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SOUTHERN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Piedmont Social History Project

Interview

with

CLYDE COOK

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Badin, North Carolina

By Rosemarie Hester

Transcribed by Jean Houston

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The Southern Historical Collection
Louis Round Wilson Library

Clyde Cook : No, I was born in Norwood.

Rosemarie Hester: When did you move to Badin?

Cook : About 1915, I believe it was.

R.H.: How old were you?

Cook : About four or five years old. I was born in 1912, and I was about four years old when my Daddy moved me here. That would have been about 1916.

R.H.: And why did they move?

Cook : It was a better living opportunity here at Badin then than there was at Norwood. It was just sort of a small farming section. And the plant was beginning to take shape here at Badin at that time, and my Daddy came here and started working here, and then he moved his family shortly into Badin.

R.H.: What did he do when he came?

Cook : I guess more or less he was sort of an attendant for Alcoa at what they called the clubhouse.

R.H.: Didn't he work for Alcoa until he retired?

Cook : Yes, he did.

R.H.: Did you go to school in Badin?

Cook : Yes.

R.H.: Do you remember the principal E. G. Harris?

Cook : I do.

R.H.: What do you remember about him?

Cook : Well, really the name [laughter] more than anything else. I really wasn't old enough at that time to know anything about what kind of administration he was actually carrying at that time. I remember

Harris mighty well, because Badin was in the. . . . I guess you'd call it the reconstruction area in the old school buildings, and it was an overcrowded town, and so he had quite a bit of problems trying to control the school along the blacks along in those days. But what type of leadership he had as a principal, I'm not able to say that. I really don't know.

R.H.: How did you feel about the school where you attended?

Cook : I felt. . . . Let me say I never was completely satisfied about the school situation. Because you know at that time there was two separate schools, a white school and a black school. And of course, as the courts know and everybody else knows, the black schools were the less fortunate schools. When I say the "less fortunate," we was cut short. I recall mighty well that I never did get new books for my class; I'd get books that they'd moved from the white school to the black school. And if the pages of the lesson were torn out, I would have to try to get it out of some other schoolmate's book. I didn't have no way to look forward to. And so I always had a resentment and had a feeling in me that has followed me all of my life, that it was unfair. Of course, at that time I didn't see the day that integration of the schools was taking place, but I still said that I was very concerned and I was in no way satisfied with the way that the school was being operated at that time, with a white school and a black school.

R.H.: Who did you feel was responsible?

Cook : [Laughter] Well, at that time the schools in Badin belonged to the Alcoa Aluminum Company. I don't know; they changed

names two or three times. They might have been Light and Power Company, or they could have been. . . . I don't recall just now. But it wasn't a county, it wasn't a state-operated school. The Alcoa hired the teachers and they paid them and they paid the school administrators and all themselves at that time.

R.H.: So you held them pretty much responsible.

Cook : Yes, I do. Well, that was just sort of general for basis for schools at that age anyway, for white and black, not only in Badin. That was practically the principle that was being laid down and followed in the other areas, that you found practically the same thing, that whatever the whites left would be in the black schools, is what they would have to use to make our .

R.H.: When did you leave school?

Cook : I completed the seventh grade in school. And back at that time in most of the black I didn't see too much further opportunities, not of going to college or anything that way. We was a poor family, had to live by cheap means. And so I started working at an early age. And called to me to leave school when , not because I wanted to--I always wanted to go farther--but it really. . . . The opportunity wasn't there.

R.H.: What was your first job?

Cook : Well, as I recall, the first job that I took, I went to work for Badin Drug Company as an errand boy, carrying out drugs, Coca-Cola's or whatnot, whatever was called in that they would want to deliver it out, because I was the errand boy to carry those things

out for Badin Drug Company. That was my first job leaving school that I took. Then I tried to go back to school and start over again, and I found out it was still difficult and too hard, too much for me, and I just gave it up then and finally decided to just go, because most of the other blacks was going, just go to laboring.

