solve some of the problems. Ah, cause they say that these tax ditches need to be ah, ah, cleaned out and ah, pulled first before they can ah, really ah, do much or turn the water into those ditches.

Vapaa: Have you ever been to any of our soil conservation district meetings here in Delaware yet?

Adams: Ah, I think--no--

Vapaa: (spoke at same time as Dr. Adams, unintelligible)

Adams: I--my--I've talked with 'em to my--several times ah, at the ASCS meeting ah, we've--we've met at that meeting and I've talked with him and I got some information about the tax ditches ah, from Mr. Myer (?)

Vapaa: Yes.

Adams: Yes, ah--

Vapaa: Well, he's the man in Kent County that you see. There's another man in Sussex. His name escapes me at the moment. But ah, Bill Henderson the County Agent in Sussex County can give you a pretty good background on the Sussex Soil Conservation District because we have hi--sponsored ah, area conferences. North East area conference was held, I think, in 1969 here in Dover, Delaware at Wesley College. At which time we were talking about not only drainage but all conservation problems ah, for
up and down the ah, East Coast.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: And particularly the North East. Of course, I'm not too familiar with the Southern problems. I happen to know a number of Southern county agents. Doug Strawbean (sp?) for example in Atlanta is a very good friend of mine. He was a past national president of our national association. And he's now in charge, I believe, of the ah, scholarship program that we're trying to promote within our national association for training better extension agents ah, all over the country. And it costs us an extra $20 a year--not a year but one time is what we collected from each active agent. And many of our retired agents--I happen to be a retired agent--. And my one project, Willie, at the present time with the national association is to do what I can about promoting this scholarship program of our national association. It's one of the things I think we're--we can be a real help in.

Adams: George, I--I certainly think it's the need--very needed ah, ah, project. And I hope that more ah, lower income graduates can ah, take advantage of this and ah, and consider going into agriculture. I--I still think we need more ah, young men in agriculture. And ah, I hope that these scholarships will ah, en--encourage the incentive for--for them to ah, consider agriculture.

Vapaa: Well, the goal for this scholarship fund is $100,000. We'll hear about it at the national meeting. Open up your ah, catalog if you will--your county agent magazine. And--

Adams: Yeah. I hope to--
Vapaa: ...to page 14 I think it is.
Adams: I'd like to make one of those national meetings too. I've never been to a national--well, I'm new in extension work.
Vapaa: Yes.
Adams: I--
Vapaa: I notice your name's not on the ah, register of county agents yet. But you came on the job, when?
Vapaa: I see. January the 1st?
Adams: January 15th.
Vapaa: 15th.
Adams: '74.
Vapaa: Well, I think this list is made up as of the 1st of January, so that's why. But you'll be in there next year.
Adams: Yeah. Well, I hope to. I hope to participate in all the professional organizations that ah, I can. And--
Vapaa: I'll tell you frankly, we don't have too many Doctors in our National County Agent Association.
Adams: Well ah, that's ah, will be ah, a little bit unusual, but I was telling some of the--the county agents down in ah, Sussex County that ah, I hoped they didn't feel ah, ah, any way small by having a Doctor because it ah, it requires an expertise to work with low income ah, limited resource people. And I think I'm doing a special job. You know--
Vapaa: Well, you are.
Adams: So, ah, I--eh--it requires a person with a Doctors degree ah, ah, some ah--
Dr. Adams Interview

