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SOUTHERN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Piedmont Social History Project

Interview

with

ALICE COPELAND

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By Cliff Kuhn

Transcribed by Jean Houston

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Cliff Kuhn: I'd like to start by asking where you grew up and where your parents and grandparents came from.

Alice Copeland: Both of my parents was originally from Lee County in Alabama, and on both sides they were farmers. And I grew up on a farm, and there the main crop is cotton and corn.

C.K.: How big a farm was it?

Copeland: We had eighty acres, just a small farm.

C.K.: Were you the oldest?

Copeland: I'm the oldest in a family of six children.

C.K.: And you were born in what year?

Copeland: Nineteen-two.

C.K.: How did you meet your husband?

Copeland: He was visiting relatives in my community. I was sixteen, and he was twenty. And we corresponded more than we actually got to date, because he lived in Andalusia, Alabama, and I lived up in Tuskegee. But we married, and I was eighteen and he was twenty-two.

C.K.: What kind of work was he doing at that time?

Copeland: He worked in a packing house for Swift and Company.

C.K.: In Andalusia?

Copeland: At the time we married, he was working at a packing company in Mobile, Alabama. We went there to live, and then we went from Mobile and lived in Birmingham, and he still worked for a packing house.

C.K.: Why did you move?

Copeland: Why did he leave the packing house business? [Laughter]

When you're young. . . . They cut him, to be exact, from thirty dollars a week to twenty-five, and he didn't want to take a cut. And we went back and we farmed four years, but that's all we actually farmed during our whole married life.

C.K.: Back in Lee County?

Copeland: Back in Lee County, Alabama. And then we moved to Auburn and run a store for nine years before we moved to North Carolina.

C.K.: Had you had any experience in running a store before?

Copeland: I helped him, yes. He hadn't had any experience; I hadn't either, except clerking in a store.

C.K.: Why did you decide to run that store there yourself?

Copeland: We was farming and <sup>you've heard of</sup> ~~we incurred a~~ malarial fever that used to be prominent? There was a clubhouse near us. My husband looked after the clubhouse. <sup>caretakers for the owners of it</sup> They had this big pond, and <sup>that's when</sup> malarial fever was <sup>so bad.</sup> prevalent. We all come down. There wasn't but three of us then, my husband and I and one child. All three of us had it. So we decided we'd better get away from there and move into town. That place, through acquaintances, was being sold, and we bought it and stayed there nine years.

C.K.: When were your kids born?

Copeland: When I was twenty, 1922.

C.K.: When were the other ones born?

Copeland: 1926, four years between the first two.

C.K.: You had two children?

Copeland: No, I've got seven children. From then on, they was

right. . . . [Laughter]

C.K.: So you came up here in what year?

Copeland: 1935.

C.K.: What had you been doing in the Depression in Alabama?

Copeland: We moved direct from the store. And my husband went in. He run a store on                      Street for a while when we come here. We didn't come here to go to work in the mills. Neither one of us had had any experience. And then after you find out. . . . But we didn't know enough people. We didn't have the cash to keep us going till we did build up a *business* . So we tried it a while, and then he got a job at the mill. We moved here in '35. I didn't go to work until '37, because I had a baby that was too young. I went to work in '37 and worked on then till the time I had one more child. I have a young boy, not much older than you. My baby is forty-two. So there were seven years between                      baby .

C.K.: Why did you move up to Alamance County?

Copeland: Because we had relatives here. The Copeland that runs Copeland Mill and has made such a success of it is our uncle.

C.K.: Is that Mr. J.R. Copeland, Sr.?

Copeland: Yes, J.R. Copeland, Sr. is dead. J.R. Copeland, Jr. and Jimmy III and a <sup>Ronald</sup> ~~brother~~ are the three that are running it now.

C.K.: So your uncle was Mr. Copeland, Sr. And he corresponded with you and said what? When you were living in Alabama, what did he say about what was happening up here?

Copeland: It was my mother, not me. I was a Love, but my mother was



a Copeland. I married a distant relative.

He and my mother corresponded all the time. I have half-brothers and -sisters. My mother was married twice. They were teenagers and needed work, and he told them that he could give them work up here. So my mother and sisters and brothers moved up first.

C.K.: When did they move up?

Copeland: They moved up in '32, I think.

C.K.: Were they still farming at that time?

