H-4

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

SOUTHERN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Piedmont Social History Program

Interview

with

T. J. COTTON

June 17, 1977

Badin, North Carolina

By Rosemarie Hester

Transcribed by Rosemarie Hester

Original transcript on deposit at
The Southern Historical Collection
Louis Round Wilson Library

Rosemarie Hester: We were talking about your parents. They had been from Montgomery County and Richmond County.

T.J. Cotton: Yes, my father's people were from Montgomery County and my mother's people lived in Richmond County. They used to go to school at Palmerville up here. There was a high school at Palmerville years ago. They'd rent a house up here during school months. They'd move up here--her and her mother and my granddaddy and the boys that wasn't going to school would stay down there in Richmond County. They'd stay up here till school let out and then move back to Richmond County. Mama finished school and then she got a job teaching school at Montgomery County. That's the way my father met up with her. They got married.

R.H.: And then they came to live . . .

T.C.: Well, my father had a house in Palmerville, right across the river. It wasn't too far. You can see almost the old Cotton place. The school over there, the kids all got too large for the little old private school and they brought them over here to study in the winter time and move back in the spring of the year when school was out.

R.H.: Where was the old Cotton place?

T.C.: It's right across from Badin over here. You don't know where the Badin Dam is, do you? Well, right across there. Badin Dam across on the other side was on my granddaddy's place. He had a fishery at what they call the old Narrows.

R.H.: Did the company buy your grandfather's land to build the dam?

T.C.: Yes.

R.H.: Do you remember what year that was?

T.C.: No, I was just a baby then. I can't remember that far back.

R.H.: What had the land been used for?

T.C.: Well, to farm. Lot of it was woods. Lot of it used for pasture. Lot of game back in them days. Gold mines. They had gold mines over in there. Had alot of companies from up North and New York prospecting for gold. Then they started on building the dam and buying all the property up. The French people started it first and then they sold out to the Aluminum Company, wasn't it Raymond?

Raymond Barker: Yes, the Whitney Company was involved first and then the French Company.

R.H.: Well, what did your grandfather do after the land was bought?

T.C.: My granddaddy moved over here in Albermarle. He didn't want to move. When he moved over there, he went to bed that night and he never did get up. He didn't live but three days. He just couldn't give up leaving the old land in Montgomery.

R.H.: Why, then, did he sell the land?

T.C.: Well, see they had to have the land to build the dam. That's the reason he sold it.

R.H.: He was anxious for them to build the dam on that land?

T.C.: Yes, he was anxious but he just couldn't . . . the closer he come to moving, the worse he hated it.

R.H.: How old was he when he sold the land?

T.C.: I don't remember how old he was. He was pretty old.

R.H.: How did your grandmother feel about it?

T.C.: Oh, she wanted to come to Albemarle.

R.H.: Did that have something to do with why he sold the land?

T.C.: Yes, that had something to do with it.

R.H.: Then what did your father do?

T.C.: He was a farmer. We run a livery stable at Palmerville and one down here at Badin. We had one right where the wash house is over here in Badin and one in Palmerville. Palmerville, at one time, was bigger than Badin. It had five drug stores at one time but if you go through there now you wouldn't believe it.

R.H.: Who first approached your granddaddy about buying his property?

T.C.: I don't know who first approached him about it. My uncle, he went to work for the company and he went to buying up all the land up and down the river for this dam. They just went clean on up to Old Whitney, up in there.

R.H.: Why did they think the dam was important?

T.C.: Well, they wanted to make power. See, they didn't have no electric lights around here then. Albemarle didn't have none and there wasn't nothing in Badin--just maybe six or seven houses, farm houses.

R.H.: How did your father feel about farming on smaller acreage and then not inheriting all of his father's land?

T.C.: Well, after they bought the place, it was a pretty good while before they built the dam and he got to use the land back to the water up to the creek. That was in the contract. My granddaddy, he could have stayed on over there but my grandma, she just kept nagging and nagging and he stayed just as long as he could. He said, "When I go to bed, I ain't never going to get up no more." And he didn't either.