Vapaa: Advanced degree.
Adams: Advanced degree to ah, be able to work with these people and to be able to talk on their language.
Vapaa: That's right.
Adams: Talk their language.
Vapaa: Now, Willie, ah, this tape is about to run out. I'm gonna--we'll let the--we'll talk just a little bit until it does run out and then I'll turn it over. But ah, ah, I want to talk a little more in detail with you about the National Association and also about your other work that you've been doing ah, with the ah, Delaware State College and your duties as well as working with ah, low income people; what you do out at the college; what you have in the way of staff and so forth like this. Can you tell us anything about like that?
Adams: Well ah, we have at the college ah--you know this is somewhat a new program. It--even though it's ah--it's the extension program. But it--it is called the 1890 Program. Ah, you know for--for several years ah, ah, the extension service ah, were housed ah--located at the ah, predominately white ah, universities or institutions. Ah, and ah, the predominately black institution had no ah, extension ah, service as such program. But ah, the 1890 Program ah, made available funds--I think from the ah, second moral act--.
Vapaa: Yes.
Adams: Ah, that made available funds for extension service in the predominately black institutions. E--especially the south--where we had the dual systems. Ah, we had 2 ah, ah, colleges or universities--a college and a university ah, we had only one institution with the extension program.

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George K. Vapaa, Narrator
Vapaa: Right.
Adams: As I've just mentioned. But now the 1890 Program made available funds for extension service in the ah, predominately black institutions. And ah, to keep from duplicating what is already been done--being done ah, ah, the program was so designed to work with low income ah, limited--people with limited resources who ah, ah, have not ah, really had the advantage of working ah, ga--working of the ah, extension program. And of course ah, we go out and look for these people. And offer our service and assistance in whatever way we can. Ah, and ah, we ah, think we are making some progress. Ah, it's kinda difficult to--to see much progress ah, over a short period of time. But I think ah, we are doing ah, some service to the rural people that really need--needs our help.

Vapaa: Now let me turn-- Now, we'll start here in a minute. I'm gonna let the tape run just a second until we can get going again. But ah, it's recording now.

All right, now let's go on with the Delaware State College program.

Adams: Well now, we have ah, at Delaware State College a--a family living program ah, where we have ah, ladies working with ah, ah, people with limited resources. Ah, we have ah, agents and assistant agents and we also have paraprofessionals ah, working to help ah, the ah, homemakers ah, do a better job of ah, ah, preparing to make it comfortable for their family. I--in other words ah, ah, mending clothes and repairing alt--making alterations on ah, clothes, making draperies and curtains and ah, even we have them to assist with the ah,
the beautification of the--the home. Ah, in fact we do--we--
we do not have the expanded nutrition program that is operated
by the University. But we do work with the same people ah, that
the expanded nutrition work with.

Vapaa: Now ah, you know Claudia Holden, I guess?
Adams: Yes. I've talked with Claudia Holden quite a bit.
Vapaa: And she's a Home Economist.
Adams: Yes. Un-hun.
Vapaa: And there's no conflict of interest you feel between she's doing
and what your wife's doing?
Adams: No, I don't think so at all. I think we ah, we're working together.
Their work--they work ah, closely with the Family Living Program.
And ah, Mrs. Holden ah--
Vapaa: Does your wife do any extension work at all?
Adams: No. My wife is working ah, with Home Economics ah, the Teacher Edu-
cation Program. She ah--she ah,is the Director of the Department of
Home Economics at Delaware State College. And ah, she prepares
teachers to go out along with her staff. Ah, they ah, prepare the
students to ah, ah, become teachers of Home Economics. And of course
ah, to engage in extension work also and other -reas in Home Economics--
Home Economists and that type of thing.
Vapaa: Have we talked about her background at all yet?
Adams: Ah, no--
Vapaa: You never even told me when you got married.

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George K. Vapaa, Narrator
Adams: Well, we got married in '54. I think I told you that ah, I started ah, agriculture in '54 and ah--

Vapaa: Got married at the same time?

Adams: ...to Alabama and got married the same year--in 1954. Ah, she's always been in Home Economics. But she taught ah, Home Economics at ah, Alabama A and M ah, University--her alma mater and my alma mater.

Vapaa: Was she off of a farm too?

Adams: Ah, they had a small farm.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Adams: Very small. It ah, ah, w-was not--they was--they was not many children. There was just 3 of them in that family. So they didn't need a large family to ah, supply food commodities.

Vapaa: What did her father do?