R.H.: How old were you when you had your first job as a laborer in the plant?

Cook : For Alcoa?

R.H.: Yes.

Cook : I think I was seventeen years old, and I think the age requirement was eighteen. I might have been sixteen; I don't recall. But I do remember that I set my age up about two years older than I was, and later on I went back and corrected after I passed the age limit requirement. I wasn't the eighteen limit that I was supposed to have been to go to work when I went to work.

R.H.: In some of the old Badin Bulletin's, it talks about how young men were encouraged to finish their high schooling even if they had to work in the plant, and that there were a couple of hours a week off that you would get from a plant so that you could finish your education. Do you remember that at all?

Cook : Yes, I remember. I wasn't that far along, but I had a brother that was in high school at that time. In fact, he finished high school. He was older than I was. He would leave and go to work at the plant, and some of the older before me that was in the high school, they could leave the school. If it was what they called the three-to-eleven shift, I think maybe about two or two-thirty they

could leave, time enough to go to the job and go to work.

R.H.: How did you feel about working as a laborer in the plant?

Cook : [Laughter] It was on the same pattern that the school was; it was a dissatisfaction to me in working for them as a laborer in the plant. I guess more or less that it was born in me, because I never did feel that all blacks should have been dominated by white superiority, and that's what I had to contend with. That was what the Badin at that time. You didn't see nothing. Everybody--all the superiors or overseers or whatever you wanted to call them--was white, regardless to whether they had the ability or not. If they had the color of the skin, they was able to be my superior, and that was the kind of thing that's brought about a lot of. . . . It didn't bring any hate in me toward the white people because I don't have any hate toward people because of the color of their skin, but I do have a resentment to those that enforce those kind of rules .

R.H.: How were people promoted in a plant?

Cook : Mostly by. . . . I think I was just about saying it whenever I said the color line. That was strictly. . . . You didn't get any promotion. . . . It wasn't even, for several years of which my, after the union came in; then there were some changes. We got a great number of blacks that had been able to go into the Twenty-Five-Year Club down at Alcoa. But back in the early stages they didn't allow blacks. . . . A black didn't stay long enough. . . . If he got close enough to be eligible for membership in the Twenty-Five-Year Club, they would just about find some reason to get shed of him or to take his time. They'd

say that he violated some of the rules and put him out of the plant and take his seniority and cut him back. I think maybe Tom Thomas might have been the first black that went into the Twenty-Five Year Club, and I think maybe he might have went in up in the forties.

I think the first was somewhere in that period.

R.H.: Were you laid off during the Depression?

Cook : Yes, I was for a short period. fortunate enough that. . . . I don't know whether you would call it luck or what you would call it. It wasn't exactly luck, but. . . . There 's a white family, and the gentleman is still living today, Mr. Floyd Culp. He was what we called at that time the walking boss over the construction department. And me being the youngest coming along, he taken an interest in me, and he let me work and kept me working during most of the Depression. I'd work fifty hours of the week for ten dollars. I worked sixty hours of the week for twelve dollars That's work ten hours a day and work on Saturday, when we'd make sixty hours. And I had my mother; I had two sisters and my three brothers, was all at home with nothing to do, and I worked and supported them and kept them going out of ten and twelve dollars a week. And I can recall mighty well Mr. Fickes , who was superintendent of the construction department. We had to live so close till. . . . I would need to buy my sister maybe a pair of shoes. My mother would say that they needed shoes or she needed a dollar and a half or two dollars to buy them dresses. Well, I couldn't get that far ahead, and I'd go to his home at night, and Mrs. Fickes would meet me at the door, and she'd say, "Walter, it's Clyde." "Well, tell him to come on in."

