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Interview

with

Janie Cameron Riley & Moselle Cameron

June 6, 1975

By George W. McDaniel

Transcribed by Patricia Crowley

For the Southern Oral History Program

George W. McDaniel: We're talking about some other things about life out at Horton Grove and at the Cameron place. OK, you were going to tell a story about . . .

Janie Cameron Riley: . . . Baldwin. And he told about this man that had it on for him; I can't remember the man's name, but anyway he had something that he wanted to do to him.

GM: Is this a black man?

Riley: Yes. And so he give it in some water. And when he went to drink this water this dipper stuck to his lips, and he couldn't get it a'loosed for so long. I don't remember how he said the dipper, he got it loose from his lips. Anyway, after that he said he knowed who the man was trying to do something to him, and how he got this man and how he beat this man after that.

GM: Oh, he beat him?

Riley: Yes, he beat him after that ^{doing to} for/him like that. And he was so careful how he dranked at anybody's house.

GM: He wasn't afraid that the man would come back with something else?

Riley: No, he wasn't afraid. When they'd do something at that time, see, they would always go and scratch back at each other one way or the other. They had to, 'cause they wasn't like peoples are now. See, peoples will tell you now that "I'll get you;" you know who it is. And they will; you just be on the lookout. But they just would strike back at each other right then. They would go get them. See, they'd take a chance at that, at how they did people. But I don't know, I don't believe much in that.

GM: When you were growing up what did you hear about roots?

What else?

Moselle Cameron: Well ,over there in this first long house. . . .

GM: Yes; the one that's torn down now?

Cameron: No, with "S.P." on it.

GM: Now that's the middle one.

Cameron: Yes. Well, anyway, it was a man lived there named William Fell.

GM: Yes, the one with the "S.P." on the chimney, the middle house?

Cameron: Yes. And so he had a sister, and they say she was real pretty. And there was a man that wanted her to go with him, and she wouldn't go with him. So she was going with another guy. And they say this man killed a snake and got some of this snake's blood and put it in some whiskey and gave it to her. And in about six months snakes created in her, and they got between her meat and the skin. And they say you could just see them running up and down her legs. And they say she was just hollow to the top of her body, and it kept on like that 'til she died. Now my daddy said he saw it.

Riley: Yes, they always. . . . Sometimes I wonder about that. You know, what's this Clement girl's name, Orvil Clement's wife? I can't call this girl's name.

Cameron: Mabel.

Riley: Mabel. Yes, somebody done something to her, because she was going with this man.

GM: Was this out at Stagville?

Cameron: Stagville, yes.

Riley: Yes.

GM: Where did they live?

Riley: They lived out there at New Place. I never will forget revivals going on at Cameron Grove Church; Cameron Grove was over in those woods. And Mabel got sick, 'cause she was going with--you know who she was going with.

Cameron: Yes.

Riley: And you know who done it. I can't call that name on there 'cause you're going to interview them 'cause they're from Stagville. I can't call that name. But anyway, she gave it to her in some snuff; she wanted to get a sniff, and she gave her a dip of snuff. And Mabel took sick, and they didn't know what was wrong with her 'cause people didn't take her to doctors now. And Miss Frankie went to see her. And at that time people used slop jars.

GM: Slop jars?

Riley: Yes. You know what that is?

GM: Yes, a chamber pot.

Riley: Yes, well they called them slop jars. And Miss Frankie said when she viewed it and she seen this herself, she told me when she would use it they'd have stretched the legs of these spiders that passed through her. The legs was that long. Miss Frankie said that was the truth, because she went and helped waited on this child. And she was raving and raving. And you know Mabel died; she really died, she really did. They had to take her away from here. And they told her, they got this root doctor and told her, "Don't ever let this woman come near her. Every time she comes she will have a spell." And this woman would go and visit her

and she'd have a spell. And her husband had to finally leave here; they moved to Baltimore, didn't they?

Cameron: Yes.

Riley: Then she died; she really did. Miss Frankie said.