Adams: Ah, their father worked more or less ah, with ah, I believe he did more of domestic work--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Adams: ...with ah, a doctor there in--in Utah. Ah--

Vapaa: Your talking about Utah, Alabama.

Adams: Utah, Alabama, yeah. Ah, the Eatmons, I think, an old white family that lived there that ah, almost took him as one of the family. And he ah, he worked there and took care of the--the kids and--and took care of the lawn and did--did a lot of work around the house.

Vapaa: Can you spell Mr. Yeatman's name for me, is that right?
Adams: E-a-t-m-o-n, I think.

Vapaa: E-a-t-m--

Adams: Eatmon.

Vapaa: Eatmon. Oh, I see.

Adams: Un-hun. Ah, my wife--back to my wife--taught ah, Home Economics at the--Alabama A and M. And ah, she was also ah, over the Home Management Resident. And ah, she received her Masters Degree from Ohio State in 1956. And of course, after that time ah, ah, she went to Penn State. And ah, in 1968 she received her Doctors Degree in Home Economics at Penn State.

Vapaa: And when did you get yours?


Vapaa: Um-hum


Vapaa: You're a brand new Doctor?

Adams: Yes. So ah, she--

Vapaa: You couldn't let your wife get ahead of you?

Adams: Well, my wife didn't want--she didn't want to get ahead of me. I think my wife encourage me to go back and complete my Doctorate work on the Doctors Degree because she I believe felt--she thought I felt inferior to her because she had a Doctors Degree. Of course, I didn't.

Vapaa: No.

Adams: I--I really ah, I could have been just as satisfied with ah, ah, my lower degree--ah, Masters Degree in agriculture as she were with her Doctors Degree. Ah, but we ah, I think we ah, enjoying it here at Delaware State College. As a matter of fact, I know I am. And ah,
ah, we--we just hope that we can be of some service to the college and to the college community.

Vapaa: Well, I'm sure that you can, Willie. Incidentally, here on the front of our county agents' magazine is a picture of Dick Marek. He's from New Mexico. And he's the nat--M-a-r-e-k, I have to spell this name for the secretary you see--

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: Ah, he is the national president this year of our National County Agents' Association. This man is John Sears. I happen to know him from Arizona. He's on one of the national committee. In fact this is a picture of the annual meeting committee--

Adams: Annual meeting committee.

Vapaa: ...for the Tucson meeting in Arizona this year. And most of them are Arizona or New Mexico or Western agents--that Western area agents.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: Even those Wes--eventhough those Western states are quite large, their extension staffs are not much more extensive than ours are in some cases.

Adams: I believe you have a national meeting going to the Western area about once every 4 years? Is it?

Vapaa: Every 4 years it goes to the Western area.

Adams: Every 4 years.

Vapaa: In fact, in 1966 we went to Hawaii, Willie.

Adams: Is that right? Ah, I--I don't imagine you've missed too many of these national meetings in the last 18 years.

Vapaa: No, I haven't. Really I haven't, because I know at one time why my Director said to me, he says, "What do you want to ha--work on the national association for?" I says,--in--in that time he was the national
director of ECUP, the--I forget the--. Do you remember what ECUP means? It's Extension--

Adams: No, I don't.

Vapaa: Well anyway, it was an--an association of nat--of ah, state dir-

ectors in the national association. And ah, he ah--his job was
to ah, run this national association of directors--state directors.
And at that time there was a president--incidentally, he was from
Alabama. I don't suppose you ever knew him. Fletcher Farrington
was his name.

Adams: Probably a good man then--if he's from Alabama.

Vapaa: Well, he was a good man. (laughter) But ah, he and George Worrilow

was our director at the time. Have you met him yet?

Adams: Worrilow?

Vapaa: Worrilow.

Adams: No.

Vapaa: W-o-r-r-i-l-o -- o-w.

Adams: No. Is he here in the State of Delaware?

Vapaa: He's retired now, yes.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: He hired me and he retired me.