R.H.: What about the six or seven families in the scattered houses in Badin. Were they anxious to have the dam come?

T.C.: Oh yes, everybody around was anxious for the dam to come. There wasn't no money circulating. All they did was just farming and that

wasn't too good.

R.H.: Who were the first people who came to work on the construction of the dam?

T.C.: I don't remember who they was. Lot of them, they'd come and go. Well, they started three or four times before they got the dam built and finally they got it. They started to change the bed of the river around Palmerville and they was going to have the power plant where the canal went down hill like that. Going to build the power plant there. That never did work out and they never did use the canal up there. They thought they'd build the canal from Old Whitney to down below Palmerville and all that was throwed away for nothing. When they built Badin, they were going to have the plant over there, had a big place picked out. And see when they changed hands, they done away with all the plans and moved over here where it is now. And the dam, they put where it is.

R.H.: Do you remember the names of the families who were here in Palmerville and in Badin?

T.C.: I remember a few people in Badin and a few of them in Palmerville.

R.H.: Are any of them still around?

T.C.: They all dead. Most of them was Calloways, Palmers, . . . Do you remember Raymond?

R.B.: I believe at that time you had the Meisenheimer's, several families of Kirks (they lived right in town there). A little further south you had the Millers.

T.C.: And there was the Ingrams. Up there where the main office is, there was Billy Reinhardt. He sold out and they just tore his house down not long ago.

R.B.: Two or three of the families were Calloways. That's why we're not giving you as many names.

R.H.: Are any of the children or the grandchildren of these people still here?

R.B.: The Redwines are a little bit south. Some of the Calloways. I remember one of the Redwines married one of the Calloways.

R.H.: Did any of these people go to work in the ALCOA plant?

T.C.: I think some of them did but I don't think none of them are working here now. Do you, Raymond?

R.B.: I guess the last one was James Calloway.

R.H.: Well, after they started to build the dam, there was alot of activity here, wasn't there?

T.C.: Oh yeah, there was alot of people. They'd come in from everywhere: South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, up in Tennessee, up to Ohio, all around. They had alot of them from down in Pembroke. They had a bunch of Croatans from Pembroke working down at the dam.

R.H.: Do you know how they were recruited? Or how they heard about Badin?

T.C.: They advertised in the paper. They come from far and near to work here. They paid a dollar and a half a day then. /laughter/ That was big money at that time.

R.H.: Did most people just come for the construction days and then leave.

T.C.: That's right, most all of them. They had alot from West Virginia here. One family from West Virginia--part of them's here now. The old lady, she died about three months ago. Isn't that right, Raymond?

R.B.: I don't remember. It hasn't been too long though. Another

family to make a note of beside those Eberhardts are the Coggins'. You know, Tebe, your cousins.

T.C.: That's right.

R.H.: Do you remember any stories from the construction days?

T.C.: No m'am, don't remember no stories. I was pretty small then.

R.H.: You just remember that it was rough.

T.C.: Yeah, it was rough.

R.H.: Do you remember Kid Heavy?

T.C.: Oh yeah. He was a rough one. /laughter/ He got killed over here back up by the plant. They had a bunch of dagoes over here and this little old Italian killed him. Shot him.

R.H.: Why?

T.C.: He was overbearing. Oh he was rough. He'd take a pick handle and knock people down. Take pistols away. He had a long big old black jack with a rawhide strap and a big hole through it. He'd fasten it onto his belt. He rode a horse through town and these Italians, you couldn't understand them what nothing they said. They got to laughing at him and making fun at him, you know. /laughter/ And they just yucking up. He hit this one across the head with his pick handle and his brother shot him. He didn't plumb kill him then but he died that night. I think that was the way of it. But I know he got killed and Dan Talbert, he was the shiny rouster from New London over on Hardaway Hill. That's over there close to the Badin dam. He was a good friend of mine. He was a policeman. I drove a horse and buggy to Albemarle and Salisbury. You'd have to spend the night to go to Salisbury. It'd take you all day to go to Albemarle then. The road come behind my house then--old buggy roads. The horse had to walk most of the way. They had a big old six-seated

hack. They'd put two big horses to that and I drove it sometimes. Then they had what they called a surry and have two big horses for it. You could haul four, five people in it.