GM: Were those spiders?

Riley: They passed through her live. They was alive, with the long legs. Miss Frankie said that was the awfulest; she had never in her life. . . . I didn't go to see her. I wouldn't go to see her, 'cause I was afraid of them.

GM: Now who was this? Mabel was going with a fellow?

Riley: He was liking her better than he was the other woman.

GM: Oh, so the one who wasn't being liked went to a root doctor?

Riley: Yes, and she didn't want

GM: And who was the root doctor?

Riley: I don't know the man; see, I didn't know the man they carried her to.

GM: And did this root doctor live out there at Stagville?

Riley: No, no, he lived somewhere else away from here. I don't know whether it was in Virginia or somewhere, but it wasn't here.

GM: Oh, I see.

Riley: They carried her there. And she told her how she got this.

GM: Oh, they took Mabel to see the root doctor?

Riley: Yes. And he told her that she got it in you. So she remembered her. "She give it to you in some snuff. Didn't you get some snuff from somebody?" And she said, "Yes." And they remembered too, because we was at revival that night, and we all walked back together until they

went that way and then we went this way home. But you see, I didn't know about that at that time, until later on.

GM: So this woman who didn't like Mabel had gone to see the root doctor. And then when Mabel got sick then she went to see the same root doctor?

Riley: Yes, she went to see him.

GM: And the root doctor didn't have an antidote for it, didn't have a cure?

Riley: No. He told her what to do, "Don't let her come near, 'cause every time she will have a spell." And she would get worse. And he finally had to move away. So she didn't ever really get well from it; she died. And Miss Frankie said she certainly saw those spiders; she witnessed that with her eyes. I wouldn't go to see her, 'cause I didn't want to; I was afraid. And I didn't want to see nothing like that pass through anybody anyway. They said every time. . . . And she would just rave when this woman would come to her house. And they didn't live too far from her. They would come over there and they would stay.

GM: What quarters was this? What area was this that they were living in?

Riley: The new place.

GM: Oh, behind Farringtosh house?

Riley: Yes, one of them was. But the other one lived in this little old house. I don't know, did that house come down?

Cameron: Maybe so.

Riley: I believe they tore that down; they tore that house down where Mabel was living.

Cameron: Yes.

Riley: And Mabel died. Miss Frankie said she certainly seed. . . . Where was Miss Frankie living at at that time? Somewhere near, 'cause she'd go see Mabel.

Cameron: No, up there in Bahama. You go up by and go back up there. After her first husband died they said there was this older man used to come and see her. And he would bring her two

of snuff then; she loved that. And see, he brought it one day. They say the next day she took it and threw it in the fire. And in about a week or two he come back. And so he asked her, he said, "Lena, did you dip that snuff?" And so she said, "Why?" He said, "I want to know, did you dip it?" And so she told him, "Hell no," she didn't dip it. So he said, "I had something in that snuff for you." So her sons heard him say that, and they got their guns and

And she said that after she married Randolph one of her breasts just broke out. It just kept getting worse and worse. She said it got so bad--long by that time they would wear a blouse and a skirt--and she got to the place that she couldn't wear a blouse. She just had to take an apron and tie it around her neck. And somebody told her about this man and said, "You go to him; he can cure you." And she said they got up that morning before day and went to go to this man's house. And they said when they got near the house they saw him standing out in the yard. He said, "Come on in; I've been looking for you." So he touched her and looked up in the sky and said something, and told her to go on back home. He said, "You're going to get well." And so she did; her breast healed up.

Riley: Was it a sore?

Cameron: Yes. She said it was a sore.

GM: Did this man live out there at the Cameron place somewhere, or where did he live?

Cameron: I don't know where he lived, but anyway he wanted her and she didn't want him.

GM: Oh. So this man he went to see was the fellow who had given him the snuff?

Cameron: I don't know whether it was him or not. But anyway, she went to a root doctor.

Riley: Well, that's the way Serana got her dose, when she and Green separated.

GM: Who is this?