Adams: No. I haven't met him.

Vapaa: He hired me in 1952 and he retired me at the end of 1970. And ah--

Adams: Wh--he didn't retire before you? No?

Vapaa: Yes, he did actually.
Adams: And he retired you?

Vapaa: And he retired me. In fact, at the retirement dinner—my retirement dinner—

Adams: Oh, I see.

Vapaa: ...was up at Buena Vista which is—used to be the home of Governor Buck—C. Douglas Buck, who ah, was ah, ah, a former Governor of the State of Delaware. And ah, they happened to have this retirement dinner at around Christmas time. And the extension staff of the University was all there for this retirement dinner. And ah, my effective retirement date was December 31st, 1970. I retired ah, on my federal appointment on disability because I had— I didn't have 20 years in.

Adams: I see.

Vapaa: And ah, but I had had almost 33 years of State service in spite of the fact that, Willie, I'm still not 59 years of age. I had worked for the State almost 33 years by the end of 1970.

Adams: Is that right.

Vapaa: So, and ah, George Worrilow at the time—er at that time had retired from—as Director of the School of Agriculture, Vice President of the University Relations and so forth and so on. And ah, he was a good boss. I mean I worked for him, as I say, for over 18 years with extension service. And ah, I won't say he's the best man I worked for because I had one man that when I was teaching at Harrington that was much—. Wait a minute, we're not getting—we're not plugged in. Yes we are too. Everythings all right.

Adams: Un-hun.
Vapaa: But ah, ah, Jake Messner--I don't think you know him at all. He's still living. And he spends his summers down at Rehoboth and his winters at Maitland, Florida. He was my Superintendent of Schools at Harrington, Delaware. And I taught vocational agriculture for a period of over 14 years. Now that wasn't a continuous period of 14 years. Ah, I started in 1938 (cough)--excuse me--

Adams: Un-hun.

Vapaa: ...teaching at Harrington--March of 1938--and I retired in November of 1952. And I just didn't just walk off the job so to speak. Ah, George Worrilow came to see me about working for extension because Bill Tarbell who was then the county agent in Kent County had cancer. It was a question of how long he was going to be able to live. So George wanted someone who knew Kent County at that time. And I happened to be teaching. He asked me if I would be interested. I said, "Yes, I'll--I'm very definitely interested in extension work if my Superintendant can find a replacement." So George says, "That's all right with me." So a fellow by the name of Fred Meyer who incidentally did his practice teaching under me was coming back from South America. And he was interested in a job teaching vocational agriculture again. Because he had been teaching I think originally in his home town of Bridgeville. And ah, that you know is south of Greenwood. (cough)

Adams: Yeah. What--what did you like better, the extension program or teaching vocational agriculture?

Vapaa: Well, I enjoyed working with the kids. Really, I--I really did.
Adams: I did too. I ah, I taught vocational agriculture for 18 years. I enjoyed the kids. And--and right now I do a lot--a lot of ah, 4-H Club work. Because I like working with the kids. Even though ah, we have ah, a 4-H Club agent and ah, lead assistant directors and that type of thing, I ah, I give volunteer service to--

Vapaa: Yeah.

Adams: ...the 4-H Club because I like working with 'em.

Vapaa: And were you in 4-H Club work ah, I mean ah, a 4-H Club member when you were growing up?

Adams: Yes, I was a 4-H Club member. But ah, we--as I said, we had no vocational agriculture department so we didn't have the NFA at that time you know ah, and the FFA.

Vapaa: Yes. Right.

Adams: So ah, eventually we did--you know we did away with the NFA--

Vapaa: Right.

Adams: ...and became the FFA. And ah, I was advisor for that ah--for those 18 years.

Vapaa: Have you met Aubrey Jeeter yet?

Adams: Ah, Jeeter who's the vet?

Vapaa: No. That's the son of the father who used to teach vocational agriculture--

Adams: Yeah, I've met the--I've met the father. Yes, I've met the father and the son, the vet.