R.H.: Was Kid Heavy the sheriff?

T.C.: No, some called him shiny rousters. Some called him policeman.

R.H.: Who hired him?

T.C.: The company that run Badin and was building the dam.

R.H.: Did he keep order or did he make more trouble?

T.C.: He kept pretty good order. But them Italians--you couldn't do nothing with them. /laughter/

R.H.: Do you remember any of their names or where they came from?

T.C.: They come from Pembroke below Laurinburg.

R.H.: Do you know what they had been doing there?

T.C.: They had been farming. They used them mostly to clear up land, cleaning up the resevoir , you know. They had a camp right over here behind where the plant, part of it, is now. I used to haul beer. They was crazy about their beer. They'd make their own bread. They had good bread. Long loaves about that long. It was rusty looking stuff but it was sweet and good.

R.H.: So they came in groups. They didn't come as individual people.

T.C.: No, they hauled them in here on transportation. They had special trains to ship them to Badin. Didn't have no automobiles and trucks like they got now. They had six, seven hundred maybe more. At least that many. They was good workers. They was tough but you made one of them mad, you had the whole crowd to fight. /laughter/ They stuck

together. If they liked you, they'd do anything. I wasn't as large as my little boy over there but I could drive a team. (When I went to deliver something) them old Italian women would say, "Come in sonny. You hungry." They'd get a big old piece of that good old bread and put some kind of Italian stuff on it. You'd eat pretty good. They'd say, "Here, take you a mug of beer." I say, "No, my mama'll whoop me if I drink that." /laughter/ They all believed in draft beer. They didn't know what bottled beer was then. I'd haul it in kegs. They'd unload it for me.

You know what they call Hoochie Pap? That old colored man who worked in the carbon plant so long, Raymond? He was right black looking old fellow. You know where the spring is up there right behind the old carbon plant?

R.B.: Yeah, there's really no road up to it now, is there?

T.C.: No, there ain't no road up there. He was an old nigger they called Hoochie Pap and he was one of the best workers at all. W.R. Young and some of them, they really bragged on him. Tommy Cotton (Tommy was my first cousin, he's dead now), he used to brag on him. That old guy, he would get drunk and say, "Oh no, you going to let me lay here and die!" They'd get him up to go to work. If they didn't get him sobered up, he'd stay that way a week or two. They'd go after him on Monday and tried to get him started again. But he was a real worker.

R.H.: Did they also use convict labor?

T.C.: Yes'm, they had seven hundred convicts here.

R.H.: What was the housing like?

T.C.: The prison camps?

R.H.: Well, for the prisoners, for the Italians who were here, for the black workers who were here.

T.C.: The houses wasn't so hot in them days. They'd just build a shack what we called shinies. No glass,no windows in them. They'd have shutters in them days. They had a fireplace that burned wood only. They didn't have no heaters then. Had a cook stove. Had tents, Brush arbors. Anything you could get by with. There's nothing too expensive then. Weren't nothing you could buy then. Didn't have nothing. There wasn't no money circulating.

R.H.: It was just constructed to be temporary housing, wasn't it?

T.C.: That's right. No permanent housing. Now up at Old Whitney in Palmerville, they had some nice houses. They big shots, they had some nice houses. Had big lawns and the offices. A depot--we used to have a depot here too but they tore it down about two, three years ago. They were fixed up real nice up there, the northern people was. But the people just coming in to pick up a job, well they'd have a tent or them shinies. They didn't charge them no rent but they had cheap roofing, tar paper roofing. They had to tear the top off them when they left. It was against the law to burn them with the top on. They'd give them to anybody that wanted them. We got alot of them but we couldn't use them all.