Riley: This here is Green Henderson; and his wife separated. She left when her youngest child Fred was two years old. And she did come back home and try to stay. But John Harris was this man's name. He lived down about Creedmoor, somewhere back down there. And he wanted her. She was a very pretty woman. I don't know what he give her, and she left home. And she did come back. They was staying in that little house, and he was living in the next house over there at Horton Grove. And she would come back and try to stay. And she would sit down at the table with the children and try to eat. And she said, "I can't stay with you all. I've got to go." And she'd jump up from the table and run out the door crying. She said, "I can't stay at home." At that time those houses (I don't know whether they have them now), they had steps. And they was open; they didn't have blocks like they have now. They was planks. And they went out there. And he had put something up under those steps (I don't know

whether he got anything in there). And she couldn't stay.

GM: What did he put up under the steps?

Riley: Some kind of roots. And he'd come to her house. He went back to the house and told Green. And her daddy was there, Cy Hart. He said, "Yes, I took your wife from you, and she can't stay with you no more." And Cy (this was Serana's daddy) said, "Shoot him." And he stood there in the yard and pulled his shirt over him and said, "Shoot me." But Green couldn't shoot him; and Green cried. He said, "Let me have the old smoothing board"---that's what he called a gun, his old smoothing board. He said, "I'll kill him."

GM: So Cy said that?

Riley: Yes. But he didn't. And she left home. So my mother helped raise the children. There were four of them, two girls, two boys.

GM: Helped raise Green Henderson's children?

Riley: Yes. So my mother told her to go to town and get her a good place to stay. She said, "I don't want you running around." And she went and stayed with that sister of mine.

GM: Sarah?

Riley: Yes, she stayed with that sister. And John Henderson went over there to see her. But she moved out finally, at last. But Green still went to see her every Saturday. He would hitch up the mules and (out of the garden) carry her some vegetables/and stuff out in the wagon, 'cause he loved her. And she stayed away from him. She worked in the factory, the Liggett-Meyers factory. And then she finally just completely lost her mind. But she had sense enough to say, "I want to go back home to my children and Green." And she stayed away seven years. And he took her back. She

went crazy. And at that time the county home was down here. And her daddy would sit beside the bed, and I would go to see her. So I had on a blue uniform (what they used to wear at Liggett-Meyers, with the white cuffs and collar), and I went in the house. And he was sitting beside the bed. And she looked at me, and she said, "I want that girl right there with that blue dress on." And when she said that, that porch was high and I leaped off that porch and I took off, 'cause I was scared of her. I really was. So she wouldn't eat. They carried her to the county home. Her children went to see her. And she stayed there nine days. She didn't eat. And they said she howled like a dog, and she didn't eat nothing. They said she wouldn't live long because she don't eat. And she would bark and howl just like a dog. And she did before she died. She died; she really died. And that was the truth; I know that! That's how peoples used to. . . .

GM: Like when you were coming along and that was explained to you, it was roots that had been put on them?

Riley: It was something. I don't know whether this was in her.

GM: No, but when you were growing up, though, how was it explained to you? Was it told to you as, "Somebody put the root on her"?

Riley: Yes, the roots: this was what it was. But I don't know whether it was something that he got in her and then planted the root up under there. Because I know they say Green and them, they dug up under there, and they got something from under there, those steps, under the front steps. And I don't know what it was, because I didn't see it. But they said they got something from under those steps. That's what he did. I don't know, he died. Did he die first, or did she die first?

Cameron: Who?

Riley: John Harris.

Cameron: I don't know.

Riley: I don't know too much about it.

GM: John Harris? Who was John Harris?

Riley: That's the man that did it.

GM: Oh, that's the man who did it, over in Creedmoor?

Riley: Yes. And they say he took sick, and he suffered. They say he really suffered, and he said things that he had done. Oh, they say he really suffered before he died. I know Serana's daddy, Uncle Cy Hart, he said, "Well, he ought to die. He should die." And they said he suffered before he died, and he called all the things that "I have done." I don't think he knowed, because he was sick, what he was saying or not.