Vapaa: Very fine man. They're both fine men.
Adams: Yes. I--I've talked with them quite a bit.

Vapaa: Yes. And--

Adams: Ah, no ah, I'm--I--I wonder about the State organization. I haven't--I haven't been able to make the meetings of the State organization. Or--are your meetings ah, in the State like they do in south--in ah--in Alabama where they have ah, regional meetings--

Vapaa: Are you talking about county agents or what?

Adams: Yeah, county agents. Ah--

Vapaa: Well, I'll tell you, the county agent association in Delaware is a very informal thing.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: They asked for a State constitution one time. I happened to be the state president at the time and I wrote back and told them, "We don't have a State constitution. We only have (laughter) 3 members. What do we need a State constitution for?"

Adams: Yeah, I guess that was before you had an assistant.

Vapaa: And then gradually--. Yes.

Adams: Un-hun.

Vapaa: You see there was a long time when I was a county agent in Delaware when I didn't have any assistant agent at all.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: In 1952 until in some time in the '60's.

Adams: Un-hun.

Vapaa: And then ah, well I--Yes, I did one for awhile. A fellow by the name of Wesley Webb who lives out near Mud Mill. Now Mud Mill is out west.
of ah, Dover. It's ah, south of Marydel. Have I lost you yet?

Adams: Yeah. You lost me.

Vapaa: All right. You know where Hartly is?

Adams: Yeah. I know where Hartly is.

Vapaa: Well, Marydel is south of Hartly. And Marydel--part of Marydel is in Maryland. In fact, the post office is in Maryland.

Adams: Un-hun.

Vapaa: But many of the people in Delaware have a Marydel address. For instance, Francis--

Adams: Is it near Sandtown?

Vapaa: Yes. It's south--Sandtown is south of Marydel.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: And is south of Mud Mill.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: And Sandtown however is still in Delaware.

Adams: Yes.

Vapaa: But they don't have any post office. Ah, in fact, it's very confusing because ah, the post office I think in that particular area is either Felton, Delaware or Goldsboro, Maryland.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: (laughter) I think that's the thing that's ah, ah, very confusing to a lot of people because ah, I know even though many of our farms out in that area are in Delaware why ah, they have Maryland addresses.
Adams: Maryland addresses.

Vapaa: And Maryland telephone numbers.

Adams: Um-hum.

Vapaa: And ah, it can be quite confusing. Particularly now that we have zip codes you know.

Adams: Yes. Yes.

Vapaa: But ah--

Adams: So we--you have ah, just a few county agents so it's ah, you really don't have a need to meet as--a--you can get--get on telephone and--and ah, have your meetings.

Vapaa: When you live in Dover, Willie, you'll find that you're never more than an hour away from home anywhere in Delaware. And that's one of the real advantages I think--

Adams: Yes.

Vapaa: Of being a county agent in Delaware. And there's no county agent in Delaware--Bill Henderson in Georgetown for example drives 50 miles an hour, never over 50 miles an hour, and he's never over more than 2 hours from home from ah, anyplace in the state of Delaware. As I am.

Adams: Um-hum.

Vapaa: Because you get into New Castle County of course, you can get on the turnpike and you can really make some time.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: And ah, although Bill very rarely has any meetings that I know of outside of Newark--oh, occassionally we'll have some in ah, he'll have some in Wilmington perhaps. But ah, most of his meetings, of course, are in Sussex County.
Adams: What about the specialist who ah, are working with the extension service. Are they ah, they are eligible for ah, membership--

Vapaa: Membership in national (overlapping voices unintelligible). Yes, they are. And ah, particularly most of them have titles as area agents.

Adams: Un-hun.

Vapaa: But ah, they work out in the communities too. In fact, I've been writing with--to Dr. Marcello out in the University of Arizona about a tour for a Dutchman that I'm going to have coming here who wants to learn something about ah, our ah, cold storages.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: And ah, he just wrote and told me that they don't have very many cold storages in--in Tucson. And not to--. But they do have them up at Phoenix which is north of Tucson.