And so he was a Yankee, and he'd go to bed at sundown. And so whenever I'd go in, sometime he wouldn't wait. He'd say, "Clyde, sir, what's the matter? You need money? Them girls need some shoes or something?" I'd say, "Yes, Mr. Fickes, I do. I need some money. I need to get them a few things, and I don't have the money." He said, "Would you want five dollars?" Five dollars was a good bit of money then. I told him, "Yes, let me have five dollars." And he'd tell me, "Well, now, don't you try to pay it all back at one time. You just pay a little bit of it back at a time. Don't try to pay five dollars back." And I really wasn't able, out of ten dollars a week, and you could figure it. If you ate, and what I was doing was keeping my sisters in school, and both of them graduated from high school.

R.H.: Who was Mr. Fickes? Was he a superintendent?

Cook : Yes, he was the superintendent of the construction department.

R.H.: Did Annie Mae Hampton ever work for Mr. Fickes?

Cook : I can't recall. Now I won't dispute that. But back in the early days, Lela Kendall lived in what they called the garage. When you'd say the garage, the cars came in underneath, and she lived above. She lived in what we called Fisher's Garage and worked for him through that early age. I don't remember Hampton working. Now I don't dispute that, but I don't recall it.

R.H.: What was Mr. Copps like, S.A. Copps?

Cook : Mr. S. A. Copps in his time, I guess he fitted in, but I

come back to say again that I saw the unfairness toward the black that his administration was carrying, and regardless what the circumstances might have been, the black was always in wrong if they had to go before him, for him to make a decision who was right and who was wrong. Every time it would be the black man would be wrong, and he'd probably wind up firing the black man and keeping the white man. And Mr. Copps was a Georgian by birth. And it was much different in the Georgia white man of that day and Mr. Carter that we've got in the White House up there now. A negro would have just about fled the United States if possible, if he could have got out, if it could have happened back in the twenties and thirties that a Georgia white man was going to be President of the United States. Because it was just about a general feeling among all blacks; it was a resentment, it was a hate, serving a Georgia white man that felt that a black man should still be under slavery, that he wanted to hold him to that degree to a certain extent as long as he could.

R.H.: Who first started calling West Badin "The Quarters"?

Cook: Really, I don't know. Now maybe it's kind of reversed; it was called "The Quarters" before it was ever called West Badin, and why and how it inherited that name as "The Quarters", I really couldn't yield the correct answer, not at this time. Probably I have known, but I can't think right now.

R.H.: Wasn't that like a throwback to slavery, just the label "The Quarters"?

Cook: I don't think so. . . . I think that inherited its name along at the beginning of the building of Badin, whenever they had

all blacks housed over--and they still do [laughter]--on that side of town and in that area, and they more or less called that the black quarters over there. And they had what they called shack rousters then. Instead of calling them cops, as you know of them now up and down the street, they had shack rousters that would go around, and his job was to run the laborers out and force them to go to work in the afternoon or whatever time of day. If he really didn't want to go, they'd try to force and see that he did go. And they would usually use the term that they was over in the "nigger quarters." So I don't believe there's any connection between slavery and its getting named that.

R.H.: When did things start to improve during the thirties? A lot of people were laid off during the middle part of the thirties, and then when did things start to pick up again at Alcoa?

Cook : I'm not much of keeping a record in mind of what year. But let me say this [laughter]: I remember mighty good if you want to know the change of Presidential administration, the change that taken place. I won't ever forget it. I was a youngster, working hard, as I've told you, ten and twelve hours a week [sic]. And Election Day came up, and there was only three construction workers working for Alcoa in the construction department at that time, and I was one of them. And we was working on the railroad out there, another black by the name of Will Sturdemire, John Biggs, and myself, the three of us. Mr. Culp , the walker boss, came out that day and said to us, . . . Mr. Herbert Hoover was President of the United States, and that was Election Day, and he said, "You boys