GM: Were there any root doctors or conjurers or anybody like that out there at Cameron place, do you know?

Cameron: No; they stayed away, and people would go to them.

GM: Why weren't there any out there?

Riley: I don't know. It wasn't any there. The peoples knew where they was away, like in Raleigh and up here at--what was this place where he lived?

Cameron: Where?

Riley: This other place where this man, where they used to take people to? It was up here near Burlington, somewhere back in there. I don't know exactly the little place, but somewhere near back in that way.

Cameron: Well, they was just scattered around, you know.

Riley: But I never heard tell of anybody round about Stagville, Snow Hill or like that, or anything in Durham. I never heard tell of them taking anybody. . . .

Cameron: Well, there used to be some in Durham.

Riley: I didn't ever know about anybody they'd take them to in Durham.

Cameron: I went with other peoples to their house. I didn't even know of them until I went there with some other peoples, because I didn't even know there was people in Durham that would do things like that.

Riley: But I'm telling you, it used to be something.

GM: Did you ever hear about where these people learned about roots, where the knowledge of roots and the idea of putting roots on people and that, where that came from?

Riley: No.

Cameron: No.

Riley: I never did, because I wondered about this John Harris, where he get it. Maybe he learned it from somebody, but I never knowed. And they were just like that: when they wanted somebody they'd work this root on them, you know, or something like that. Because this is what he did. But she was just a pretty woman, and he just wanted her. See, he knowed she was somebody's wife, but it didn't make no difference with him, see.

Cameron: Well, you know, along way back then people would have these fast horses and buggies. And they would go to these root doctors and get roots. If there was anybody they wanted or anybody they wanted to make away with, they would do it. They was just that mean.

Riley: Yes. Henry Burden--you know Henry Burden?--he said this man and he fell out. I don't know the man's name.

GM: This is Henry Burden. Is this fellow out there at the Cameron place?

Riley: Yes, at Snow Hill.

GM: He was at Snow Hill?

Riley: Yes, he was at Snow Hill. And he said this man didn't like him. They fell out about something, I can't even remember what. But anyway, this man was going to give him something in a drink. Well, he knew the man didn't like him, and he didn't like the man, so he fixed him a drink. I mean, they didn't fix whiskey like they do now. They just had this-here homemade whiskey from the still, and they'd give it to them. And he said he just got suspicious about it. And the man went to do something, and he just switched glasses like that. And the man got his own dose, and it killed him right there. He killed his own self 'cause he got his own drink. And Henry said the man fell dead. And he knowed the man had a friend; he said he jumped on the man and beat him anyway, and the man was dead. He told that, he really did. He said that was the truth, he did it 'cause he knew the man was going to kill him. See, if he hadn't switched glasses it would have killed him. But he just switched that drink right then, and he died. I've never heard tell of anybody beating a dead person, but he said he would have killed him. But you know, there's just so much that went on back in those days. That's all they knowed to do.

Cameron: Yes, that. And then too, along then people would go with other men's wives. They wasn't as bold as they are now, but they always

has gone with one another's wives. And they would fall out with their woman and give her a little something. If they couldn't get the woman they wanted they'd give them something.

GM: Give them a root or something?

Cameron: Yes, something to work into someone.

GM: Do you know what kind of roots they would use?

Cameron: No, I don't.

Riley: No. They had a root they'd go out in the woods and get. Nobody didn't ever know it. You know what? I believe these root doctors would tell them or give it to them.

Cameron: Well, you know, it's a lot of different kind of roots for something. Every root in the woods is for some kind of medicine or something. Well, people just learned what would hurt a person and what was good for them. Along then people wouldn't take their children to the doctor; they'd go to the woods and get something, stir them up a tea or make them some kind of salve or something to rub in.

GM: This is out at Cameron place they would do that to them?