Adams: Right.

Vapaa: And he says that there's quite an extension program of cold storages in ah, Denver, Colorado. And ah, but he hasn't particularly encouraged me to take this Dutchman to ah, to Tucson. And frankly, I don't think I'll encourage him to go there.

Adams: Yes.

Vapaa: We have--particularly when we have 20 cold storages within 10 miles of Dover. And this man--this Dutchman ships ah--he's about 40 years old--. And ah, I worked with the man who works with him. Ah, Mr.--Mr. Konings in Holland--

Adams: Um-hum.

Vapaa: ...sent his son over in 1961 to learn something about the broiler
business. He wanted him to get some experience in the broiler business and he says that—he made this request through the—an editor of a newspaper in ah, New Jersey—Northern New Jersey. I'm trying to think of the name of the town. It doesn't make too much difference. But it was in the Western part of New Jersey along the Delaware River. And the Jerseyites call it Northern Jersey so I'll call it Northern Jersey, too. I can't even remember the county right off hand. Here—I can look it up here I guess. But it just takes time to run it on the tape and we just as soon not use it, I don't think. But ah, Sussex County in New Jersey by the way is the northernmost county in New Jersey.

Adams: Is that right?

Vapaa: And Sussex means south. So it—the name doesn't really make sense does it?

Adams: No, it doesn't.

Vapaa: And—and in fact—it makes good sense for Delaware because Sussex--

Adams: Right

Vapaa: ...County is--

Adams: Is in the south.

Vapaa: ...is in the south. And Kent County, the middle county, I don't know how we happened to get our name of—the name of Kent County. But it doesn't make a great deal of difference.

Adams: It doesn't mean middle, does it?

Vapaa: No. There's no town of Kent that I know of in Delaware. There's no Ke—town of ah, Sussex in Sussex County. Georgetown is in Sussex County. And there's a Georgetown, Maryland just west of us. But ah,
it's up in ah, oh, again, I'm not sure which county it is. But it's south of Cecil County. It's not in Cecil County. And ah, or is it? It could be. Because ah, Georgetown is just a little town along the what we call the Western shore of Maryland. And have you been over there yet?

Adams: No, I ah, --

Vapaa: The Western shore?

Adams: I, no--I've been somewhere on the Eastern shore, but not the Western shore of Maryland.

Vapaa: Well, wait a minute, that is the Eastern shore of Maryland. Excuse me. The Eastern shore of Maryland and ah, the Western shore of Maryland is on the other side of the Bay.

Adams: The Eastern shore is down around Princess Ann and--

Vapaa: Yes, that whole area is called the Eastern shore of Maryland.

Adams: (voice overlapped with Vapaa)

Vapaa: And they even call Snow Hill, Maryland on the Eastern shore you see.

Adams: Right.

Vapaa: And ah, ah, let's see, Salisbury, Maryland is considered to be on the Eastern shore of Maryland even though--

Adams: Now wh--what's on the Western shore. Wh--what are some of the towns--

Vapaa: Baltimore.

Adams: Baltimore is on the Western shore.

Vapaa: And Annapolis.

Adams: Un-hun.

Vapaa: Have you been to any of those places yet?