better pray that Mr. Hoover be reelected the President. If Roosevelt's elected, the company will close this plant down." And I never will forget it. I stopped. I was driving spikes, and I stopped and set my hammer down. And I stood up and I told him, "Mr. Culp, there's one thing I wants to say, and I'm going to say it. I don't care if they'd close the plant down and throw the damn key in the lake down yonder. I pray God that Herbert Hoover won't be reelected the President of the United States." He looked at me, and he said, "You ain't got good sense, and you ain't never had." And I said, "I never will have if I have to pray for Herbert Hoover to be a President for another term." And he turned around and walked off from . And Herbert Hoover lost to Franklin D. Roosevelt. And as soon as Roosevelt got in office, the wheel of industry started turning. They started the calling in and putting more people back to work and started raising the wages. I believe that's when N.R.A. Johnson brought in the forty-hour work week. And they started making some changes in the working man's position under the early stages of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

R.H.: Do you remember when the union was first organized?

Cook : Yes.

R.H.: Did you help in the organization of the union?

Cook : I joined the union in its early stages, when it was just beginning. You were supposed to hide; the company had Chief Melton, and the policemen would sit around and keep a tab on who were going to union meetings. And blacks was afraid to be seen going to the union hall and those kind of things, was afraid to let

it be known that they was members. And I remember mighty well; I was janitoring at that time at what they called the wash house down there. That's the entrance where they'd change clothes and go in to work at. Whenever it was before the employees to vote on whether they would be represented by a union or not. And Chief Melton for Alcoa came in and said to another old black that was working there as I was, Eli Matthew, and said to myself, "You people are in a position to talk to these colored people whenever they come in. And the company has taken care of you down through the years. You know you can depend on the company. Now if you want to vote and let certain people, this Robert Kearns and them kind of people, run your business, it's up to you. The best thing you can do is to try to advise all the black people to go vote against that union." And I listened to him make the statement, and I went right the opposite direction. Every black that came in that consulted and some that didn't, if I felt that it wasn't a direct contact back to the office, what I was doing or what I was saying, I was using my influence for them to vote for the union for better working conditions and better opportunities for blacks.

R.H.: What type of impact did it have?

Cook : In the terms of influencing blacks? Well, the union won. They won and have, but of course they was weak for a good many years. But the union won out, that the employees would be represented by the AFL-CIO.

R.H.: What kind of impact did it have for blacks, though? Did they have greater opportunities in the plant?

Cook : In some respect, in the wages, but they had a division line, a color line that was well understood between the company and between the union, certain lines that they held for white, and certain they held for blacks. At that time there weren't even any blacks could go in for crane operators or truck operators or nothing of that kind. That came in way years later, that blacks began to gradually improve.

R.H. : Were there separate washrooms?

Cook : They did have, one side for the white and one for the black.

R.H. : When did that change?

Cook : I don't recall what year, but that's been since the Supreme Court has handed down the rules that separate is not equal, and they had to make a change in it, started gradually adding a few blacks in . . .

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

R.H. : Have you ever filed a grievance with the union?

Cook : No, I haven't. Not with the union, no. In fact, the most of my work after then with Alcoa was, I did a lot of janitor work. And we was eliminated from the common being members of the union. In some of the work I did I wasn't eligible for membership.

R.H. : Janitors are not eligible for . . .

Cook : Well, at that time, in some cases if you had contact with the office and all, the work around the office and all, you couldn't

be a member of the union.

R.H.: Did you fight in World War II?

Cook : No, I didn't go. I went and was examined, but I was exempted. I did not go.

R.H.: Do you remember that during the 1950s there was a person running for head of the union who campaigned on a promise that if the blacks voted for him, he would see that there'd be more equal opportunity in the labor union?

Cook : Do you recall the name?

R.H.: I don't know his name.

Cook : I think maybe I do. I think more or less. It seems like to me that that Carl Lee Drye was president along in the fifties, and that most possibly could have been his promise, that there would have been better opportunities.

R.H.: Were there?