R.H.: And there was an actual prison camp here?

T.C.: Yes, it's under water now. It was about as far from the dam as from here to the post office over in Badin. A great big prison camp. They kill alot of them. That was pretty bad on the prisoners. Made them work back in them tunnels where nobody else wouldn't go but they had guns and made them go. Lot of them, rocks would roll down and kill them. We dug six hundred up. Had them buried there at the prison

camp. They happened to think after they backed up the water, why, they'd be covered up and it's against the law to cover them up. They got a cemetary up there in Palmerville, in the woods. It's growed up. You couldn't tell that there was a cemetary there. They cut saw timber off of it. Ain't nobody ever come to see about them. I hauled them all when I drove the wagons.

R.H.: Six hundred people?

T.C.: Between five and six hundred. They killed so many every-day just about. It was bad but they had to go. They had no other choice.

R.H.: Do you know what prison they were from?

T.C.: They come out of Raleigh prison.

R.H.: What about the black labor that came from South Carolina?

T.C.: Well, it was black and white, all mixed up. They had camps for them too. The ones who was building the dam, they built--oh, I don't know how many. Then they had a big mess hall, that's where they eat at. And then they had a big place for them that had no families to sleep in. That's what they call the shiny rouster. They'd run them out the next morning, go beat on the doors. If you didn't get up, they'd go in with a pick handle and run them out. They was hard on them, back in them days.

R.H.: Did any of them come with their families?

T.C.: Yeah, alot of the families moved in after they got started.

R.H.; How about the Italians--did they come with their families?

T.C.: Some of them. Most of them were single ones. They had right many with families.

R.H.: I heard a story or two about how agents would be sent out from the company to go into different towns in South Carolina and Georgia

and pay off the sheriff to round up all the 'rough people,' as they've been called, and bring them up to ALCOA where they'd work. Sometimes these people wouldn't like the work that they were doing and they'd get on the train and go to Salisbury. Kid Heavy would meet them at the train at Salisbury. (He'd heard that they'd gotten on the train and were leaving.)

T.C.: That's right. That's true. I know that for sure. Old Kid, he was shot a time or two but that old Italian, he laid him out.

R.H.: What happened to the Italian after he killed him?

T.C.: They turned him loose because they tried to try him in court and they couldn't understand nothing he said. So they turned him loose. Well, that's what they ought've done. He was overbearing on them. He'd ride up to a house--he rode a great big old horse--and knock on the door. If they didn't open it up, he'd step back and take his big old foot like that and bust it down. Have his hand on the pistol or blackjack. They'd run out the back door. It was rough. That was before Badin got started down here and at Palmerville they had two churches. One was a Methodist Church. One was a Baptist Church. What they call Main Street up there, the ladies after five o'clock on Saturday afternoon couldn't come down Main Street. It was just a road. It wasn't no street and the road come around like that. You had to go on the other road to go to church on Sunday. The roads would be full. You could buy whiskey then for a dollar a gallon. (They had the post office up there close to the church.) I'd haul that whiskey down on a two-horse wagon and they could get it on Fridays and Saturdays and boy would they put it on. It was a sight.

R.H.: When did people start to leave?

T.C.: When they finished the plant, when they started backing up the water that's when they started moving out. They went to other jobs. They started building dams all over the country then. They'd go from one job to the other.

R.H.: And what did the Calloways and the Palmers and the Kirks and the Millers think about all of this happening.

T.C.: Oh, they got carried away with it. They could farm and sell anything--eggs, produce, chickens. They had big yards and they made money. We had a great big garden up there at Palmerville. Had five or six cows and mama, she had a pocket full of money all the time. Before, she didn't have nothing.

R.H.: Were you going to school at this time?

T.C.: Yes, part-time I was and part-time I wasn't.When it first started, I wasn't old enough to go to school.

(BEGIN SIDE TWO TAPE ONE)

R.H.: Do you remember Jimmy the Greek?