Copeland: No, they had moved to Auburn by that time, doing different things connected with the college. Two of my brothers worked for the college in the *dairy* department. Auburn reminds me of Chapel Hill a lot. No industry there.

C.K.: Right, it's all college.

Copeland: Just a college town.

C.K.: So the Depression had hit in Alabama, and they were laid off?

Copeland: No, I don't remember them being definitely laid off, but there was a seventeen-year-old boy, and one girl was still in high school. They just needed work. Mama was a widow the second time by then. They come for financial reasons, to find work.

C.K.: Which mill did they come to work up here?

Copeland: They all started working at the *Plaid Mill*. At that particular time, J.R. Copeland was Superintendent of the *Plaid Mill* and a mill at Swepsonville and one at Belmont.

C.K.: The Virginia mill and Swepsonville.

Copeland: Raleigh .

C.K.: So he would go to all three of those . . .

Copeland: There was other men under him, of course, but he was called the Superintendent of all .

C.K.: And you came up in '35 when your husband started working in the mill?

Copeland: No, he started to work in a store. And it was about a year before he went to work in the mill. He started to work at thirty-two and a half cents an hour with a wife and six children. [Laughter] You young folks don't know what we. . . . But of course everything was cheaper.

C.K.: That's one thing that I want to know. What were things like here during the Depression and also during .

Copeland: The mill work and the textile work, the hosiery mill and all, at one time Burlington was called the hosiery mill center of the South . And the textile work was the main work here. The officials on the mill would have rather a plant like Western Electric hadn't come in, because they had more competition. definitely be a mill textile business. And of my seven, I don't have a child that's ever worked in the mill, except only maybe during school, a parttime job. I have three boys that worked for Western Electric; two of them are still working for them.

C.K.: What were conditions like during the Depression here?

Copeland: By the time we got here in '35, it was picking up all over the country. The stock market crash was '29. And I'll say '31

and '32, along there, was the worst. And I think it had picked up more here. If you had a job during the Depression, you was all right, because the wages and the cost of living usually stays. . . . If wages go up, the cost of living comes up and so forth. But there was more jobs here. That was the difference. There was more jobs to be had here than there was where I moved from. I went to work in April of '37, and I never was out of work *much* of the time. Sometime the mills would

I was out ten months in 1942, when my last child was born. And that's when I went to Copeland's to work. He was born in May of '42, and I went back to work the next spring. My uncle, Mr. Copeland, came by. I wasn't going back to work , but they had started up this mill at Hopedale, and that was during the War years and help was scarce. And they asked me would I come down there and run the warp mills. And I said, "Well, I hadn't planned to go back to work." And I had never run machinery ; I had always just cribbed. And he said, "Well, somebody'll teach you, and you can do it." And so I went to work down there.

C.K.: What machine were you running?

Copeland: A warp mill. That makes the warp for the. . . .

C.K.: What kind of work was your husband doing at the ~~Blaid~~ Mill?

Copeland: He started off at the ~~Blaid~~ Mill, like most everybody, at service work, working on hoppers. And then he just learned different things. By the time he left the mill--he didn't leave till he had his first heart attack--he was running a tie-in machine in the weave room, one of his better paying jobs. But he learned to do a lot of different things.



C.K.: How did that happen?

Copeland: Because he had the initiative, you want to do. We were both people that always wanted to make the most money we could at whatever job we was on.

C.K.: So he wanted to learn different kinds of skills, and he was able to do that.

Copeland: He always done something besides work an eight-hour job. He said a person couldn't hardly raise a big family on a straight eight-hour job, and he went in a lot of different businesses himself. In fact, one time here we raised chickens on the side. I can't say we made any money, but we had about five hundred laying hens at one time. And then he tried a filling station business in Graham. But in his later years he did make some money building houses. In fact, he built that house next door to us. He would work in the plant eight hours, and he would hire carpenters and electricians by the contract, give them the job, and he would *see after it and work too.*

C.K.: Was that the rule?

Copeland: That's unusual, for people to do that, but we both, and I still have, at seventy-four years old, a lot of nervous energy. I stay busy, just like I keep that crocheting sitting here by me, or else I read or something.

C.K.: Were you living in the same place all these years?

Copeland: No. When we first came here, we lived on West Webb Avenue, called South Park Avenue.

C.K.: Right near the *Blaid* ~~Mill~~ itself.

