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Iron Hill School Oral History Project

Interview with: Donald Lewis
Date of Interview: April 22, 2003
Interviewer: Roberta Perkins
Transcriber: Marcia Adams

Also present: Laura Mackie Lee, Museum Director, Iron Hill Museum of Natural History

Roberta: This is Roberta Perkins, today's date is Tuesday, April 22, 2003, and I am interviewing Mr. Don Lewis. We are here at the Iron Hill Natural History Museum and I am interviewing Mr. Lewis as part of the Iron Hill Oral History Restoration Project. At this time I wish to thank Mr. Lewis for taking his time out to help us with this project and share his memories and experiences attending Iron Hill and living in the community. Thank you and welcome.

Mr. Lewis: Your welcome.

Roberta: Mr. Lewis would you give me your name and when and where you were born.

Mr. Lewis: My name is Don Lewis and I was born here in Iron Hill.

Roberta: And the date?

Mr. Lewis: I was born in the 3rd month, 1st day, 1941.

Roberta: Would you give me your parents name? And your mother's maiden name also?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. My parent's name was Ernest Lewis, Senior and my mother's name was Edith Lewis. Her maiden name was Edith Miller.

Roberta: Are they from Delaware, are they native to the state?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Roberta: In this area?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Roberta: What about brothers and sisters?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. Altogether there is 9 of us. We had 5 girls and 4 boys.

Roberta: Could you just for the tape's sake here kind of give us the names of them?

Mr. Lewis: My oldest sister is Frieda Lewis, Ernest Lewis, Junior, Clifford Ray Lewis, and Rosetta Waller, Roma Lewis

Roberta: Can you spell that – Roma?

Mr. Lewis: R-o-m-a. Richard Lewis, Sandra Johnson, and Marvel Waller and myself, Donald.

Roberta: Are you the youngest?

Mr. Lewis: I'm the 5th I think from the youngest.

Roberta: Do they all still live in this general area or are they all kind of scattered?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. One of my oldest brothers just moved to North Carolina. Ernie, he retired from the City of Newark and he moved to North Carolina.

Roberta: What do you remember about your childhood, growing up just for starters, in Iron Hill? What was it like for you?

Mr. Lewis: I really loved it. I mostly grew up on a farm. My grandfather had a 37 acre farm just below here and we just loved riding with the horse and on the horse and wagon and everything he did was by horse. He didn't believe in machinery at that time because he was raised by the Amish people. It was a good experience for us.

Roberta: The Amish here in Delaware or in Pennsylvania?

Mr. Lewis: That would be Dover.

Roberta: What kind of farm?

Mr. Lewis: Just a regular grain. He raised grain, poultry, you know eggs, milk. We had the whole works. He never had to work for anybody but his self.

Roberta: That's always a nice way to be.

Mr. Lewis: Yes. Like I say I was born here at Iron Hill right across from the school. By a midwife. I forget her name. Mrs. Biddle, but I forget her first name.

Roberta: Now did she live in the community?

Mr. Lewis: She used to be from Belvedere area.

Roberta: Do you know if anybody else was born like that using a midwife?

Mr. Lewis: No.

Roberta: Playing with other children.

Mr. Lewis: Oh we had fun.

Roberta: Outside of your family.

Mr. Lewis: Yes, we mostly played with the Earls, away from school and at school we mostly played here. We played like baseball and tag. We called it blind man's bluff.

Roberta: Here at the school?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, right here at the school.

Roberta: So this was school recreation?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Roberta: Oh really?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. We had a lot of recreation here.

Roberta: What was ... the blind man's bluff is when you had the

Mr. Lewis: You had one person and they would get up by the tree, the other person had to go in and get them without getting caught so if someone tagged you then you had to stay in, locked in until someone got through and tagged you and then you could escape. We called it blind man's bluff.

Roberta: Where these more or less the recreational games or were they kind of the organized games?

Mr. Lewis: No, we might have made the game up ourselves. I'm not sure, but then we had baseball too, besides that. Hopscotch, they played a lot of hopscotch too.

Roberta: What do you remember about how the baseball was played, like you know you had bases.

Mr. Lewis: Yes, we had bases, softball.

Roberta: There must have been a border where if you hit it beyond that it was an out?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, but mostly we couldn't hit that far. We had one right where the cars are parked. That was one diamond and then we had another diamond over

here. I was a small guy but I could hit it from here across the road. But that was like a double.

Roberta: And the road then was nothing like it is now.

Mr. Lewis: No, there was no cars. The other games we played was one of the boys was, I think it was Calvin Williams, brought some roller skates. You know, the clamp-ons. So one of us would get one on our foot and we would go down the sidewalk with it to the end. My knuckles were skinned up.

Roberta: Oh you still have souvenirs from it.

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Roberta: In the community when you were younger what was the way that people communicated. What went on? How things happened? News. Do you remember?

Mr. Lewis: I guess either telephone. We didn't really have a telephone. We didn't get a telephone until like '53. Same way with the electric. We had lamps, outhouse. In '53 we got electric and I think '54 or so we got our first maybe television back then. We didn't have computers like the kids got today. That's why we stayed outside and played ball or made up our own games.

Roberta: When you look back on it that must be so different for you. The way the kids entertain themselves now and the way you and your family had to entertain yourselves.

Mr. Lewis: It's sort of like the Waltons, you know. The way they played games. Everybody had chores to do you know. There wasn't time for a lot of playing.

Roberta: So were you busy pretty much from the time you got up until the time you got home from school?

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes, we stayed occupied.

Roberta: What did you do? What kind of chores did you have?

Mr. Lewis: We had to cut wood and then when we weren't cutting wood we had like an oil burner stove and my job was to keep the oil stove filled.

Roberta: So where did the oil come from? Did somebody deliver it from town?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, it came from out of Newark.

Roberta: If you think of anything that I haven't asked and you want to include it just feel free. Now if I understood correctly, did you grow up on your Grandfather's farm? You were born across the street.

Mr. Lewis: Yes, I stayed there until we got our house built I think in '52, or something like that, '51 – '52.

Roberta: What were the circumstances around that? Your parents bought some property?

Mr. Lewis: Yes my parents bought some property next door to my grandfather's farm.

Roberta: How big was that?

Mr. Lewis: Two acres.

Roberta: So did you have a little mini-farm on that?

Mr. Lewis: Well we had a garden and we had chickens and pigs.

Roberta: Is that where you lived most of your life?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, until I got married and then I moved to Wilmington and then back here.

Roberta: And now you're back here. When you said it was a lot of fun, what do you remember – activities that people did? The kids.

Mr. Lewis: Play ball. We used to walk over to Mr. Maynard Earl's a lot and then we had an area where we played ball. We played rag ball we called it.

Roberta: Because you made the ball?

Mr. Lewis: Yes we made the ball – a rag ball.

Roberta: What did you make it out of? How did you hold it together?

Mr. Lewis: Well we took a sock and stuffed it with rags and then stitched it together.

Roberta: So did you have back up? Did you make more than one?

Mr. Lewis: Yes we made more than one because when it got wet it was all over.

Roberta: What did you use to hit the ball?

Mr. Lewis: Mostly we had a board or something like that.

Roberta: Did you fish?

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes. All these little creeks and streams. We used to walk back here to – they had a little spring back here. We used to catch little bullfrogs and stuff out of the spring. There was another stream over here further. Me and I called him Bob, Bob Earl. We used to go fishing over there a lot and catch the little sunfish. Then another spot we called the Orange Bridge right down below here there is another stream. I don't know why we called it the Orange Bridge because it was an orange bridge at the time but we always called it orange.