Cook : In some respects yes, and some no, because they still followed the color line. And let me say this: at that time I had left Alcoa and was a journeyman bricklayer. And I tried during that time at Peerage whenever I knew that they was wanting bricklayers--and I lived here in a couple miles of the plant down there--and they never would give me a job as a bricklayer down there. In fact, they gave no blacks a bricklayer job. They gave it all to whites.

R.H.: Where did you live during these years?

Cook.: Well, mostly right around in this area. My wife said that we've been living right in this section about forty years or a little more. So I've been generally. . . . For about twenty-some

years when I was following the brick trade, I was in and out. I worked away from home a lot, so I had to go away from home to get work to do. It was sort of hard. After you left Alcoa, there wasn't too many places in Stanly County and other areas that they would mix the races, white and black bricklayers work together.

R.H.: Why did you leave Alcoa?

Cook : I got laid off. And rather than to go back and start back as a common laborer where I had started at, I thought that I had some better potentials good enough that I could do something else, that I started taking brick. . . . Back in the early days when Alcoa had the schools, that was the kind of training they was giving, was black bricklayer training and giving white maybe carpentry or some other kind of training over on the white side. I didn't have enough training from the Alcoa school to qualify as a bricklayer, but I decided I wanted to go back and get started again, and I did do it.

R.H.: And what year did you go back to Alcoa?

Cook : I don't recall. I came way on. I followed bricklaying, and after I couldn't get on for a bricklayer's job, then I went back down there and started back at doing some janitor work back for them again.

R.H.: After people were laid off, if they were rehired did they start at the same level that they left at, or did they go down to lower levels and then have to go up again?

Cook : They'd hire them back according to the seniority. The older ones would get called back first. That was supposed to have been the rule. There was a right smart of complaining that they were

manipulating the records and all in order to call back whites whenever blacks was eligible to go back. I've heard that complaint from the union side of it.

R.H.: Did you participate in any community activities or political activities in Badin?

Cook : You mean in my early days, now, or when?

R.H.: In your early days or all through your life.

Cook : Yes. I was active in AME Zion Methodist Church. I was a very active member in the church. I was Master of the Masonic Lodge in Badin for a good many years. And I have been a member of the Badin Civic League. And unfortunate. . . .For the less fortunate black people in Stanly County, I am supposed to represent them as being the President of the NAACP in Stanly County now.

R.H.: When did you start that?

Cook : As President, this is my second year.

R.H.: How many people in Badin belong to the NAACP?

Cook : I really don't know. We have a membership committee, and the secretary has. . . . We don't have a large attendance unless it's some special event to bring them out. And really I'm not able to tell you right now how many members in Badin, but we cover the whole Stanly County; we don't cover Badin. And we're always reinstating and some dropping out and new members coming in, and right now I haven't had the record and don't know just what is the total. But we have a right good membership in the NAACP.

R.H.: Do you know how old the NAACP is in Stanly County?

Cook : Not the exact date, but I recall that I was carrying

an NAACP card back in the thirties. It was the latter part of the thirties or early forties, I was carrying an NAACP card. I was a member.

R.H.: Have you been active since the thirties?

Cook : Yes. I don't recall. It could have been . . . in the forties when I became active in the NAACP. It's so long that I kept no record of it, and there wasn't any record kept locally much at that time. But I haven't been out; I've been a member ever since.

R.H.: What sorts of things does the organization do now?