Copeland: In five minutes. They used to say when [laughter]



~~Mr. H~~ me come in, they knew it was time to go to work. And then we bought that house over there. ~~The~~ Plaid Mill owned all those houses around there at one time.

C.K.: When did they start to . . .

Copeland: I don't remember what year they started to sell them off. I guess it was '38 and '9 we bought ours over there.

C.K.: For how much?

Copeland: Eleven hundred dollars. And I can't tell you exactly what we paid for it when we bought this one. I've been living here thirty-three years in March. We rented [our first house] for one year, and we decided that wasn't what we wanted to do, and we sold it for between two and three thousand dollars at that time, in '33. We didn't pay but \$5,500 for this house .

Elna : Alice, wouldn't you say they started selling those houses about forty-five years ago [1932]?

Copeland: That's my sister. She worked at the plaid mill, too. I don't remember when they started to sell them. We bought ours about '39.

C.K.: Why did they start selling them at that time?

Copeland: I imagine that they could use that money to invest in the machinery and enlarging the textile business and make more money than they could renting those houses to employees, because they rented them to them real cheap. Just a few dollars a week; they took it out of the time or something like that.

C.K.: Until that time, did most of the people who worked at the plaid mills live around that area?

Copeland: That's right.

C.K.: And then it's changed since then?

Copeland: Oh, it's changed.

C.K.: What caused the change?

Copeland: ~~The Plaid~~ Mill has closed now. There was transportation, would be one of the reasons.

C.K.: When did people who worked in the mill start to get automobiles?

Copeland: I can't tell you about the old time as much as the other people, because I didn't start in the mill until I was thirty-five years old, I reckon. But a lot of these people that I know personally started there at nine and ten years old. I have first cousins--I cannot hardly believe it--that started in the mill at nine and ten years old.

No home or not. But when we lived out in the country, which everybody knows is a hard life, we didn't think we were better, but we knew we was having it better than people that lived in the mill villages. Because we <sup>wadn't</sup> ~~wasn't~~ taken out of the school and put to work. We worked in the farm, but we did it and went to school, too. And as everybody knows, there <sup>wadn't</sup> ~~wasn't~~ ever a time that we didn't have a balanced diet, because we raised our vegetables

had our milk and butter and meat. And so I'm glad that I wasn't raised in a mill village. And I never had any idea, but when I moved to Burlington, our intention when we moved here wasn't, but when you find out you can make more money, and money is what you need when you're raising a family and wanting to send that family to school.

C.K.: Especially during the Depression. What did you feel when

you first entered the mill and moved ?

Copeland: It was hard for me to learn. It's tedious work to me, tying all those knots, and I tied knots constantly. And I thought it was hard, but they thought it was nothing; they'd been doing it all their lives. But I learned it. There never was a time that I wasn't proud of my job, because I knew that instead of my children having to stop school and go to work, that by me and their daddy both working, they could go to school. And I was proud when I worked six days a week, and I don't regret any days that I worked in the mill. But now, since my hearing has gone bad, one of the things. . . . Now they have to wear earplugs in the weave room. I worked in the weave room very little. I had a hearing aid and I didn't hear any better, and I didn't keep it; I had it on trial. And the hearing specialist said noise and quinine, which I did take when we had malarial fever, and terramycin, a drug that I took one time when I had a bad infection, [laughter] those three things both have a tendency to affect your hearing. Now they're learning all this, and they have to wear earplugs in the weave room. But I never did work in the weave room but about nine days. I didn't ever like the weave room on account of the excess noise. It was terrible. But the Preparation Department is not quiet. I talk louder than I like. I get mad at myself. And I said I worked in the mill from '37 to '64, except just that ten months out and other times when I'd get <sup>minor</sup> ~~some violent~~ illness.<sup>es</sup> And I never did like the noise, and you had to talk loud to make people you was working with hear you.

C.K.: I imagine it was especially strange when you first entered



the mill and it was so loud.

Copeland: Oh, you just felt like you couldn't stand it. You gradually get used to it.

C.K.: I guess. Were you aware at that time that the noise level could possibly affect your hearing?

Copeland: No. In fact, I don't think anybody was conscious of it, an average person, till maybe six or seven years ago. Anyway, that's the first time I started hearing about it.

C.K.: I know they do all have earplugs these days.

Copeland: That's been since I quit. I took my retirement in '64.

C.K.: Coming from the country and feeling proud of coming from the country and so forth, you didn't feel superior to the people who worked in the mills?