T.C.: Oh yes, I brought him to Badin from Albemarle on a horse and buggy.

R.H.: Did you really? Where had he come from?

T.C.: He come from over in Greece. He was a sight. He had a little old--well, they tore down the building--right on the corner. A little old cafe and a barber shop combined. Jim had a place over there in Albemarle. He sold it out. I don't think they had but thirty-five, forty dollars. He give me a dollar to bring him over from Albemarle. He says, "Where's the place where the cafe's at?" I says, "They got one right down here on the corner but they have fights and bust out the window and get drunk." He says, "I'll stop all that." He was funny. He'd have

a couple of drinks, you know. He was a pretty good old Greek.

He went in and introduced himself and asked the man if he'd want to sell out. He says, "Yes sir, be glad to. I'm tired of this place." Jim asked how much he wanted and he didn't have too much, you know. They got together and Jim opened it up and he just kept building all up. He had a good business. Had a nice, good building over there. His wife just died and he had a boy over in Greece and finally got him brought over here. He was fourteen years old when they got him. He was a funny kid, funniest little fellow you ever seen. He couldn't talk our language, you know. He couldn't understand. And he done finished high school over there and they started him over here at the Badin school in the first grade. Man, he just jumped up there. He knew more than the teachers knew. Had them all laughing and tickling. He learned our language, you know. He made it all right. He sold out. He married a girl from Charlotte. They wouldn't marry nothing but Greeks. His daddy went to Charlotte over there to a big old Greek. They had one daughter. He told him about his boy and they got to talking around. So this Greek over in Charlotte brought his daughter and introduced him to Tommy. They set a time to get married. They got married but she never did like it over here somehow or another. Her name was . They had two children--a boy and a girl. They were real nice. The boy, he finished high school over here and got a job up in Seattle, Washington. Cathy, the daughter, she taken a business course over in Charlotte. They living over there. When the mama died, she sold out everything over here and moved to Charlotte and then she kicked the bucket. Tommy, he never did like it in Charlotte. He liked it better over here. But old Jim was a sight. He was a good Greek.

R.H.: Do you remember Mr. Hambley or Mr. Whitney?

T.C.: Seems like I . . .

R.H.: Mr. Hambley was the English engineer who started the project up at the Whitney Dam with Mr. Whitney.

T.C.: Oh yeah, he was a nice fellow too.

R.H.: He got typhoid and died.

T.C.: There was alot of typhoid then. They had chills around Badin and Palmerville before they got all this stuff scrubbed out and cleaned off. Albemarle was a bad place too. They had hog pens and barns and cows. Used to go through there and have to hold your nose. People used to live in all that stuff and they'd die like flies. The health people finally got started and got it cleaned out. Don't know what that is now. Got everything cleaned up now, sanitary places and sewage lines opened up. That was a great help.

R.H.: Do you remember when the French came?

T.C.: Yes.

R.H.: What was that like?

T.C.: They was the ones that had them big houses up at the Whitney. They had Cadillac automobiles. They hardly ever used the top on them except in the winter time. Had a big old horn over on the side of the car. It'd go, "Whomp, Whomp." It was a rubber horn. Up here at Palmerville they built two or three nice places, maybe four or five places. A two-story building for the big shots to live in.

R.H.: When did these permanent houses get built in Badin?

T.C.: They was still working on the dam when they built them. See, when they backed up the lake, that killed Palmerville. There was alot of traffic coming across from Montgomery County, Randolph County

and all back in there. You see, they had to come this way or go back around Troy. They had a dirty set of county commissioners and the company'd give them a little kick back and they closed it up. Had a sign up there, "End of the Road."

There's a whole lot else I know.I just can't think right now.

R.H.: You're doing fine. I'm getting a real good story.

T.C.: Well that's good.

R.H.: Do you remember Doc Rainey?