Cook : [Laughter] Well, one of the most bothersome things that we have to complain about right now is job opportunities for blacks. I hate to make that statement, but Stanly County is just about at the bottom of the list whenever it comes to job opportunities for our young black people. And for that reason, I spoke a few times in my meeting with the mayor And the county officials. . . . I think about the days of Roots, Alex Haley's novel, whenever they were separating families by selling the daughters off and all, they don't sell them all off now and they don't have the whipping pole. But they had a way of separating them at the economic level. If a black child goes and gets a college education, if he wants to get a job comparable to his education, the most of them has got to leave Stanly County and go in other areas. Most of our better young material now is in the northern states, where they could get better job opportunities. And it makes it mighty difficult for me now if I'm called on to produce a qualified young black to take a better position right now; it's hard to find one, because they done drained

them out. And some got discouraged, didn't want to leave home, and dropped out of college and out of school, and just taken common jobs and went to work here to start with. I don't know how long you have been in this area and how much you will visit around throughout the county, but it's not any problem for you to see the thing that I'm talking about. And the thing that's grieving me is, when you walk into banks in Stanly County you find no blacks. I think maybe the Cabarrus Bank has started by bringing on the token one or two blacks in the teller department. You go into the big chain stores that's operating in Charlotte and Greensboro, whatever city you go in, you go there and you'll find that they're well represented with both black and white, and there's a good relation. You come here to Albemarle, and you walk in those same stores and you can't find a black in there nowhere. Well, that's disturbing to me. I'm personally dissatisfied with it. And my people are dissatisfied with it. Now I have done met with the city management; I've done met with the county management in good faith, hoping to resolve, and they promised me that they would work towards improving the situation. But seemingly, they have forgotten about it. Don't nobody need to tell me, and don't nobody need to tell my people, that we can get federal assistance; we can file complaints and we can file suits against these kind of things that's going on, because they're long past due. And I'm not the person to threaten any, and I hope it's not going as a threat. But I'm certainly looking forward, before my administration comes to an end, of making some changes in Stanly County.

R.H.: Where is the NAACP office in Stanly County? Is there one?

Cook : No. The only thing we have is a meeting place that we meets. It's a city building, the Amherst Garden Recreation Center in Albemarle on the second Tuesday night of each month.

R.H. : Do you know anything about the poll tax that they had in Stanly County?

Cook : No, not too much. That's coming in sort of under the political system, and really I'm not too much of a politician that I feel that I'm in the position that I could just give you the actual facts about what is the consequence about the poll tax in Stanly County.

R.H. : Were you happy to see the schools integrated?

Cook : Yes, I certainly was. If I may emphasize, because I knew that was a better opportunity for the young blacks for a better education. And then there was a certain other thing I knew, that it should be some help towards closing the gulf of division between the races. It wasn't going to happen. . . . It couldn't put me and the whites that came along whenever I did. . . . I lived in sight of the white school, and I couldn't even go by there on the way going to school; I had to go a back way and walk two or three miles to a black school. They didn't want us to even come by, for fear that there would be trouble. Well, these blacks my age, they couldn't put us in school together, but they could take these youngsters and start training them that all people are created equal, down at that level, and you won't have no problems. One of the things that was most touching to me was, and I was a little bit afraid . . . [Interruption]

Cook : I was afraid that it was going to bring about a resentment whenever Alex Haley's novel came out of what happened in the Roots, that it was going to stir up animosity and create a division wherein that we were going to have somewhat of the same thing that we had when Dr. King was assassinated. Riots and hatred. But it didn't develop that way. Why? I noticed when Alex Haley visited some areas, he was covered by young whites that admired him. They didn't stand back and hate him, and that was touching to me to see that they had respect for Haley and his novel, where a majority of the blacks [sic] back in my age would have been saying, "They ought to kill the so-and-so." That was taught in them back in separate institutions. But now, since they're in the same institution and going to the schools together, they are not taught that kind of thing, at least that we find it out. Or I think if the administrator found out that they are not there too long before they are gone, because they've got to be able to get along with each other. There ain't going to be no division in these children that grows up down here together. They love Alex Haley and over-crowded him, just forgot about what color he was, and that was very touching to me to see it that way, and that's the way I think it ought to be. I don't see people by the color of their skin; I see them for what they are and who they are as individuals. If he's a white individual, well, I think just as much of him. . . . If he's the right-principled individual, I'll protect him with all of my life, just as quick as I will the black, more so than I will one with the blackest that hasn't got any of the principles that I think that I'd like to see my black

people have. And we've got them both white and black. We can look in the papers and on the news and see the crimes that are being committed, that I'm not proud of and you are not proud of. But I don't see them as black and white; I see them as individuals that I just don't appreciate.