Roberta: The kids interpretation. What important celebrations in the community do you remember what they were? The ones that were the most important to the community?

Mr. Lewis: No. We had May Days here and we put on plays here.

Roberta: Do you want to tell me about those?

Mr. Lewis: The plays – Miss Ryder used to have us doing a Christmas plays. We always had our exercise play in June, which was real good. I still remember some of the old parts.

Roberta: Exercise Play in June? What was that?

Mr. Lewis: After we graduated like, not graduated but or passed on. We had that little celebration.

Roberta: So what form did that take? So it was a graduation celebration?

Mr. Lewis: Yes you know where you get promoted and you come and get your report card and then they had banking accounts and we would get our monies from our banking accounts. Some of it wouldn't be much. Some of the kids had more. Some of them might have had two or three hundred dollars. Where me, about a dollar or something. We did this every Friday. Every Friday we did banking. She taught us how to bank and save.

Roberta: So what did she do? What form did that take?

Mr. Lewis: On Fridays I think we used to stand and say a piece or a rhyme or something and then we would give her a nickel or a dime or whatever we had and then one of the girls would write it down and record it and then

they would take that money to the bank. Then at the end of the year you got all your money back.

Roberta: Plus interest?

Mr. Lewis: Well I don't think there was much interest, not on mine anyway.

Roberta: That is a really neat exercise.

Laura: That is, I hadn't heard about this. It makes sense.

Mr. Lewis: We had other games in here too, like she used to have square dances. Yes we used to do the square dances – put the chairs all back and we'd all square dance.

Roberta: How frequently was that?

Mr. Lewis: Maybe once a month or something like that.

Roberta: Did she incorporate numbers in the lessons a lot?

Mr. Lewis: Well we used to have number cards a lot. I thought she was a real good teacher because she had to do almost seven things into one. She had to be like our music teacher and then she had to be like our nurse you know like if we got cut or something. I got another scar over here. I got cut one day. Then we had to come to her.

Roberta: Did anybody ever get hurt really bad or was it mostly first aid.

Mr. Lewis: No, well somebody got hit with a swing one time but I can't remember who that was but we never had to go like to a hospital or nothing like that. You know if you got a nosebleed she would put the keys down your back and stop it.

Roberta: Did that work?

Mr. Lewis: For us it did.

Laura: What did she do?

Mr. Lewis: Put cold keys down your back, you know, hold your arm up with the cold keys and your nose would stop bleeding.

Laura: I never heard of that.

Mr. Lewis: That's some old remedies I guess. She did a lot for us that we can remember. She was a music teacher. Like I say she was everything.

- Roberta: I can't imagine. I think it is just great. How late were you allowed to stay out?
- Mr. Lewis: When we were young, I don't know, it got dark fast so we was in. We never stayed out I know, not past nine. Maybe when we got teenagers maybe but not when we were young.
- Roberta: Holidays or weekends weren't any different?
- Mr. Lewis: No. We didn't know one from the other. All we knew was Thanksgiving and maybe Christmas. That was important. That's about it.
- Roberta: What about birthdays? Did people celebrate birthdays much?
- Mr. Lewis: No we didn't. Couldn't afford it. There was nine of us, eleven with our parents.
- Roberta: Do you remember August Quarterly?
- Mr. Lewis: In Wilmington? Yes. My mother never missed a year. She used to take us up when we were little.
- Roberta: What was it like for you?
- Mr. Lewis: Oh man it was exciting. After I got maybe like 13 or 14 then I would go to that Hopkins Theater. They used to have a Hopkins Theater there and I used to go down to that.
- Roberta: Now you would go from out here?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes.
- Roberta: How would you get into Wilmington?
- Mr. Lewis: Well we had Old Baltimore Pike, this road right here, straight all the way in. 95 wasn't there. I think 40 came there later. But we mostly took Old Baltimore Pike.
- Roberta: So your folks had a car?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, my father did. He always had a car.
- Roberta: How important was church to you? What part did it play in your life?
- Mr. Lewis: It must have been pretty good because right now I'm at church and I am chairman of the Trustee Board, I'm the president of the male choir and let's see what else, I do all the duties mostly around the church right now.
- Roberta: So it had an influence on you.

- Mr. Lewis: Oh it's beautiful. We had Miss Ethel Roy, she was like our substitute teacher some times for Miss Ryder and she was our Sunday school teacher. She would have us putting on plays of a different sort, you know, every year. We had Children's Days. You couldn't read your piece, you had to memorize it.
- Roberta: So when was she a substitute?
- Mr. Lewis: Maybe around the '50's or something. Only when she got ill or something like that she would sit it maybe one day or two days or something like that. After we got 18, you know, teenagers then we stopped going to church. Then as I got older I went back. I think I re-joined back in '82.
- Laura: I went through the same thing. You said you were one of nine? You probably said then when I was in there.
- Mr. Lewis: We are all still living.
- Laura: I met another Lewis and that's what I'm looking for, her name.
- Roberta: Oh, that's his mother.
- Laura: That's your mother?
- Mr. Lewis: Was that Edith?
- Laura: Yes.
- Mr. Lewis: It was an older lady. She came here. Did you meet her lately?
- Laura: No. It was probably three years ago. She came in here one day.
- Mr. Lewis: Ok.
- Laura: She grew up around here too?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes. They went to the other school when they were younger too.
- Laura: Bethesda, that's right. She told me that.
- Mr. Lewis: But they had to walk.
- Roberta: Now where is that located?
- Mr. Lewis: It's on Frazer Road. If you go down here to the red light, turn left go to 40. As soon as you get to 40 turn right and the next road make a left. It's a tavern right now.
- Laura: Kind of like a biker tavern. She went there?

- Mr. Lewis: Yes. But as we got older we caught the bus. Mr. Rudolph Valentine picked us up on the bus. He had like the onliest bus in the area. It was a truck at first. He made benches inside this truck so we could sit on and later he got a little yellow bus, and then later he got a bigger bus.
- Roberta: And that went into where?
- Mr. Lewis: Well it left from Pleasant Valley to here. It picked up all the students around here. But other than that we used to have to walk.
- Roberta: How far of a walk that from here?
- Mr. Lewis: Must be a couple of miles or better.
- Laura: Are you close to 40?
- Mr. Lewis: I'm right in the middle. I'm a mile from 40 and a mile and a mile from right now. Back then it was the same. Do you know where the Rainbow Dog Kennel is?
- Laura: I do.
- Mr. Lewis: That's the property my grandfather had. And I'm right next door.
- Roberta: I'm just learning this area, I drive through it but I don't know the history.
- Mr. Lewis: Another thing we used to like to play up on the pit thing. We called it the pit thing.
- Laura: The pit back?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, this big hill right over here. To us then it looked like it was real tall but now it looks like it's small, maybe it washed away some from the rains and snow.
- Laura: Everybody says that.
- Mr. Lewis: It seemed like it was real big and we used to climb up on that thing and then run down.
- Roberta: What kind of a pit was it?
- Mr. Lewis: It was from digging the iron ore, back in the 1600's when they took the ore out.
- Laura: It's the dirt that they have dug out of it like King of the Hill type.
- Laura: Do you still remember houses being in the woods around here?