T.C.: He was the first doctor they had here. He was real good. He come from Fayetteville. Friend of mine got a daughter that lives in Fayetteville. She knowed Doc Rainey's daughter. When he left here, I think he went back there. He was a nice fellow. Seems like he ain't been dead so many years. Maybe ten, fifteen something like that. He was a real doctor.

And Doctor Moore, he was a good doctor too.

R.H.: Somebody told me a story about Doctor Rainey finding a man who had just been hurt. Apparently, there was one of the workers who was giving a foreman a hard time. Two people were told by the foreman to kill this other man. They attempted to kill him and hurt him very badly but when Doc Rainey came along, he was still alive. So Doc Rainey took him over to a hospital in Winston-Salem. When they found out in Winston-Salem about this murder and heard how rough Badin was, they were going to get up a bunch of about four hundred, five hundred people to come down to Badin and straighten it out. Did you ever hear anything about that?

T.C.: No, they never did get nothing done. That wouldn't have done no good cause it was really rough. Ain't no telling how many people's

in that dam over there.

You take them old engineers that run them old cranes, you know that picks that stuff way up high. Like picking up concrete and pouring in the dam. They'd have a flag man out there and if didn't do everything just right, they'd drop that thing. They'd make like it'd break, wouldn't hold on, like the brakes didn't work. Make like nobody didn't see it.

R.H.: Well, how did the people who were working on the construction at the dam feel about the French riding around in their Cadillacs and having nice houses?

T.C.: It'd tickle them to death. They never had seen an automobile before.

R.H.: Really? They thought it was funny.

T.C.: Sure did. It was funny. Old Doctor Hill in Albemarle, he had a automobile buggy. He bought the first and a fellow O'Hara bought two. Doctor Hill was a good friend of my daddy and my mother (we lived up in Palmerville then) and he bought that automobile and then run into a branch. He couldn't get out. Had to get a old mule to pull him out of the branch. He never did get much service out of it. Finally had to go back to a horse and buggy. Had to have a good horse and buggy. In fact, he was going with my uncle's wife's sister over there in Randolph County. Going or coming, he'd spend the night in Palmerville cause he couldn't make it over there in one day. It'd take about a day and a half. Couldn't run the horse none. And then maybe you'd have to stay until the river . . . hour or two for the ferry boat. Bout two wagons, maybe three horse and buggy all it could carry. He traded for a new horse one time and the horse seen one of them little old dinkeys. (I don't know it you ever seen one of them dinkeys. They had big old steam shovels. You know they had these little old duck cars just a little larger than those chicken coops over there.

They had two chains on this side and you could knock them hooks up like this. Then give them a little push and the dirt would go down through the doors. They had a trestle out so they make .)

This little old dinkey, you'd blow the whistle and that steam pops and the horse run away and tore his side up. So he had to borrow one of our horses and buggys to go to see his sweetheart.

You know little Doctor Hill in Albemarle?

R.H.: No.

T.C.: You ain't from around here, are you?

R.H.: No, Chapel Hill.

T.C.: Well, this Doctor Hill married this lady and he had a boy that made a doctor too called Little Doctor Hill, Jr. He's a doctor over in Albemarle now. His doctor was, I believe, the first doctor there was in Albemarle.

R.H.: Your grandmother stayed in Albemarle then after her husband died?

T.C.: She stayed there awhile and then my uncle, Will Cotton who bought all this company land, he bought a place in New London. Had a drug store up there and a fruit stand and all. Uncle Will, he never was married so he could stay with her up there. Finally she moved to New London and that's where she died. She was one of the best cooks at all. I used to go up there and she'd have great big old biscuits that big around and about that high. Boy them things was good. She'd put honey and country butter and it'd run all around. Boy, you thought you couldn't eat but one but you could eat two or three of them. It was good too. Then she'd have alot of fig preserves. She canned alot of stuff. My granddaddy over there at the old Colonel Cotton place right across from the Badin Dam where I was born at, he had one of the best

orchards around anywhere. Had about twenty acres. Had any kind of fruit all year round. Take them big old apples and stuff like that and wrap them in newspaper. (Didn't know what waxed paper was in them days.) He'd bury them in the wheat, you know, and he'd keep them all winter. Take watermelons--we'd take three, four and bury them in wheat and cut them Christmas day. We didn't have to buy nothing back in them days. A little sugar, a little coffee. Could sell enough eggs to pay for that.