Copeland: No, not after I was that age on. Just growing up.

C.K.: They didn't feel any different to you because you were . . .

Copeland: There's some of them, of course, in any work you go at, anywhere you go, there's some people that you wouldn't want as a bosom friend or you wouldn't visit their house and so forth. But when you were on the job, it didn't make any difference to you; they were employees just like I was.

C.K.: So you stayed over there on South Park for how long?

Copeland: We moved out here in '42. Approximately seven years.

C.K.: Did you go into the town of Burlington very much?

Copeland: Oh, yes.

C.K.: To do what?

Copeland: I worked at two different stores up there. You won't believe how much I worked while I was a working person. . I used to work at the United Dollar Store on the corner of Webb. The Craftique Furniture Company ; in fact, that's the first job I ever had in Burlington. After we moved here in October, Easter weekend of '36 I went to work there . Some of the relatives and the older children kept the baby, and I worked on weekends. And I worked on weekends and holidays for a long time.

And then after I went to work in the mill, if we wasn't working on Saturday I used to work up there. And one Christmas Mr. Smith was Manager there, and he told me that I could work all the hours I wanted to. I'd go to work at nine o'clock-- I was working on the second shift at the ~~plaid~~ Mill--and work from nine till two and come home (and what you worked in the store wasn't really what you worked in the mill) and re-dress and go to work at three.

C.K.: Till eleven.

Copeland: Yes, we worked till eleven.

C.K.: Who took care of your kids during the time that you worked in the mill?

Copeland: When I actually went to work in the mill regular, my oldest child was thirteen years old. And the next one was ten. And my husband worked on one shift, and I worked on the other. And we never had hired a maid .

C.K.: So you were able to cover for the kids.

Copeland: With the children up that age, the oldest one thirteen and the next one ten . But I'm

proud of it now. I've got a nice family.

C.K.: Why did you want your kids never to go into the mill?

Copeland: I wanted something better for them. Each generation wants. . . . I wonder now what the next generation will want for their children, more than you-all have had. My grandchildren are having too much too young. Someday we're going to go back a little bit to the oldfashioned way of raising children, I expect. Now everybody gives a child a car by the time they're sixteen. Our children bought their first car, and they paid for it with the money they . My oldest son is a graduate of Elon , and he's Postmaster of Durham. My daughter Sarah finished high school and had one year in business college, the whole secretarial course in one year. She's been with Burlington Industries; her title now is Administrative Assistant. And my second daughter, Gerry, works for Kayser-Roth in the Accounting Department. My third daughter, Gladys, is an R.N.; she *worked graduated* *from* ~~at~~ Watts Hospital in Durham. She met her husband there, and her husband is a C.P.A. They live in Atlanta, and of course she don't work. My next son, James, had as much as eighteen months at Elon. He didn't finish. He works for Western Electric; he's been with them since '55. And he worked over here at this plant till Christmas, and now he's driving back and forth .

C.K.: When they moved . . .

Copeland: But he's too young to retire, and got too much time in to lose. And my youngest boy, Winston, went to college at Elon for about two years at night. But he went to work at Western over here when he first got out of high school and went to night classes at Elon.



He stayed with Western from '53. . . . My son Winston passed away eight years ago with a heart attack. He was thirty-four years old. And then my youngest son, the one that's thirty-five, went to State. He was in his junior year at State, and he wasn't doing anything. He was having a ball and was partying all the time. And he had to go to summer school two summers. He made all A's in math his freshman year, but he joined a fraternity party. But he's a graduate of Georgia State in Atlanta. He never did want to go to school, but he wanted to party and go to school, too. And after his daddy died in '62, we decided that he would drop out and go to work. And his last two years he went on his own. But he got his diploma from Georgia State, and he's been working with Bell Laboratories ever since, the same job. He'd worked at Bell; with what time he'd had at State, he went in at Bell Laboratories as a draftsman. And he got his degree in math. He's a math major, but his title at Bell Laboratories is Engineer now. So I say my children's all done well. Because Mama was determined they was going to have a chance [laughter], and their Daddy was, too.

C.K.: Did other families move up like that? Because that's quite a success story of your particular family.

Copeland: I'm proud of them.

C.K.: How about other families that you worked with in the mills? Did many of the children stay in the mills?

Copeland: I won't say that they had the same ambitions I had. My oldest son says I'm an education nut, and I guess I am. I didn't have

C.K.: How far did you go to school?