- Mr. Lewis: Only way over there where Miss Webster. We used to have a path where we could walk down past the spring and over to Miss Webster's over there. And Miss Daisy Smith, I think her name was. Yes because we used to go over there some time to get water or something. It's not that far, maybe a half a mile I would say through the woods.
- Roberta: Water for the school, for drinking water?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes. We only did it once in a while but we had the jugs come in for the water. We didn't have the regular bathrooms either. I guess we had like an outhouse but they were on the inside. That type. One was back over here and one was over here. They might be still there. I don't know.
- Laura: It was in the building then?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes.
- Laura: Yes, that one's still there. The girls side is my office now and they took out the toilet and the sink
- Mr. Lewis: It would smell and then they had to pour the chemical in it to kill the smell. There was 2 big lakes outside there where they drained it out from the outside.
- Laura: They are still there.
- Mr. Lewis: They're still there?
- Laura: They are not connected anymore. There is a giant frog that lives in one of them.
- Laura: It is huge.
- Roberta: At the same time, this is fine, we're jumping back and forth but I'm all right with that. Jobs, in this area for African-Americans when you were young?
- Mr. Lewis: Farm work. We had a chicken farm next door. Which I ended up working on it for a little while, in the '60's. Dairy farm, that was it.
- Laura: Do you remember who owned that chicken farm?
- Mr. Lewis: Mr. Salminen.
- Laura: He's still there.

Mr. Lewis: He's still there. He still remembers me. He's got to be getting close to 90 or so. That was about it for around here. There was some Polaries up the road a little further and they had chicken farms.

Roberta: What was your first job? Do you remember?

Mr. Lewis: My first job? Well I started when I was like at 11 years old across at the dairy farm – Mr. Norman Kamether. I went over there and I was so small they would have me sit on the tractor so they could throw the bales up on the wagon. My job was to pull the tractor up and stop it. You just had to let the clutch out. You didn't need no brake or nothing. That was my first job.

Roberta: How do you spell his name?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Kamether? It started with a K. K-a-m-e-t-h-e-r or something. His first name was Norman. Norman Kamether. There wasn't many jobs.

Roberta: What was the pay like?

Mr. Lewis: Oh well we might work all week and might get five dollars. My oldest brother worked all week and he got like twelve. We weren't even interested in money. We just wanted something to do.

Roberta: How did your employers, or people treat you, you know that you worked for?

Mr. Lewis: Back then? They were nice. But everybody knew everybody. That was the good thing, everybody knew everybody. We had a couple of jobs picking tomatoes when I was maybe 13 for Mr. Abe Folk.

Roberta? F-o-l-k?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. His daughters used to have that fabric place there in Newark there at one time.

Laura: Was she Elva?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. There was two of them. But we'd get maybe seven cents a basket or something like that. I was a little guy so I had to carry it between your legs through the row so the truck would pick it up and then the truck would come and pick them up but you had a number for them and then the older guys was taking your number and putting it in their basket. I worked

all week and I think I made like seven dollars. We all wanted to go to Hanover Park at that time.

Roberta: Now where was that?

Mr. Lewis: That was up in Pennsylvania. It was an amusement park. It was an August. We always went in August to the amusement parks from the church.

Roberta: How long was your work day to earn seven dollars a week?

Mr. Lewis: How long was the weekend?

Roberta: How long was the work day?

Mr. Lewis: Work day? Oh you could go from sunup to sundown.

Roberta: Do you remember how many baskets a day you would pick?

Mr. Lewis: No I don't remember. It was hot in August. They started getting ripe around June, July and August, till September.

Roberta: Now I know you said everybody knew everybody, what were racial relations like? Do you remember that that was a problem?

Mr. Lewis: I don't know if I was a relation. We almost called everybody cousins. But the Lewises, we weren't related to like the Earls and the Smiths and the Websters. We weren't related to none of them.

Laura: Or the Grinnages either?

Mr. Lewis: Yes the Grinnages. My father said he was a cousin to one of the Grinnages years ago. I don't know how. His mother's maiden name was Blake and the father was Lewis. They don't remember the father because he died while they were little. The parents died when they were little and my father's oldest sister had to raise them up. So they don't know too many Lewises in the area and we are trying to find that out.

Laura: Did you know any people in the Money family?

Mr. Lewis: The Moneys?

Laura: This was probably long before your time.

Mr. Lewis: The onliest one I know is James Money and his dad, Isaac Money lived on our road. He just died at 90 something.

Laura: Isaac did?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, his name was Isaac Money. He just died not long ago. Just this winter he died.

Laura: Robert Grinnage's brother married a Money. Their house faced Route 40 across from the old Merryland Roller Rink

Mr. Lewis: Ok, I know where that's at.

End of Tape 1, side A.

Begin Tape 1, side B.

Roberta: The interaction between Blacks and Whites in the area, did you have any problems when you were growing up that you knew of?

Mr. Lewis: No. We never really knew nothing about prejudice because we didn't go anywhere. We didn't know. All the farmers like Mr. Folk, we all sat down and ate together at the table. Mr. Kamether across the road from us, anytime my Mom needed milk for the younger kids we would just go over there and he wouldn't charge us nothing. That's the way it was.

Roberta: That's good.

Mr. Lewis: There's another guy, Mr. Thorpe down the road he had chickens, you know, eggs and stuff, that he sold to the canneries or factories so we would just go over there and get eggs. They'd never charge us you know. No we never knew anything about prejudice, at least I didn't. Maybe back in my Mom's day it might have been a little. Depends on where you were I guess. We didn't get to travel that much. In August we would go on one of those picnics maybe like to Hershey and Hanovers. That was once a year that we would do that, when we were little until we got grown. Then we'd go everywhere once we got a car. That was my dream, when I got 16 I was going to get me a car. And that's what I did at 17.

Laura: Did you really when you were 17?

Mr. Lewis: I was working right here at this chicken farm. Right next door. I saved up and I was making like forty dollars a week and from February to May

that's when I bought my first car. I saved up two hundred and some dollars for my first car.

Roberta: You were serious.

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes.

Roberta: Was it a used car?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, a 1953 Chevy. Me and one of the Butler boys, we walked from here to Newark one day to get a haircut. The barber shop was closed so we walked down to Fader Ford and looking around so he had a car outside and I said how much do you want and he said \$250.00. So I was a teenager and I went to the side and I counted out my money and I had \$255. I paid \$1.00 for my temp tag then I got a dollars worth of gas and I had a couple dollars left over.

Roberta: What year was that?

Mr. Lewis: It was close to '59 or '60. It was close to '60 yes, cause it was a '53 Chevy. When I worked at the chicken farm some fella came up, he thought I lived there and he asked me did I want a job working at the gas station so I said yes. So in May I went down to see him, it's all the way down at the corner where the Glasgow Auto Body is. It used to be a Esso Gas Station. So I left from the chicken farm and went down there and got \$1.15 an hour working with him, working on cars and radiators. That's where I learned how to work on radiators. I was talking about the radiator specialist.

Roberta: Right, at General Motors.

Mr. Lewis: No. At the gas station here. That was before I went to General Motors. I stayed with him six years. But then later on I got married when I was like 22 but then no benefits and I left there and went to General Motors.

Roberta: And you were there how long?

Mr. Lewis: General Motors? Twenty six and a half years.

Roberta: Is that what you started as, as a radiator specialist?

Mr. Lewis: Yes as a radiator specialist. Yes working on car radiators. I didn't even know they leaked.