R.H.: How many people were there at your school--when you went to school?

T.C.: In Palmerville? There was two grades: high school and primary. They didn't do like they do now. They had these long recitation benches. One teacher (I think she taught from the first on up to the fourth or fifth), she'd make a talk every morning. They had big sliding doors and they'd hoist them doors up and put all of the school in one building. She had a big old seat, a big old thing like a preacher's pulpit. Get up there and pray for about an hour and sing. The high school, they had a music teacher, a room for the music teacher. One teacher she taught all those grades, about six or seven maybe eight grades. She had to teach.

They had a big commencement at the high school. (They called it commencement back in them days.) It'd take two or three days fixing up the school and decorating the rostrum. They had a big old program. People'd come driving horse and wagons. Way down in Richmond County all around. They'd camp. That was fun. Then over in Montgomery County, in Troy. All around. You'd go over there.

R.H.: What did you do when you got out of school?

T.C.: I worked for my daddy. Farming, drove horses and wagons,

things like that. I had something to do all the time.

R.H.: Where did you farm?

T.C.: Up here at Palmerville. My mother, when her daddy died he left her three farms and he was a wealthy old man. Fess Ledbetter from Richmond County. Left all the children three farms a piece. We went down there and raised cotton and corn and stuff like that. When he moved away from Palmerville, that was the worst move he ever made in his life. Cause you could always pick you up some money during the week. When you'd go away, crop money didn't come in but once a year and then the boll weevil got bad and he might not leave you nothing. Then you'd lose your farm. Couldn't pay the fertilizer bill or the heat bill. I stayed down there till I got eighteen. I told him I was going to leave. He says, "No, you ain't. I'll have you brought back." I says, " If you do, I'll go so far the next time you can't find me." I had some money buried out. /laughter/ So I said first of October I'm going to leave. He didn't say nothing. He went out squirrel hunting early that morning. He didn't want to see me leave. I asked my mother to get my clothes. She wouldn't do that. So I had a old two-horse wagon. I traded it for two cows and old grey mare and old black mule I hooked up and backed out in the wagon. Loaded it up. It was about three o'clock and I had a long ways yet to come. They didn't have roads then. When I got to Pee Dee, old cows got to fighting and tore the bit off. There was a big farm house down there. I called them down there and asked the man how about he keep for me over the weekend. He said he would. He was a friend of my daddy's. So I come on up here. I had a job working in grocery stores and meat markets for my uncle. I'd haul freight. Didn't have no trucks then. Used wagons. I had my own horse and wagon. Mule, too.

I went to work for them. On Monday morning before daylight early we went to get the cows over there and we got back to Badin about nine o'clock. Now you'd be across over there about fifteen, twenty minutes. Pretty close to that.

R.H.: And you've been here ever since?

T.C.: Yes, I been here ever since. I used to work for the company long time ago. I work for my own self now. Used to trade horses, goats. Do a little trading now, not too much now. The trading business is about over. I used to do good on trading. Fix up yards. Sell produce. Little peas, corn. That's gotten so now . . . Well, weather changed and everything. Bugs. Didn't have no insects way back then. But now you got to watch them. When they starts out, you got to get you some spray or dust cause they'dd take it down.

R.H.: When did the insects start to come?

T.C.: Well, the weather started to get milder and milder. See way back it was so cold that it'd freeze them out. But now, they live from one time to the other. The winter we had this past winter, that was the hardest winter we've had here in a long time. We still got planty of them left. Used to be before one snow'd get away another would cover it up. This lake, I've seen that thing froze over. They used to have T-model cars cross right in front of the plant up there. Bootleggers over in Montgomery County made whiskey and toted it across over on that ice. That there Stokes Ferry below them bridges near New London got froze in. They'd use mules and horses on that ice. Nobody ever got drowned on that ice. The insects couldn't take it when we had that kind of weather. If we had that kind of weather now, it'd be different. They had old Japanese beetles and all kinds and boy they'd clean you out.