R.H.: Blacks were not allowed in the white section of Badin when you were growing up?

Cook : I wouldn't say that they wasn't allowed. It was limited a lot. You could come over and shop most of your dry goods stores. They had a good many stores when Badin was what they called "in its bloom" then. You could come over. And the post office was in Badin and all. But no blacks could live on the white side, and they still don't. And then, at a certain time after dark, there were Badin cops and they had a good many of them around on the streets, prowling around and watching then. If they saw any black youngsters in the white area, they wanted to know, "What's your business? You'd better get back over on the black side." And if they saw any white over on the black side, "You ain't got no business over here among these niggers at night. You'd better go on back over town." Those kind of things were what they used to tell you.

R.H.: How do you feel about the condition that the school in West Badin is in now? The building's not used any more, and it's vacant, and it's sort of falling apart.

Cook : Yes. Well, unfortunate for Badin, whenever they quit using it for a school, it had served its purpose then. There was nothing else they. . . . Some foreign organization--when I say "foreign,"

from out of the northern states--came in and bought it and was going to make some big thing out of it. But the community is not large enough to support that kind of thing over there. We've got a small community. What's happened to Badin over the years, there used to be a time everybody that worked for Badin practically lived in the Badin area; now I think, if you would check it out, you've got as many or more people coming and going that's migrating in here and coming from, oh, some down the edge of South Carolina in and going back every day that don't come here. And for that cause, all business has gone bad. We've got no business, no dry goods stores in Badin; nothing, practically, pays off. The days that I spoke about I was an errand boy for the drugstore, they had one of the finest theaters sitting there where the post office is at now. And whenever that theater would turn out on Saturday night. . . . The Badin drugstore is the old building that's sitting right over to the right. Well, if you're coming this way, it's to the left of the post office over there from what used to be Dr. Lassiter's office there. And it would be so crowded, the streets around there at night, I'd always have to stay there till about ten o'clock on Saturday night and do whatever they needed me to do around the drugstore. And the whole town was just flourishing. The same thing was on the black side over there. Everybody . But after they started letting people come in from far and near and work and migrate back and forward, well, then business started slumping. Eventually, I think they paid somebody to tear down one of the nicest recreation buildings, I had heard it was called between maybe Washington and Atlanta at one

time, was the Badin Theater. It was a fine building. It had to be torn down.

R.H.: Do you know any of the blacks who were originally recruited from South Carolina, from Georgia towns, to work in the plant in its very, very early years? Do you know if any of them are still here?

Cook : The most of them is dead. They used to have a recruiting station down in Florida, in Georgia, in Mississippi, around in that area, back in the early stages. They brought them in in what they called "transportations." They transferred them here. And they had to live here. They had several boarding houses on the white side and black side for those people that they didn't have families to live

. And in some cases on the black side, two families had to share the same little small apartment, a little building, to live over there. But now they've tore down more of Badin than they got left over there, and so that's not the case anymore. And so I really. . . . There is two blacks that I can point out that came in here in the recruiting days. One of our old blacks by the name of Herbert Curtis up there, he was recruited out of Georgia or Florida area and brought in here back in the teens or early twenties. T.L. Smith, one of our oldest citizens, he was recruited and brought into this area, too. I think that's correct. I can't recall; the most of them is done dead now.

R.H.: Is there anything else you would like to say?

Cook : I don't know of anything. Maybe I've done already talked too much as it is.

R.H.: No.

Cook : And so I think maybe that I've been bothersome or worrisome enough to you. Really, what I've said, I don't feel like it's worth your time to come out here.

R.H.: Well, I don't feel that way at all.

[End of interview]