- Laura: They were that good.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, the cars ran hot. Cores ran hot and they leaked and I didn't know that. So that was our job to fix them.
- Laura: Now you mentioned the Esso station down there. When you head down Old Baltimore Pike you pass Salminen's, there's another house on your left that I was told used to be a gas station.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, that's up here. Auggie, something like that, Auggie Madison I think.
- Laura: That's what it used to be?
- Mr. Lewis: It's right below Iron Hill Road?
- Laura: It's on the left.
- Mr. Lewis: My grandfather I think back then my Mom told me my grandfather farmed some of that land, like share cropping and went from there up the hill somewhere. There was a little gas station and a garage right there. But there was three gas stations down there at that time on that corner.
- Roberta: How far back does your family go, living here? Your grandparents lived here.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes. I think my grandfather was more or less from Dover. I don't know what year they came up here to the Glasgow area.
- Laura: Do you remember your Mom's maiden name?
- Mr. Lewis: She was a Miller. I think my grandmother was a Johnson. But she came up mostly from Saulsbury I think it was. My grandmother. The Jenkins and the Johnsons down in that area.
- Roberta: When you were at Iron Hill, did you have the same teacher? The whole time you were here?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes.
- Roberta: Where did she live?
- Mr. Lewis: Newark. On 896, New London.
- Roberta: So she didn't live in the community. She had her own transportation.
- Mr. Lewis: No.
- Laura: I missed this, who did you say your teacher was?
- Mr. Lewis: Miss Minnie Ryder.

- Laura: You had Minnie Ryder, ok.
- Roberta: What was your school day like? What time did you have to be here?
What did you do after you got here?
- Mr. Lewis: I know when we got here we had to do like your Pledge of Allegiance and stuff like that. And the roll call and we had the inspection, the ears, the nails.
- Laura: Oh really.
- Roberta: Oh yes, I remember that too. When I was in elementary school, that's right.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes we did. We had to do all that before class started.
- Roberta: Do you remember a state inspector coming? Did they still have a state superintendent come by?
- Mr. Lewis: I'm not sure.
- Roberta: They must not have, I would think you would remember. They might have stopped that.
- Mr. Lewis: I can't remember if they did. We did cooking here.
- Laura: You would do cooking here?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, some of the kids weren't fortunate enough to bring lunch so they would bring a big old potato and put it up on the big old pot-bellied stove there in the morning and by lunch time it was done. Then we had a hot plate that the girls used to cook like macaroni. I never will forget that macaroni. One of the Congo girls cooked this macaroni. It was good. It wasn't nothing but some boiled macaroni with milk and some salt and pepper and maybe with some cheese or whatever in it. It was kind of runny, loose like. It was good. I never will forget that.
- Roberta: Stove top macaroni and cheese. That must have been hard you know, like half way through the morning if somebody's lunch was cooking.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, you could smell it by lunch time. Then we had our recesses in-between that too.
- Roberta: What was the lighting like in here?

- Mr. Lewis: Well we had electric. Now the older ones they had the lamps. We had the electric when I came in '46.
- Laura: Similar to these?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, they might be the same - similar to those, yes. I just can't picture it right now but it's similar to those.
- Roberta: So you remember when they had the oil lamps or kerosene?
- Mr. Lewis: No that was the late '30's
- Roberta: I don't know if the ceiling still looked like it or if these were right in the same spot where the other lamps were.
- Mr. Lewis: Then we had the blackboards. Are they still there or are they gone?
- Laura: They're gone.
- Mr. Lewis: Ok, they used to be over here and I think we had some up there and the big map. She had a big world map.
- Laura: Did you remember where the teacher sat? Was she up front?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes she always sat up front. Yes her desk was up the front there. We had like six rows of chairs across here.
- Roberta: How many students?
- Mr. Lewis: Oh maybe six to a class or something like that. You had so many first graders, second graders, third, fourth, fifth, sixth. Sometimes some of the sixth graders might help some of the first or second graders, you know with their spelling or something like that.
- Laura: Do you remember any pictures on the walls?
- Mr. Lewis: Only the ones that the guys used to draw. Like for Christmas and Santa Claus. Ernest Earl and a couple of them guys, they were really good. They were good artists.
- Roberta: When you were in school were there still pictures of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington at the school?
- Mr. Lewis: Oh yes they still had all that. Then we had our library was over there, down along the wall there.
- Laura: She had some books in addition to her textbooks?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes she had all kinds of books.

- Roberta: So you had a library.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, like I said we had the works. In a smaller size but we had everything.
- Roberta: What were the books in the library?
- Mr. Lewis: Like *The Little Engine That Could*, stuff like that. Then we had our regular readers too. *Dick and Jane*, you know, all that type.
- Roberta: Did you have a separate reading time. Like the equivalent of what study hall is now.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes we had reading time like everything fit together like our math, our spelling, reading. There was something else we had there like social studies or science that we would do. We even had science projects. I never will forget we went out one day to get – we used to get honeysuckle and stuff when it started blooming. So one day we brought a branch in that had one of those cocoon things on it and we had it up on the old top of the library thing there and we let it stay up there and as soon as the sun hit it, it hatched out. So when we came in one morning there was praying mantis all over the place. She'd say get them out, get them out, she was scared to death.
- Laura: That is so funny.
- Mr. Lewis: We did frogs, the tadpoles. We had jars all up by the window and grow stuff like plant a lima bean or something and let it, I guess it was more like science.
- Roberta: I remember when I did that. We had a paper towel so you could see it germinate. That's fascinating stuff. Was the area around the school pretty much the same as it is now, immediately around the school, the wooded area?
- Mr. Lewis: Except for all the houses. Yes, the school is. Everything is about the same. Except for all the new houses coming about. But everything else seems to be in place. There would be the swings, the sliding board, the see-saws. We had a monkey bars or something. We would grab and get hooked up and swing around and around.
- Laura: Did it have chains on it?

Mr. Lewis: Chains on it, yes.

Laura: Genustride.

Mr. Lewis: You would hold on to these wooden things and swing around.

Laura: I think Reggie Grinnage told me about that.

Mr. Lewis: Yes we had all that.

Laura: Sometimes you'd forget to tell the little kids to let go.

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes, we used to do that, to let go and sometimes you would get hurt. Sometimes we'd get the girls up so high it was really scary way up there.

Roberta: How did you get the momentum?

Mr. Lewis: You run. You would get a hold of it and you would run.

Laura: Like a Maypole.

Mr. Lewis: It takes off like a Maypole. It swings from the top.

Laura: You don't ever remember that pole being used as a Maypole?

Mr. Lewis: No.

Laura: When you were here it was the Genustride I think they must have replaced it. Some of the older kids remember the Maypole but everybody your age remembers the Genustride. You can see the path from it still.

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes that was fun for us. It would wear your shoes out.

Laura: So it had shades and it had like wooden things.

Mr. Lewis: Yes, wooden things you hold on to.

Laura: One for your hands and one for your feet?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, where your feet hung free, you just hung on to it.

Laura: You just held on. I tell that story sometimes to kids that come here and they are like why are you going to put that thing back up.

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes, it's fun.

Laura: People started breaking arms.

Mr. Lewis: We started overlapping one and then when that thing overlaps the other it would take off real fast and it would go way out.

Roberta: That would be scary.

Mr. Lewis: If somebody would walk in front of you that's what we would be scared of. If somebody walked in front – there was my cousin he walked in front

of one of the swings, or behind the swing and it hit him and knocked him down. He just got a lump on his head but it could have really killed him. It was dangerous. It wouldn't be safe today.