R.H.: Do you remember Victor Foglia?

T.C.: Yeah, I remember him. When he got married, I carried the first groceries in his house. He married a Italian. She come from Winston-Salem. Her daddy come from Winston-Salem and moved down to a place between Albemarle and Norwood called Porter. That started out above Badin here in a little place called town. They had alot of them rough joints up there. He has family here in Badin now. Lot of them is. Got a daughter lives in Palmerville. Son lives about two miles straight across from here.

R.H.: Do you know why he stayed and so many of the others left?

T.C.: Well, he went to work for this company after he got on with the dam. Several of them stayed but not too many. He used to live right back up here in a house. He lived all around here. His wife, she was one of the best cooks and made the best wine you ever stuck a tooth in.

Fact is, when I went to work for the company (I worked for the company seven years) then the depression come along and I got laid off and my uncle, Uncle Will (the one that bought all this land) he owned all this land and he had thirty acres between here and Albemarle. He had a grove out there and a little old house. (I built that house.) And I had two mules for carrying. Anything to make a living back them days. The lady, she was sitting on the porch cooling. She done cooked dinner and they called her to come on in. The girls had the dinner on the table, and she didn't answer. When they come out there and seen that she was dead, they was screaming and going on. It was pitiful. She was one of the best cooks. She could can anything.

They got caught back in the depression. They didn't have no wood and we'd haul wood. The winter was rough and we'd haul wood from see where that power line is. Well, the company was giving away wood and the old

man come over one morning and said he had a house full of kids that was about to freeze to death. They got no wood. I said, "Well Victor, them horses can't stand up to do no good. You have to wait till the sun come up a little bit." He says, "You not a fool me now." He talked funny. He called me Pete. I said, "No sir, I won't." So I hooked two to the wagon and tied one behind so I had three and we hauled about a half a load. We got three half loads up there and it was so cold. And his wife, she had dinner and said, "Come on in, Pete." Went in there and she had a gallon of blackberry wine sitting right over here and that table--she had corn on the cob (she'd can it and put it in jars and you couldn't tell it from right out on the field). Vegetable soup and corn bread. Everything. I wasn't going to drink but one glass. /laughter/ She said, "Come on, drink two." I says, "No, I can't Mrs. Foglia." "Oh, it won't hurt you." I eat that hot dinner and when I got home, I didn't get my horses put up. /laughter/ I made it to the house. I got them hooked but I didn't get the harness off of them. Next morning I woke up so thirsty and I took me a big drink of water. I was high again. /laughter/ I went out there and fed my horses where the air could hit me. I got kind of straightened up. That blackberry wine. I never could drink no wine much but it really set me off. She could make the best. Just everybody had a quart of blackberry wine for sickness. Kids, if they had a upset stomach, they'd pourthem a little bit in a spoon, according to how large they were. That's what she had it for. People'd come from all around to get a quart of blackberry wine. She was a real nice old lady. She raised a nice family. All those girls. Two boys and bout four or five girls. I know them all.

R.H.: What was it like here during the depression?

T.C.: Oh, it was tough. People plant gardens. Pull up the flowers and plant gardens. Just couldn't get no money. The plant wasn't running but about two potrooms and you could make two six-hour shifts this week. (That was three dollars a shift. You'd draw six or seven dollars a week.) Them that was shift foremen and made around twelve dollars a week, they wouldn't give them no work. They had to . . .People got cows, hogs and they'd raise their own meats. Had their own milk and butter. They had to. They made it pretty good. You could take a dollar then--if you could get the dollar--and could buy more stuff than you could for ten now. Ten dollars don't go nowhere much now.

/End of Interview/