Adams: Well, I've been through Annapolis ah, going to D.C. on ah, one--

Vapaa: Route 50.
Vapaa: And ah--
Adams: Have you worked in Maryland? At all?
Vapaa: No, Willie. My whole experience with extension was with the University of Delaware and in Dover. And my whole teaching experience was at Harrington--at the Harrington High School. Which is now part of the Lake Forest Special School District.
Adams: Un-hun.
Vapaa: And you know the high school instead of being at Harrington is between Harrington and Felton.
Adams: Yes.
Vapaa: Have you been to that Lake Forest School yet?
Adams: Lake Forest School. Yes, I have. That's a--somewhat new school out ah--
Vapaa: Oh, yes.
Adams: Yes.
Vapaa: Brand new school.
Adams: Right.
Vapaa: And they had trouble with the roof. And ah, I don't know whether you've heard about that yet or not, but you will.
Adams: Yes.
Vapaa: The roof leaks. It seems that they had some trouble with the original contract. And I think that they've finally got this roof patched up. But ah, I mean that's a minor point.
Adams: Yeah. I met the--the vo-ag teacher there. What's his name?
Vapaa: Oh, there are a bunch of them.
Adams: Yeah.
Vapaa: John Curtis used to be there and he just retired.
Adams: Yes.
Vapaa: You didn't meet him by--
Adams: No. I don't think I met ah, Curtis.
Vapaa: Neal Brasure?
Adams: No. No th--
Vapaa: W&s he the one?
Adams: No--no.
Vapaa: Well, let me tell you something. They're going to have 5 vo-ag teachers there at ah, Lake Forest ah, starting as of September the 1st, I believe.
Adams: Is that right?
Vapaa: But Neal Brasure is the man in charge. John Curtis is the man who used to be in charge. And John is--he retired (cough) early. John--I never taught him--he started the University when I ah, graduated. In other words, in 1933. But he's had 35 years of teaching experience in Delaware. And I guess he figured he'd rather raise hogs than teach school.
Adams: Um-hum.
Vapaa: Although he's a very good teacher. And a very effective man incidentally at the Delaware State Fair. Ah, we're doing our best to get him in as a Director of the Delaware State Fair. Because he ah, is the one who got the FFA for example to put up a--or man
this tent of--for--of livestock. You know, many urban youngsters
don't know anything about livestock.

Adams: Right.

Vapaa: And John is essentially a livestock man. He owns a far--owns 2
or 3 farms around Harrington. And ah, he's now farming--he's now
growing hogs. He probably grows more hogs than anybody else in
Kent County. I know he does. And ah, (cough) he's been president
of our state hog association. Bill Henderson has been the gun so
to speak behind the Delaware Hog Producers' Association. I think
that's what they're called. And also behind the Delaware Poultry
Improvement Association.

Did you get involved at all in the Junior Barley Growing Program?

Adams: Well, I worked with the ah, 4-H Club with that program.

Vapaa: I see.

Adams: I ah, was able to give some assistance to some of the 4-H Club
leaders ah, who had ah, club members who had those ah, broilers.

Vapaa: I see. Now your 4-H Club program, do they meet at home or do they
meet in schools still?

Adams: They--they meet ah--well one thing they--they--it's difficult for
them to find a meeting place. They meeting--a lot of them meet at
home. Ah, that's different from ah, the area that I came from. We
met at the school. We gave ah, ah, ah, period we thought was part
of the ah, ah, the curriculum you know--extra curricular activities--
4-H Club. But I find up here that we don't go into the schools with
the 4-H Club.

Vapaa: Which do you prefer?
Adams: I think that ah, I think that they should ah, go into the schools with the 4-H Club. I think it--I think it's ah, it's the bene--. I don't think they lose too much time ah, at the school by giving a--a period a month or--or twice a month for--for 4-H Club work.

Vapaa: Well Actually Willie, here in Delaware they have never--well they used to meet in schools, yes. I know this. Before my time.

Adams: Um-hum.

Vapaa: But ah, and this has been true in the South and still is true in the South. And ah, Heaven forbid that I should try to change any Southern tradition. I did this one time. And ah, the president of the st--national association at the time who happened to be a good friend of mine from Mississippi--he says ah--. I suggested to him for example that the South have ah--it's the--we split up the country you know into 5 regions. And ah, the South has twice the number of national directors that they do in the other regions of the country. And I said, "Why don't you have--split up your Southern region into ah, more regions but make them smaller?"

And this fellow told me, he said ah, says, "There have been a lot of people who have tried to split up the South." He says, "They've never gotten it done yet." (laughter)

Adams: Ah, did you see the program last night, More Than a Dream? It was on ah, ah, NBC.