Laura: They probably wouldn't even have swings any more. And the grounds always got like mulch and ripped tires so nobody gets hurt. So you used to bring your lunch mostly? Sometimes people would bring a potato?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Laura: Do you remember having a cup for water or anything that was here?

Mr. Lewis: No only like I said we had the fountains back there. We didn't have our own.

Roberta: Things are changing.

Mr. Lewis: In the '50's it started changing.

Laura: That water fountain is still here.

Mr. Lewis: Yes it is still there.

Laura: It's underneath that ...

Mr. Lewis: Let's see. I was what, 5th grade, sixth grade. Me, Congo and Calvin Williams we had to pick that thing up and put it up on the thing and we were small that thing must weigh fifty pounds. The water jug. And they were just the same size and we were little guys.

Laura: See that's a regular water fountain.

Mr. Lewis: Oh, yes that came later. That's modern to us.

Laura: You didn't have ink wells in your desk did you then?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Roberta: Did you use them.

Mr. Lewis: No, I didn't. Later on like we started using pens and pencils. Like the ink wells, everything was still there.

Roberta: What kind of shape were your books in?

Mr. Lewis: They were in fairly good shape. We had to cover them.

Laura: Did you ever write in notebooks?

Mr. Lewis: Once in a while. We might get a new reader. I forget the name of that big reader we used to have.

- Roberta: So you were still getting used books?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes we got used books. I remember one time we had to go to St. George's and get some books one time. I don't know who I went down with, we went down with somebody and got some of the books and brought them back up here. That's when St. George was getting ready to close I think it was.
- Roberta: What about pens and pencils?
- Mr. Lewis: Mostly we brought them from the house. I think the State must have supplied at little bit. I remember the yellow paper and something else we had here, and the big old crayons. I think the State might have supplied some of that stuff.
- Roberta: Were the crayons new or used.
- Mr. Lewis: They were new when we got them. Then I think we were allowed so much playground equipment we used to keep back here in the closet like baseballs, a bat, or something like that. I think we had a dodgeball. I can't remember the basketball till later. I think that's about it for our toys that we played with.
- Laura: The last time we talked when you were here quite a few years ago you said something about a guy that had roller skates.
- Mr. Lewis: Oh yes, his name was Calvin Williams, my knuckles were skinned up. We would hold one foot out like this and we were sitting down, we were little then, I can't do it today – hold that foot out and hold this one and then we'd hit a bump or a stone or something and the skate went down and got my knuckles across there.
- Laura: That was Calvin Williams.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, that was a clamp on. Yes, he's dead now, he died a few years back. A lot of my classmates have died young that was in our class. I was trying to figure how many was in our class, like when I was in the 5th grade. I remember Janice Henry, Robert Earl (we called him Bob), Gladys Earl. There was an Evelyn Moseley, a Phyllis Bullock, two of those, Phyllis and Evelyn are dead. Let's see who else was there in my class. There might

be six or seven of us in like the 5th, the 6th, as we moved on. I guess we started from the 1st grade but I think that's the originals that I can think of, there might be one or two more maybe.

Roberta: When you were speaking with Laura earlier there is a mention of a medicine ball that you all played with?

Mr. Lewis: A medicine ball?

Laura: I mentioned that there was a big ball that I saw in a picture and you had said that you thought maybe there was something like that in May Day.

Mr. Lewis: I can't remember that, a medicine ball? I know we played dodgeball, we wrapped the pole, the May ... what do you call it? The – you just said it

Laura: The Genustride? Maypole?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, we wrapped the Pole, we did the zoo-de-o, something else, London Bridge. We used to do all that on our May Day.

Roberta: Now what's the zoo-de-o?

Mr. Lewis: We used to flap our arms back and forth – here we go zoo-de-o, zoo-de-o

Roberta: Ok I thought that's what you meant.

Mr. Lewis: That might have been another made up one, I don't know where it come from or who originated it.

Laura: You said that was May Day. Was May Day and Field Day the same thing?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, the same thing. We always had it in May. We'd have a little ice cream, sodas, cakes, cookies, stuff like that. I guess our parents must have put it together or some of the PTA I guess.

Laura: Did you have other schools come?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. Christiana up here, they used to come. There wasn't too many schools around but there was another one that came.

Laura: Kirkwood maybe?

Mr. Lewis: It might have been Mt. Pleasant down to 896.

Laura: Where was the Mt. Pleasant School?

Mr. Lewis: It's still there. You go over Summit Bridge, down past the airport and right below there is Mt. Pleasant there and the little school sits back –

somebody lives in it now, over there on your right. I remember going to Glasgow too, I can't remember the names now, I think Bethesda.

Roberta: For Field Day?

Mr. Lewis: Yes we went down there one time too for a May Day or something.

Roberta: Were parents involved in the school?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, a lot of PTA members. Mostly like the Congos. They were big, they were big people, they had a big farm down the road. I remember a Miss Moseley used to come to a lot of the functions. The Williamses, they had a big farm where the Glasgow High School is now.

Roberta: What did the parents do? Their involvement with the school?

Mr. Lewis: They would see that we had like the sodas, the cookies, the cakes, you know for that day.

Laura: For special days?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. Then they would help her with some of the little games that we played. I remember one time when we was in here and we had – it was a Halloween Party and it was Miss Ryder and Miss Moseley so it's Rev. Congo now, he's a pastor now. But him and Calvin Williams so they blindfolded me so I could pin the tail on the donkey so they spin you around and aimed me at the board over here where the donkey was and Miss Ryder and Miss Moseley were sitting over here. They just spun me and turned me around and they pointed me right toward her so there I go with my hands all out and I remember her saying, "get your fingers out of my face." They really laughed. That was fun for them.

Roberta: That's the danger of a game like that.

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Roberta: You get a couple of people who are real ornery - you were in trouble.

Mr. Lewis: I never will forget that. "Get your fingers out of my face!"

Laura: So you had square dances in here.

Mr. Lewis: Yes we had square dances in here.

Laura: And you had a couple of special events. When you had square dances did you have a record player? Victrola?

Mr. Lewis: Yes a record player. We had an old record player. We'd doe-see-doe, al-a-mand-left and al-a-mand-right. I don't know if I could do it now. We'd lock our arms and spin around and you would grab your partner.

Laura: Do you remember anything else they did in here like when the school wasn't open?

Mr. Lewis: When it was cold we would get up and march around the room or do something. Sometimes it would be really cold on the cold days in here.

Roberta: Even the stove wouldn't help?

Mr. Lewis: Oh no. It would be cold, like in your house today it was cold and you could imagine the stove was way over here and we should have had some vents that some of the heat would come out. It used to get cold.

Laura: It gets really cold in here.

Mr. Lewis: Or if they didn't have no coal or something or no wood and then it would be getting a little chilly then we would have to go down and get wood up out of the basement and then chop it and split it and then start the fire. I don't know who the janitor was, Mr. Maynard Earl or – someone used to start the fire and if they were late starting the fire it would be chilly in here in the winter time. You know, no air conditioning or nothing like that. I don't think we even had fans in the summertime. They would just open the windows.

Laura: The ceiling is so high in here like when it turns hot out it's cool in here for a week or two but once the heat is in here you can't get rid of it. And the same thing with the cold. It gets really cold in here. The heater wasn't working a couple of weeks ago when we had that cold spell and it was way colder in here than it was outside.

Roberta: Did you have a little space heater?