Copeland: I only went through the ninth grade. But I wanted to go; don't think I didn't want to go. Finances

. He can't realize that I that long.  
I went to a country school far

. You had to board in a little town to go to the county high school. Now, any child can go to school; transportation anywhere they want. And that's what makes me so mad. It's the age of opportunity.

C.K.: And a lot of people don't take advantage of those opportunities.

Copeland: I even enrolled at the Technical Institute. My daughter says I was the only person she ever knew who was a dropout before they ever started. [Laughter] I was determined to get that high school .

C.K.: Did you get it?

Copeland: That's why she calls me a dropout. I have done a good bit of travelling since I retired. And there was a tour that I was going on to California in '66. And Mr. Taylor was Principal over there, and I had enrolled. So the tour was going to leave the first day of October, and I called him and I said, "If you was me, would you start now and then be out?" The tour was going to be gone twenty-two days. And he said, "Well, I'd just wait and start the next semester." [Whispers] And I didn't start . So my daughter said, "Mama, you're the only dropout I ever knew before they started." [Laughter] But I should have.

C.K.: What do you think distinguished your family from other families? Why do you think there was this particular drive or desire to get ahead and improve?

Opeland: I just can't tell you. All I can say, this son of mine is fifty-four. He had a heart attack a little over a year ago. He's had drive all his life. I guess it's just a trait that's born in you. I don't know. He worked his last two years in high school, worked in the mill and went to high school. And Frank finished in '39. But we just had eleven grades in high school then. And we couldn't send him to State. Here's exactly what we told Frank; we didn't have the money to board. But we said, "Now if you can work parttime, and go to Mon. . . ." He didn't want to go to Mon; he wanted to go to State. He was going to major in chemistry then; he was going to be a chemical engineer. But that boy went back to school. He really had twelve years in high school, and he took three subjects. One of them was chemistry, and one of them was economics. And then in the spring of '40, he decided he wanted to go in service. He wasn't but eighteen then. He started in September before he was six in November. And I just couldn't see it. Oh, I just hated it so bad. But his daddy finally signed for him. He lacked a little of being eighteen, and he had to sign for him. And then, you know when I was glad that boy went in service, was the day of Pearl Harbor. Because if he hadn't gone in, he'd have been drafted and probably just sent wherever they wanted him, without any special training. So they told him when he went down to Raleigh to join, if he could pass the exam they had a special opening in the Financial Department at Fort Bragg. He took



that exam, and there was some college boys taking the same exam. And he passed, and he went to work in the Financial Department at Fort Bragg. And he worked in finance and personnel the whole time he was in service. He started one time to make a career of it. But he wasn't overseas for sixteen months. When they opened Camp Butner . . .

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Copeland: He stayed in the States. He didn't actually spend but sixteen months, and he was wanting to get overseas time. So after he come back from the service is when he went to Elon College. He wouldn't go to Elon when he graduated from high school; he wanted to go to State. And he graduated from Elon.

C.K.: Was he the only one of your sons who served during World War II?

Copeland: He's the one that's in Durham as Postmaster now. He's been Postmaster in Durham for eleven or twelve years. But he worked at Copeland's while he was going to Elon College, and then after he graduated at Elon, too. He was a designer down there when he went into the Post Office. But he showed his drive all of his life; he was trying to better himself.

C.K.: When did that mill open down here at Hopevale?

Copeland: Oh, I can tell you exactly. It opened up in '42. Why I know, because I connect things with the time that last baby was born, and my husband was working over there. My husband went to work over there .

C.K.: He was one of the original . . .

Copeland: My husband helped put up the machinery down there. He was working at the Virginia mills at Swepsonville, and he knew he was going down to Copeland's as a foreman. That was understood with his uncle and so forth . So he went down and helped put up the machinery, and it opened up in '42.

C.K.: So he was a foreman?

Copeland: Yes, he was a foreman down there.

C.K.: And that's where he finished, as a foreman? Why did he leave the plaid mill to go down to Swepsonville?

Copeland: A better job opening come up down there. I guess he left down there to go to running a tie-in machine, the best I remember.

C.K.: Did the mill try and recruit people that they knew were good workers?

Copeland: That was under the same management. The Kinney mill and that was under the same management. You was frozen on your job during World War II. One company couldn't hire the other's workers. You remember reading or hearing about that?