Cameron: Oh yes, yes. I know they used to give us something for measles, to break measles out on them, just like if a child gets sick. And we used to would smoke rabbit tobacco for a cold, or stew and drunk a tea. And we'd get pine bark, I mean pine needles and boil it with rabbit tobacco, and you'd drink that for a cold.

GM: Oh, drink that for a cold?

Cameron: Yes.

Riley: And when a child had chicken pox, they knowed what it was. I know my mother when she was a little girl, they would take her in the

hen house every day . . .

Cameron: For nine days.

Riley: . . . for nine days. But she had to go in there like that, but she had to come out backwards to cure it, to dry these chicken pox up on her. My mother did that.

GM: Your mother did that?

Riley: Yes, my mother did that.

GM: Oh, when she had the chicken pox?

Riley: This was her granddaughter that had it. See, the next sister under that, the one I was telling you about that died at childbirth, this is her daughter. She lives over here. And she had chicken pox. My mother raised this child. And she had the chicken pox, and she would take her in this hen house for nine days. She'd go in that way, but she had to back out; she couldn't come back out the same way she went in. This would dry it in for nine days.

GM: Well, what else did your mother do, or your mother do?

Cameron: Well, they would save the jaws that come out of a hog head, the jaw bones; they'd keep that and hang it up. And if any of the children had mumps, they'd burst that open and get the marrow out and rub their jaws with it to make the mumps go away.

Riley: Oh, they didn't have no doctors then. They had very few doctors, just old Doctor Strowd. You know, he was a doctor at that time, but they didn't go to him unless they had something like a stroke (an old person had a stroke) or maybe pneumonia.

GM: Something crucial.

Riley: Something like that. But other than that, they would always

keep these and do that. What was that they used for dirt
for sprained ankle. For a sprained ankle.

GM: What was that?

Riley: Dirt

Cameron:

GM: Oh yes, yes.

Riley: And they would get that and put it in some vinegar and make
a plaster out of it, and put it on there for a sprained ankle. They didn't
know what a doctor was for that.

Cameron: We used to raise a bush; we used to call it a tansey. We
used to get that. And there was a single tansey and a double tansey. We
would take that and bruise it and bind it around it our head, and that was
for the headache.

GM: Now do you know what kind of bush that is? You all called it a
tansey?

Cameron: It's a groom.

Riley: Yes, dog groom. It looked like a fern, not a flower, because
I have one down in the back with the ferns. They called it tansey at that
time.

Cameron: It had little hearts.

GM: Oh, so the plant you have back here would be what you would call
tansey?

Riley: A fern. This is a fern, they call it. I have never heard tell
of a mention of it as tansey now.

Cameron: And we used to raise violets; that was for colic.

Riley: And stomach aches.

GM: Colic is diarrhea?

Cameron: No, it's gas.

Riley: No, something like gas. And you chew that. And what was that stuff you plant with the laurel leaf? What was that that grew up tall? Oh, I don't know. And you used to chew that stuff and swallow the juice. Ugh!

Cameron: When my mother would have a baby she used to plant a little bush called catnip. The cats loved it, but it were good for the babies when they'd have the stomach ache. You used to stew it down and put a little sugar in it, and put a little in the baby's mouth. And then it's a mint that will grow on a branch; that was branch mint. That was good for a stomach ache. And it used to be an ivy, a river ivy; it runs on the ground. We used to get that for the baby, all that stuff.

GM: Grind up the leaves from the river ivy?

Cameron: Yes.

GM: Do you know what that river ivy was? I know the ivy like we have now that grows up the side of the houses and trees.

Cameron: Well, it was just a little round leaf that runs on the ground, down in the low ground, low places (we used to call it the low ground). And every spring of the year my daddy used to get sassafras, that red sassafras, and make a tea. That was to cleanse your blood every spring.

Riley: I still have some, I believe. I done had it made up, oh it's been ten or fifteen years ago. It's somewhere in there. And it smells so good.