Laura: Yes but it doesn't do much.

Mr. Lewis: No. Like you said the ceiling is so tall.

Laura: Do you remember anybody in your class that might have been the equivalent of a bully or somebody that got in trouble a lot with Miss Ryder?

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes, there was one more I forgot. Peter Congo. He was another one. He was in our class. He used to get in trouble a lot. They used to call me, him and Robert Earl the three musketeers cause where you saw one you always saw the others. We were always together all the time. The three musketeers.

Laura: What was the punishment? Did she have a switch? Did she whack anybody with a paddle?

Mr. Lewis: I think we only got whacked one time with a yardstick. We did something we wasn't supposed to do on the playground. That was me, Pete and Bob again. And the girls told on us.

Laura: Girls will do that.

Mr. Lewis: Very seldom anyone got a crackin' or a beatin'. The way we were raised we had to – if she told our parents then we might get it when we got home. So we stayed pretty well on the ball. I remember crackin' a couple of them. The girls, they went in the boys room and there's a trap door up in there and they climbed up on either a ladder or something and they went up stairs and they wasn't supposed to be up there and as they came down and as recess was over she said, "now where's them girls?" They're up in the attic upstairs so she made them all come down, one by one. I can't remember if it was Lena Satchell or another girl named Irene (they moved away) but anyway when they put their legs down and she took a belt or something and cracked their legs until they – I think she made them jump down, I think they jumped down. I don't know how high it is now.

Laura: It's pretty high because I put a ladder up and it's really hard to climb in there and even when you're on the top step of the ladder it's pretty scary.

Roberta: Were they just curious?

Mr. Lewis: Being ornery I guess. It was during recess. I don't know why they wanted to go in the boys room.

Laura: That was even worse.

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Laura: It might have been Lena Satchell or somebody else?

Mr. Lewis: I think she was one of the girls.
Laura: That's who we're seeing tomorrow.
Mr. Lewis: You'll have to ask her about this.
Laura: We won't tell her you told us.
Mr. Lewis: The other girl I think she died, Irene Grey, or she moved away.

End Tape 1, side B.

Begin Tape 2, side A.

Laura: You don't remember the teacher going out there?
Mr. Lewis: There was a basement under here too or something. We were scared.
Roberta: It was scary down there was it?
Mr. Lewis: There might be snakes down there or something.
Laura: I'm sure there were.
Roberta: Dirt floor? Did the basement have a dirt floor?
Mr. Lewis: Yes.
Laura: Yes, it's not even really a full basement. It's like a crawl space.
Roberta: That's even worse.
Laura: Now when you walk in this entrance way that wood floor looks like its different from the rest of the floor. Do you remember whether that wood floor was there or – we have a metal grate here?
Mr. Lewis: We had a grate or something was out here.
Laura: Yes, it's right here under the table. You walk around here. Do you remember that being there? The dirt would fall off your shoes.
Mr. Lewis: On rainy days we used to play in there. Something used to go in that - some kind of tag in the corners or something.
Laura: So that metal grate was on that floor as late as the '40's. That's interesting because I always wondered how long that was there. I found the metal grate when I went up to the attic. I thought this was kind of weird and I measured it and it fit that spot exactly. There is still a few desks up there but not too many. I brought most of them down.

- Roberta: Do you remember taking tests?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, maybe once a year. We used to have them in January, or the first of the year or Spring or something. Whatever that state test was. I remember someone would give us a pencil and we would have to mark the little multiple choice things or something like that. One of those attitude tests or whatever it was. I guess it's for the state, I guess.
- Roberta: Did the teacher have like little quizzes or something all year long?
- Mr. Lewis: I know we had tests. We'd have a spelling test like every week or math, stuff like that. We used to have those cards with the words on them, number cards with your numbers on them. The answer would be on the back.
- Roberta: Flash cards.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, flash cards.
- Laura: Did you have homework?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes. We always had homework. I remember we had lamps and we would sit down at the table with the lamps and do your homework. It wasn't modern like this here. When we did get electric in '53 I think it was, oh it was so bright it almost hurt your eyes. They'd say well you're not that old, yeah but we didn't have, '50 – '53 we did not.
- Roberta: That's right, when you didn't live in the cities –
- Mr. Lewis: It wasn't important you know. Everybody was the same. I think Mr. Congo, they were the first ones, I think they got electric over there. We used to go over their house and watch the TV, me and my brothers. Go over and watch the wrestling. You know they had the little small screen. Then my grandparents got one later and then later on we got one.
- Laura: You don't remember what color the building was do you, the school?
- Mr. Lewis: As far as I know it was gray.
- Roberta: Was that on the outside? Gray?
- Mr. Lewis: It was a grayish color.
- Roberta: What was it like inside?

- Mr. Lewis: I can't remember inside it might have been gray and white too. Sort of like now maybe. It wasn't no dark color, I think it was sorta' similar to what it is now.
- Laura: At one point it was some shade of green. It looks like there is some kind of different layers of paint.
- Mr. Lewis: They used to oil the floor maybe once a year.
- Laura: Oh really?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes they used to put some kind of oil on it. I guess that's the same floor.
- Laura: I think it is. You see some of the holes where the desks -
- Mr. Lewis: They preserved it real good.
- Laura: It probably needs oiling too.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, that's what they used to do to it.
- Roberta: Who was responsible for the building upkeep?
- Mr. Lewis: Usually the PTA like Mr. Maynard Earl, for maintenance and stuff like that and then they would have some of the men around the neighborhood when something needed to be done they would all get together and do it.
- Roberta: There was a railroad nearby, I guess it still is, the tracks? Do you remember anything about that?
- Mr. Lewis: No. The only one I know is up the road further. Somebody said the Underground Railroad used to go through here but I'm not sure. See because this is Old Baltimore Pike from Baltimore to Wilmington, years ago and this is the onliest way you could get through. The old Route 1 way up there they called that the Old Baltimore Pike at one time too. In Pennsylvania.
- Roberta: That's right, that one goes through
- Mr. Lewis: Media and on up into Philly.
- Roberta: Now you were talking about you were born in the house across the street, do you know the people who lived -
- Mr. Lewis: The farmers? I can't remember the name of the farmers, but my Mom would know but I don't. I thought I knew it, Sycamore or something.
- Roberta: And the black students and the white students went to separate schools?

- Mr. Lewis: Yes.
- Roberta: Did you ever interact socially with the white students?
- Mr. Lewis: Not socially. Only when we used to play during summer and go to the swimming hole during the summer up there. McCormick's were down on the other corner and they had a little school on that corner it looked like it would only hold about 5 or 6 people but it's real small. It's a house down on the corner there.
- Roberta: You go out here and turn right
- Mr. Lewis: Go all the way down to where the red light is, the last little building there that was the school.
- Roberta: On the left?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, right there on the corner. I forget the name of it, what they called it. It might have been Iron Hill School or something like that, I'm not sure. We all used to like play together. The kids that we grew up with.
- Roberta: Was the school year September to June?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes. We would close in June. That's when we would decorate with our roses and our honeysuckle. It was smelling good in here. Around June or so.
- Roberta: That sounds nice. Was that something that everybody did - you went out and collected?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes we went out and collected and put it all up, the bigger kids would put it up. The same with Christmas time. We would make our chain links and stuff and run it across back and forth. That was all part of our art work.
- Laura: Did your teacher ever take you outside for science activities or anything?
- Mr. Lewis: Only when we got the cocoon things and then we'd bring the tadpoles and frogs and stuff like that and watch them hatch out to tadpoles. We'd bring the eggs in. I don't know if it's still back there or not there was a spring, the water kept shooting up.
- Laura: It's still there.
- Mr. Lewis: It was good water. Cold. Right now the algae and stuff is all around it.
- Laura: A lot of the trees have grown taller and there's not much sun.