Vapaa: No.

Adams: It was showing the progress of--that they'd made in the South. E--e--especially ah, with ah, the social reform--the white and black
working together and living side by side--

Vapaa: Right.

Adams: ...and getting along all right. A thing that they never thought would se--really happen--really come true.

Vapaa: Well, the transition in our National County Agents' Association was scarcely noticeable. Now let's say this. There was a lot of hullabaloo in the background. And I wasn't aware of it. Ah, we happened to have a Southern president at the time. And he was the one who made the transition.

Adams: Yeah.

Vapaa: And it has worked very smoothly. And I think you'll find on the program there that there'll be something very definitely for you at Tucson. And I certainly want to encourage you to go.

Adams: I am going to try to go. I'm talking to my ah, Director now--a Mr. Washington--trying to get permission to go.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Adams: In fact, I--I think I'll get a chance to go.

Vapaa: Well, it'll certainly be worth your time and whatever it costs, Willie, to ah, to go to the National Association meeting. It's really a training session and I certainly want to encourage you to ah, to become a part of it.

Adams: Yes. This is my first ah, year. In fact, I haven't been with the extension service a year yet. And I would like to find out from the top down what it's all about, you know.

Vapaa: Well actually, you'll find out better from the bottom up.

Adams: From the bottom up.
Vapaa: If you go to the meeting, you'll meet a lot of county agents. That's why I went. You know ah, I'll tell you frankly when I go into these national meetings--I used to go--used to be I didn't go to too many of the sessions. I would go and talk with--try to meet as many agents from other states as possible and learn what their problems were.

Adams: Right.

Vapaa: Because you learn more I think from what the other fellow's doing than you do from ah, just ah, listening to somebody from on high ah, talk about what we're doing nationally.

Adams: Right.

Vapaa: I think this is nice, but ah, it's what the guy down at ah--your neighbor across the county line may be doing that should be of most interest I think to you. And I'm--

Adams: Yeah. I have quite a few ah, ah, colleagues that ah, are working in the extension program in the South that ah, I--I'm certain I would enjoy meeting again, and find out what's going on.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Adams: In their region.

Vapaa: Well, I'm sure you're going to meet them.

Adams: Yes.

Vapaa: And ah, have you met any of the agents from Maryland yet?

Adams: Ah, no. I--I've only met these here in--in Delaware.

Vapaa: Yes.

Adams: I'm not to--I only know of one home agent in Salisbury.

Vapaa: Um-hum.
Adams: Ah--

Vapaa: Well, we'll certainly get you introduced around, Willie.

Adams: Well--

Vapaa: And we're about to run out of tape again. And I would like to wind this up. I know that you--probably getting hungry and--

Adams: Go right ahead.

Vapaa: ...want to get--

Adams: It's getting near lunch time?

Vapaa: Yes. But ah--. Yes, it is--just noon. So--and we are just about out of tape. But ah, I want to thank you for helping to ah, put this program together and get your reaction how you feel about extension and so forth.

Adams: Well, I'm sorry that--if I ah, sound like I did a lot of rambling. I--I did because ah, this was kind a impromptu, you know. We didn't plan this. This has not been rehearsed. And--

Vapaa: Not at all.

Adams: Yes.

Vapaa: But I think we have gotten all of the information that Dr. Monroe wants. I mean we got when you were born, we know when you were married.

Adams: I hope so.

Vapaa: And I think this is the important thing, Willie. Thanks very much again.

Adams: You're welcome. You're quite welcome.

Vapaa: O.K. Let's just let the thing run on out. It'll be--

Adams: You know ah, what about the national meeting?

Vapaa: National meeting. The--the ah, the--did you find the plane fare and--

Adams: And how much it costs--
Vapaa: I'll get it for you right now.

Adams: And all this. I--I need to turn that in to my Director.

Vapaa: Now when this thing runs through why--I'll call the Bank of Delaware right now.

THE END