GM: Good, oh yes. Where I was from, where I lived they had sassafras plants growing down by the pasture. We'd go down and dig up the roots and

brew them with pine real well and

Riley: There's a tree; I want to dig it up so bad, but I'm scared
somebody'll shoot/^{me.} I want to dig it up, because I like the tea from it.

GM: I like it too, yes.

Riley: It's good.

Cameron: I do too; I do too.

Riley: And people used to take all these-here old things, Lord a'
mercy, and give their kids. . . . They didn't know what it was, a doctor.

Cameron: No.

Riley: They didn't have the money; they couldn't afford a doctor if
the doctor would have been available. Of course the doctor would used to
come to your house at that time. But they didn't have the money to do it.
They had to study all these-here different things to do for themselves.
And I know when women used to have babies, they would keep them in the bed
nine days, and they wouldn't feed them nothing but butter and bread for
nine days. They wouldn't let them get out of bed.

Cameron: Right.

Riley: They wouldn't let them get out of bed. You had to stay in the
bed. They would bind them, and then make them stay in bed and feed them
butter and bread.

GM: Bind them?

Riley: Yes.

Cameron: A band, a big band around their stomach.

Riley: A big old cloth that they would put around. I don't know
what that was for.

Cameron: To make their back strong.

Riley: I don't know what that was for. And they'd keep that woman in the bed for nine days. Now a woman having a baby, she can get up right then, but they used to wouldn't let them do that.

Cameron: My mother, she used to have cramps in her legs. I know my grandmother would take a little piece of wire and wrap some cotton around, and keep turpentine on that for cramps, she'd have them so.

GM: And would that help?

Cameron: After childbirth.

GM: Oh, after childbirth she'd have the cramps in her legs?

Cameron: Yes.

GM: And do you know, did that help very much?

Cameron: Yes, it did.

GM: It did?

Riley: They knowed what they was doing back in those days, people really did; they knowed what they was doing. Oh, they had to. I'm telling you right now, the black people had to have some kind of knowledge from God; they had to, 'cause they didn't have nothing else to dwell on. And they didn't have no education. This is the reason why that I believe in this: they didn't have education to do these things, 'cause they couldn't read. Now you take my mother: she couldn't read, but she could sing the hymns. She knowed these hymns like those people sing now, you know, "Amazing Grace" and all of that stuff. She could sing those hymns, but she couldn't read.

Cameron: It was a gift from God.

Riley: Because I used to read the Bible to her; I would read the Bible to her. And when I would read the Bible to her she could explain

these things. I didn't know, I would just read the Bible to her. But she could explain what God is, and could explain it to me. This is why that I say, this is something was sent down for them, knowledge from God. It had to be, because they didn't have education. They didn't have a chance to go to school. This is why I say they worked so hard, they had such a hard time. And they had to have this knowledge from God, because man couldn't have give it to them. And they couldn't have gone through with these hard trials and tribulations if it hadn't have been for God. He brought them through this, because they craved for freedom. And I believe this is why they didn't see all of this through. But as I told you the other day, I think their children will get this where I didn't. I pray to God that my children don't have to go through with this, what I've gone through with. And I hadn't had to go through with it, I hadn't had to do it all the time. But I hadn't had to go through with what my mother went through with. And this is what I say to my nieces and nephews: "You have the good opportunity. Take it. I didn't have it, but I didn't have it like my mother had it. But you don't have it like I had it. And now you have the chance. Accept it while it's here. Go to school; get your education. You're young; you're going to need this. You are not going to get it. The times is going to get worse as you come along if you don't get your education. You're going to have to have education to go in a person's house to do his work. You probably will do that. You'll be young boys. You're going to have to have education to go out there and dig this ditch, because you used to could go out there and dig a ditch and put this line through. But you're going to have to have this education to learn how to lay these pipes in this ditch." This is what I'm trying