- Mr. Lewis: We went back there so much we had a path, you know all the way back there. I told my wife I was going to walk back there and see if I could find it.
- Laura: It's down in one of the old iron pits. It used to have a lot of water but in the last year and a half there was hardly anything but its back again.
- Mr. Lewis: Some of the kids they used to find arrow heads too but we didn't know the value or nothing of those things. There was a couple of graves up front there. I think they might have hit one of the stones when they did something to the road up here on the bank.
- Roberta: Graves?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes.
- Roberta: Oh really
- Mr. Lewis: Indians, and the old war – Revolution. One of them wars they came through here and up to Cooch's Bridge Road.
- Laura: So they were kind of up by the road?
- Roberta: Was anything ever done with them?
- Mr. Lewis: The graves? I think one time I saw the marker was still there, I don't know if it's gone now or not. You know when the Highway Department comes through they do a lot of damage and remove stuff. When we were kids those stones were there. There used to be a tree out front too, like a deer horn, it comes down and up with a thing in the middle. We used to sit in it. I don't know if it was a beech tree or what that thing was called. I don't think its there now I think it is gone.
- Laura: Do you remember the Iron Hill Railroad Station that used to be down on Otts Chapel?
- Mr. Lewis: That's what she asked me and I don't remember. They told me there was a house or something over in here too. Or no, it was a school wasn't it?
- Laura: The old school was down by the road but there is a house foundation back this way.
- Mr. Lewis: The Earls or somebody used to stay in it. I can't remember

- Laura: That's what Mr. Grinnage said. So when you were here that old school building was gone from here?
- Mr. Lewis: No. I came in '46 I think it was. They needed more teachers like her.
- Roberta: Miss Ryder?
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, to me she was really super, for a teacher. And all that she had to go through.
- Roberta: That seems to be the common thread that so many of the teachers were just excellent.
- Mr. Lewis: I had heard when she took the test, the State test, she scored the second highest mark, you know, at that time, I guess it was the Black teachers I guess. She scored the second highest mark you know in that history back then. Now I don't know where she went to college. The teachers would have to take a test too years ago.
- Roberta: Now that was to initially get the job? Did they have to take a test?
- Mr. Lewis: No I think they had to take a test after – like once a year or something like that. I don't know if they still do that or not. Once you graduate from college you still have to keep up with the times so they had to take a test like we did. We had to take a test every year.
- Roberta: That's like the new standards. That's like what they have to do now.
- Mr. Lewis: They still have to take a test?
- Roberta: Is it essentially a test?
- Laura: The kids have to take a test. People made a big deal about that. Like you guys were doing it.
- Mr. Lewis: Oh yes we had to take a test.
- Laura: And it's funny because some of the education staff are focusing on things that you guys did probably every day. Like they are real big on doing group projects now and we hear all these stories about you guys making stuff for your Christmas plays it was part of your day and my daughter doesn't understand why do we have to work with people, she needs to learn to work with people
- Roberta: And that was common when I was in school, it was just what you did.

- Mr. Lewis: That's where we got a lot of our knowledge from one from another.
- Laura: And that's the other thing in the one room schoolhouses like you said how the 6th graders would help the little kids. I was at a school in Middletown and they said they were doing this new concept called looping and it involves 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders all in the same room and the older kids help the younger ones and I thought, well, what a new idea, they've been doing that in one room schools for how long? And now they are bringing it back thinking it's this great, new idea. Let the kids help the kids learn.
- Mr. Lewis: I was talking to one of the students the other day. Good Friday we had a fish fry at our church so one of the girls in my class, and I was telling to one of the ladies and we were spelling a word or something and I said this girl here, she used to help me spell. I couldn't even spell my name and it was only like D-o-n and she gets so tickled every time I tell that. Her name is Janice Henry. She used to help us out. She was a little bit brighter than some of us. She caught on just like that. She was sharp.
- Laura: Now she still lives around here?
- Mr. Lewis: Middletown. But she goes to my church. She was in my class.
- Laura: We're trying to track down other people.
- Mr. Lewis: Call Miss Henry.
- Laura: So Janice Henry would be a good one, she lives in Middletown.
- Roberta: Do you know how to get in touch with her?
- Mr. Lewis: I can get her number at church.
- Laura: Ask her to give me a call.
- Mr. Lewis: She brought her son. He's a professional baseball player. He came to church Sunday. From Richmond, Virginia.
- Roberta: Who does he play for?
- Mr. Lewis: Well he's retired right now. He played for the Cincinnati Reds. He played for the Texas Rangers one time. He's like 40 years old now.
- Laura: Can you think of anybody else that's still around that we should talk to?
- Mr. Lewis: In my class like I was telling Roberta a while ago there was only like I can remember living there was me, Janice, and I forgot Pete Congo. He lives

in Middletown also. He was the ornery one and Robert Earl, there wasn't no more than maybe 6 or 7 of us.

Roberta: Any of those folks if you are in touch with them ask them to give Laura a call because we are trying to interview as many people as possible from the different time periods.

Mr. Lewis: See we went from October of '53, in the middle of October we went from here to Middletown and then we started 6th grade in Middletown. Then maybe around '60 something my brothers and sisters they all had to go to Christiana. That's when things started opening up for us. See we could have easily gone to Newark. The schools were there but we couldn't go.

Laura: Once you hit 6th grade you had to go to Middletown?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, then they had to bus us from here to Middletown. They were talking about busing now, we did it back then in the '50's. We passed all the schools and had to go all the way to Middletown. To Louis L. Redding.

Roberta: So when you finished that school where did you go?

Mr. Lewis: Well I quit in the 10th. I passed into 11th but I didn't go back and I came out and started working. But then they built the new school and you graduated from Middletown. Louis L. Redding. But before that my oldest sister now they could go to Middletown to I think the 8th grade and then they had to catch a train or a bus from here to Howard High School. Like I say they were passing all the schools here but that's where we had to go in order to get your education. And then the ones down further had to go to Dover, they had to go to the University to graduate.

Laura: So you had several siblings that went here?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. My older brother is in North Carolina. Most of my younger ones, I think my last one went with Reggie. Reggie's original [redacted] was here. My youngest brother – I think he went here for a little while and then he went to Christiana. In the '70's it might have been when they opened up. I can't remember. We lost out on a few opportunities by going all the way to Middletown. Like I was a good ball player in sports and I couldn't play because we practiced because we had to walk home. I walked home twice

and I didn't do it no more. We had to hitchhike from Middletown to Glasgow. Now the town boys, they could do it because they could walk right up the street. We didn't have an activity bus like they got today. We were all good at baseball but like I say that was all we had to do for fun. Like my grandkids now, they are all into sports and they are good. I've got one in the 9th at Glasgow, got one at Hodgson and my granddaughter is at Delcastle. Two running track and the other one playing softball for Delcastle. So they had Grandpop running back and forth. Oh they call me. I went up to Hodgson last weekend and it's small, it's a 15, and when the gun went off he was gone. He won.

Laura: Now is he a Lewis?

Mr. Lewis: He's a Lockhart.

Laura: Lockhart.