C.K.: Yes. You were working during World War II. Did you put out war-related materials like parachutes or tents?

Copeland: Yes, we made parachute material at Copeland's. We had government . You couldn't throw any of the waste away; it all had to be weighed, because . We made a lot of parachute material. I was working at Copeland's during the War years.

C.K.: Did a lot of women get new jobs during . . .

Opeland: A lot of women. Like I told you, he wanted me to go down there and run that machinery at that warp mill. And I despised to run it. I'd much rather do the other. And I never did run it, only when I had to. Yes, women did things that they had never done before.

C.K.: Like running warp machines?

Opeland: Yes. And weaving. Weaving used to be considered a man's job. Weaving and running the warp mills, because they still had men on the slashers the whole time I was there. And I didn't see any women fixing, but now, with this women's lib and women's rights, they're learning to fix in the mill and doing all that. But that's been since I've been away from it. I don't want any of that.

C.K.: Why is that?

Opeland: Because it's too heavy, is one thing. And I'd just rather have a more feminine job.

C.K.: Did women keep those jobs after the War?

Opeland: I said all the time during the War years, when those boys come home, I was going to quit. I was going to give them jobs back to the men. But I kept on, because I had children in school, and I just kept on working till [I was] sixty-two. So I didn't quit like I thought I was going to when our boys got back home. They come in gradually--they didn't all come back at one time--and the ones that I personally knew, it seemed like they found jobs. If it had been, asked me, "So-and-so needs a job. Will you give him yours," I would have.

C.K.: You would have, even though you were still  
trying to . . .



Copeland: Send my children to school. I would have. And, of course, children in a big family learn to. . . .

C.K.: What are the biggest changes that you've seen in Burlington and in the textile industry?

Copeland: People are making more money in shorter hours, and a lot of the textile business is moving out of Burlington. Why, I don't know. Right now I'm concerned about Burlington. Western is gone. My daughter's going to be out of a job the first of August, they're supposed to be moving. Then Kayser-Roth is moving their main office to Greensboro. I don't know why. I think our Chamber of Commerce really hasn't been on the job like they should have, to try to get new industry in here. Because a lot of industry is moving from the North to the South, and we should be getting more of it. But I'm not in the know-how enough to know why we are not.

C.K.: That's what everyone is telling me, that it's kind of levelled off here.

Copeland: It's levelled off. And the Rhodes Furniture Company is moving out. It's a chain of furniture stores that's been here ever since before I moved to Burlington. And it's just getting bad right now, so I really don't know why.

C.K.: What other kinds of changes have taken place in the community since you've been here, or in the textile business?

Copeland: Of course, we all know the generation gap. Young people now want something better, and they say all my generation thought about was material things. Yet if their parents and grandparents cut off the material things, this young generation would know that it's got to have material things to make the world go round. I don't know what they're

thinking about, but they want to be in a "position" instead of a job. You've got to start at the bottom and work up. out of college, you don't get in a job like you'll have five or ten years from now.

C.K.: Why do you think that is?

Copeland: I think parents, really. Parents are more to blame than the children. And I think our welfare program has been imposed on. I think everybody that's too old and disabled to work should have help, but I don't believe in supporting able-bodied people. And they say, "Oh, the government's giving it to me." They don't think deep enough to know that the government don't give you anything; somebody's paying for it. I don't believe in the welfare program as it is now.

C.K.: I have to agree.

Copeland: And I don't believe that people ought to try to get something for nothing; I just don't believe in that. I don't want anybody to keep me up. But there's a lot of people just so , they don't care where it comes from or how they get it .

C.K.: How has life changed in Burlington?

Copeland: It's changed in Burlington just like it has everywhere else. I've gone to the same church every since about '36, over there in West Burlington, helping my mother. We haven't had much integration in the church, but I know if they wanted to come in, they could, and I can't say if you're a true Christian that you could object to that, but. . . . It's just changed. The churches has changed; everything has changed. It's just a changing world.

C.K.: How has the church changed?

Copeland: [Laughter] Well, things are done in the churches now

that didn't use to be done as far as the social programs. We had this Education Director that was a Miss Sills, and she brought in all of the children anywhere around the neighborhood, and they played games and had Bible stories and all, black and white and all of them. I just can't hardly put my finger on it, but it is a change. It's probably for the best, but it's just a lot of change. And the casual dressing. You wouldn't have ever thought of anybody. . . . Of course, they haven't worn hats in years. And now if you want to go to church in a pants suit, you go. You go as you are. That's not too bad for that ; I'm not criticizing that. I'm not criticizing any of it; it's just . I would like to know how my grandchildren turn out, if they'll make good citizens. That's what I consider a good person, somebody that abides by the laws of the country and helps make the laws and is interested in the betterment of the community. And just be a good citizen.