to tell them, see. I said, "My days are behind me. I'm not looking for anything else. I've had mine, see, and I'm thankful of this opportunity that I have now, because I don't know how long I'm going to live." But I think that God will take care of me; I believe he will. And I think if you believe this with all your heart that he will carry you through now. And I believe he'll finish carrying me through. I don't believe that he'll stand to see me go through no hard trials and tribulations no more, no more than I went through when I was growing up. But after I grew up and I got me a job, I had to give some days to it. And then I got married. For a few years my husband and I, we didn't have much money. But then when he went in the service and got out of the service he got a good job. He and I went to Liggett-Meyers. That's how we got this house started; we had this house started, and we built this house in '47. And this is why I say, my mother worked all of her life (and she was eighty-four years old when she died) but what did she have? Nothing! Nothing! My father worked that farm; they didn't have nothing. They couldn't even hardly make ends meet the year round. They done worked the whole twelve months. Tobacco used to be a twelve month job. You'd start in January for the plant bed, and they didn't get through 'til sometime after Christmas, stripping tobacco. The market stayed open longer than they do now. This is why that I say: this is why we today, peoples today that have better understanding, better religion than the peoples had way back then . . .

Cameron: But they had more religion.

Riley: They had more religion than we have now. They had the love of God in their hearts, while we have the love. . . . We worship what we have, and that's the difference. When you worship these things here on

earth you are not worshipping what God wants you to do. I believe that: you are just worshipping earthly things. And this is one thing that I don't do. I thank God for what I have, what he's enabled me to get, but I don't worship this, because God loaned me this for just a little while to use for his use. And this is why I do a lot of mission work. My car, I go out to visit the sick. I cook and I carry people dinner. And I do this because I think^{this}/is what God wants me to do.

GM: And then you could also use those to hurt somebody?

Cameron: That's right.

GM: Now did you ever hear of people maybe having learned these things brought over from Africa, or anything like that?

Cameron & Riley: No.

Riley: I never heard them from anywhere but around. I mean, the peoples that did it was in Durham or somewhere close around. I don't know where they learned that from.

GM: When you were saying it was a gift from God, I was wondering also if it was seen like it was a gift of God who had been with us in Africa and was with us now? Of course he was, but I was wondering if it was also told in that way.

Riley: No. I think this is the way I believe: at the time in the woods there was poison stuff. "This is poison," when we was growing up; "Don't touch that; it's poison." Now nobody hasn't told me this, but this is how I believe they got it. "This is poison stuff. I'm going to get this root. I'm going to do so-and-so." This is how I think it come about. I don't know; I've never heard this.

Cameron: Well, it's a name for every weed out there in the field.

Well, people learned the things that would help you and the things that would harm you. Now it's a weed out there you can touch it, it stings just like fire.

Riley: It's a stinging weed, they call it; I know that.

Cameron: Well, the briar sticks you; thorns'll stick you. It's even a weed out there they call the crowfoot; that's good for medicine.

GM: What does that do? What does crowfoot do?

Cameron: It's for arthritis and colic.

Riley: What is that big weed called that looks like a tobacco plant?

Cameron: Mullen.

Riley: Yes, mullen.

Cameron: That's good for a sprain.

Riley: That's a big old weed; it looks like a tobacco plant.

Cameron: It looks like tobacco. They call it the devil plant, devil's tobacco and devil's snuff. Well that devil's snuff, it's good for sores. It's just like snuff you buy, only it doesn't have the scent or anything. You get it and sprinkle it on a sore.

GM: Do you dry it first? Do you have to dry it?

Cameron: It's already dry. It's in a little round pouch.

Riley: It's already dry. You pull it down like that, and it's in a little old . . . something. It grows on a little old something like that. We used to take and stick something in it.

GM: It looks like a pouch.

GM: Was it a pod or something, or a little pouch?

Cameron: It's a little round pouch just stuck on the ground. We'd step on them and bump them.

Riley: And bust them. And it's just like snuff you buy at the store. You don't see that now.

Cameron: Some places round with farms and stables have them.

Riley: I don't ever see it now, but I don't go out around now. But I don't ever see it. I don't hear nobody say nothing about it, devil's snuff. Oh gracious Lord a' mercy.

END OF INTERVIEW