Mr. Lewis: My son, the girl they had a child by, they are not married. That's my son's children. And they are good in football too. The little one, he played for St. Elizabeth High School and they play for the New Castle Police League, football up here at Bear. I always tell the young kids although I didn't graduated, you know, I tell them how like Miss Ryder all their wisdom and knowledge helped me out you know. How I had my own business. I worked at General Motors. I'm retired from General Motors and I accomplished more than some college kids.

Laura: That is so true.

Mr. Lewis: I had my own radiator shop too. After I retired from General Motors, the Newark Automotive Radiator had an ad in the paper one day and I said let me go over and see what he is talking about so I went over there and he hired me right on the spot and I was able to tell him how much money I wanted an hour. I'm a drop-out.

Roberta: You were good at what you did.

Mr. Lewis: I always try to encourage them to get into all the stuff they can today. I've been retired – I came out in '93 so I've been retired 10 years already.

- Roberta: Yes that's a good thing to encourage them as much as you can. I have a good friend and she is fond of saying get as much as you can as soon as you can.
- Mr. Lewis: I tell them all in church or wherever. It happened to me but it might not happen to you. But we always had like a lot of wisdom. What do they call it? "Mother wit." From the grandfathers, like me, I still have my gardens and stuff I can show people how to plant when I was little all the way up.
- Laura: I don't think kids realize how many advantages they have today.
- Mr. Lewis: Right.
- Laura: Even like something as simple as the activity bus.
- Roberta: They don't.
- Laura: If it wasn't for that, you know ...
- Mr. Lewis: My little kids or whoever comes around I show them how to plant. How to plant that seed. So last year, me and my nephews, we had some beautiful watermelons so around September or so, and we went out there and picked a nice big one and cut it and ate it and it was so good we went back and got another one. He couldn't believe that.
- Roberta: There's nothing like your own garden.
- Mr. Lewis: He couldn't believe that from a seed. They call me Farmer Don – let's go down to Farmer Don's!
- Laura: That's really neat tho'.
- Mr. Lewis: They look forward to that garden when they come down. I show all my grandkids same way you know. I make them plant themselves. The one little grandson, my daughter's boy, he was four and I planted a row like of string beans, here I let him do his own. His came up better than mine. He just gloated. They came up nice and thick.
- Roberta: Now do you get them to plow their own row too or you already had that done?
- Mr. Lewis: No, I do all that. In the summertime, like my granddaughter when she was like eleven, and she wanted some money to go to the amusement park so

what I did I had a big 'lectric spool, I rolled it up to the road there and we had got tomatoes and peppers out of the garden and we had strawberries. She got up there and sold and she made good money up there and she loved doing it. Right now she is sixteen.

Roberta: Ok, I was going to ask you how old.

Mr. Lewis: Sixteen – got her license and the other one's seventeen and he's got his license. They're both driving this year. She loved that so that's a start for her if she can remember, like business. I'm never afraid to do anything. I'll tried anything. I was painting cars and everything in the garage. Everything.

Laura: How many grandchildren do you have?

Mr. Lewis: About six. My youngest son got the most. He's got them all, except my daughter. My daughter's got two. But she's my adopted daughter but she's got two, he's six and one sixteen months. My other ones, they are older. From seventeen on down to fourteen. My oldest son, he doesn't have any, he just got married back in August and his wife's got a child but he doesn't have any. Don, Junior.

Laura: Have we missed anything?

Roberta: I don't think so.

Laura: I'm sure we will think of it after.

Mr. Lewis: I used to call her you are all wrapped up into one. I used to tell my wife, she was a nurse, and she was like a gym teacher, physical education, music. She can play the piano too. She used to have us singing songs and doing poems and I can't remember what else she was like I say everything wrapped into one. I don't see how she did it myself. But today, the teachers, they would complain. They wouldn't do it. They would say I got too many kids in my class. I don't know how many we had altogether, that's what I was trying to think of. Like thirty. It was close to twenty-four to thirty. There was so many in the 1st that sat all the way across and we had 6 grades.

- Roberta: That seemed to be the average. I guess they have more than that in a class now.
- Mr. Lewis: Today it's mostly 24 or something like that.
- Roberta: And I think the difference also is that the students were a lot more respectful and they were quiet and there wasn't hyper-activity that goes on.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes. We had to say "yes sir and yes ma'am" and all that. We had respect. Not like today. I was over at Glasgow High School with my daughter one time and they was cussin' and I couldn't believe it and the teachers weren't saying anything.
- Roberta: I know.
- Mr. Lewis: I couldn't believe that.
- Roberta: It's really gotten out of control. The teachers have no control or say so over the students but yet the parents expect the teachers to be the parent.
- Mr. Lewis: Right. You can't touch them. When I was in the 6th grade we went to Middletown and it's a little rougher there so I didn't do my homework one day. My second week there I think and it was a Mr. Moody and he said, "I'm going to give you some ice cream and cake." That's the way he told all the students but we didn't know what this ice cream and cake was. I thought we was going to have a party. I didn't do my homework so he took us back in this little cloak room back here. "You line up, you line up," we said "not prepared, not prepared" and he took that strap and beat us all. But after that I started doing my homework on the bus and everywhere. Oh he was rough. He was a preacher too. Rev. Ellis Moody. Oh he was rough but we got that homework from then on.
- Roberta: Ice cream and cake, what a thing to say.
- Mr. Lewis: Yes, I was thinking we were going to have a party. The other kids knew about it but we were new there. He beat the girls the same as the boys. It didn't make no difference.
- Roberta: That was in Middletown?

Mr. Lewis: Middletown. We went from here to Middletown and it was a change. The work was a little bit harder down there that we never had. We had biology and different stuff that we never had here. And see like we was all in one 6th grade class. Right here we was all divided. And we didn't have our homework that day and he told us we were going to have a party. The other kids started laughing. We're going to have some ice cream and cake. He said I'm going to charge your battery. We didn't know what he was talking about until he lined us up.

Roberta: Was that a hard adjustment going from several grades in one class?

Mr. Lewis: Yes. To us it was. Recesses changed. Everything changed. Where here we had a recess at a certain time but down there we might get maybe one lunch and one recess. Now here we might have got two. Two and a recess.

End of Tape 2, side A.

Begin Tape 2, side B.

Laura: When you picked up the trash it was here?

Mr. Lewis: Yes it was on the school grounds.

Laura: Where did you put it?

Mr. Lewis: In the trash cans. We had trash cans. Paper and cans whatever somebody might throw out along the road or paper that blew.

Laura: This has been great.

Roberta: Yes and I can't think of anything and pretty much of the stuff that was covered was on this list.

Laura: Yes, we've covered a lot.

Roberta: If you think of any more things that you want to tell us just write it down.

Mr. Lewis: Like I say, I'm getting older and I can't think like I used to.

Roberta: I think you did pretty good. I'm amazed.

Laura: You gave us a lot.

Roberta: You did a lot better than I would have.

Laura: We'll ask Lena about that attic.

Mr. Lewis: Oh yes, see if she remembers that.

Laura: The stories you are coming out with.

Mr. Lewis: I think maybe she was one grade ahead of me, I think. If I was in the 4th she might have been in the 5th or 6th, or something like that. I might have been in 3rd or 4th at that time. But I remember that.

Laura: Better her than you.

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Roberta: Well Mr. Lewis thank you very much for your time.

Mr. Lewis: Ok

Roberta: We really appreciate it.

Laura Thank you.

End of Tape 2, side B.