C.K.: How have people of your generation been good citizens? How did they participate in the affairs of the community back here in Burlington? Did you participate in any . . .

Copeland: I've been a civil-minded person and I vote, but I've never been too active because I had too much else to do at home. But my oldest boy Frank and , they're active in I don't know how many different civic projects and so forth. He's one of these involved people. But I've never had time to get involved away from my family. And if I had it , my family would come first. I didn't go much back then; I go a lot now. Because when I wasn't at work, by the time my children were beginning to get



grown, I never was a parent that felt like I ought to be off when my children<sup>were</sup> dating and having friends at home. I was always home. In other words, I'm one of the old school, I reckon. [Laughter]

C.K.: There's a lot to be said for the old school. And I think that that's important, that people who are younger realize. . . .

Opeland: The standard of living--let me say this much about change in Burlington--has really improved in Burlington since 1935. Everybody has from one to three or four cars, and everybody has refrigerators, and most of them have air conditioning. And I am glad to see the standard of living raised for the working people, and it is good. If a person wants to work and have a job, he can have just about anything he wants, if he works regular and takes care of his money and don't throw it away. The standard of living has really improved.

C.K.: I'm very interested in this idea of family, because I think I agree with you that the family is very important.

Opeland: I'm glad to hear you say that. Are you married?

C.K.: No, I'm not. But I still think that the family is very important.

Opeland: When you do marry, you be good to your children and you love them, but discipline them. When you just turn them loose, you're not treating them right.

Elna didn't work there too long, but she did work at the plaid mill a short while.

C.K.: Do you still keep up with other people who worked at the plaid mill?

Copeland: Not too much.

C.K.: Do you know any?

Copeland: There's a bunch of them, yes, that still goes to H<sup>ocutt</sup> Memorial Church. Mr. Walter Williams was the Office Manager, and he was Sunday School Superintendent there for twenty-five years. And it was a saying that [laughter] if you wanted a job at the plaid mill, be sure to go to H<sup>ocutt</sup> Church. A lot of those people still go there.

C.K.: What would the names be of some people that I might be able to talk to?

Copeland: Sally Weaver, who lives on Peale Street. She worked there for years. Her husband was my foreman.

C.K.: Do you know Mrs. Ethel Shocklin<sup>ed</sup>?

Copeland: Yes, she's in Senior Citizens with me. She's a lovely lady.

C.K.: I talked with her.

Copeland: We worked in the same department and knew each other back then.

C.K.: She is a lovely person. Who else would still be around?

Copeland: Oh, I know a lot of them . Mary and Lee Robinson both leave on Peale Street right close to that Mrs. Sally Weaver. You should talk to Mr. Robinette.

C.K.: I've talked to him this afternoon.

Copeland: Mr. Robinette is really an interesting man. And he's been there forever. He's one of them that probably started there.

C.K.: When he was nine.

Copeland: When he was young. And Sally Weaver probably did, and Mary Robinson. Mary Robinson is from Danville, Virginia, but she come here from Dan River Mills when old man Jim Coulter--and all of them referred to him as old man Jim Coulter--he was at Dan River Mills before he come to Burlington. He was one of them that first was in with Spencer Love when they organized Burlington Mills. Yes, I know a lot of them was there back then.

C.K.: Who else?

Copeland: You want any more? [Laughter] Betty and Lloyd Davidson.

C.K.: Where do they live?

Copeland: I know where they live, but I can't think what street that is. Wildwood Lane, I think.

C.K.: Is that out there, too?

Copeland: It's not too far from there.

Eina : It's off of West Webb, isn't it, Alice?

Copeland: Yes. And Emma Glosson. She's on West Webb. She's older than I am. Not Betty and Lloyd Davidson, because Betty just retired last year. But Sally Weaver and the Robinsons are all older than I am, and Mrs. Glosson is older than I am.

C.K.: And you think it would be okay to talk with all those people, that they wouldn't mind.

Copeland: Each one of them will give you somebody else, so you'll get enough.

[End of interview]