

December 17, 2007

Interview with Virginia Franklin

By Isabelle Chewing

[Items enclosed in brackets [] are not on the tape, but are inserted for editorial clarification.]

Isabelle Chewing: Today is December 17, and I'm in Washington D.C. with Virginia Bell Franklin. Please tell me your name.

Virginia Franklin: Virginia Bell Franklin.

Isabelle Chewing: And you lived in Brownsburg for a while?

Virginia Franklin: Well, that's the only home that I ever knew.

Isabelle Chewing: Well, Miss Franklin, will you tell me when you were born?

Virginia Franklin: It was 8/13/20, eighth month, thirteenth day.

Isabelle Chewing: in 1920. Were you born in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Well, we lived a little distance from Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewing: Where did you live?

Virginia Franklin: We lived on a farm. The family I used to -- they had a big home, and their names were Wade. And they all passed now.

Isabelle Chewing: And was it that big farm out near New Providence Church [Castle Carbury at 34 Beard Road]?

Virginia Franklin: Yes. Yeah, the Wade family. I used to work for them, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: What were your parents' names?

Virginia Franklin: My father's -- my mother's name was Esterline Haliburton. She was a Haliburton before she was [married]- your family remembers that, Haliburton.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, I remember "Dude" [William] Haliburton.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they all lived down there close.

Isabelle Chewning: Dude and Maggie [Haliburton], I remember.

Virginia Franklin: Yes, right, mm-mm.

Isabelle Chewning: Was your mother related to them?

Virginia Franklin: Yes. Yes, that was her brother. Dude was her brother, yeah. She had a lot of brothers, yeah. And my father had a large family.

Isabelle Chewning: And what was his name?

Virginia Franklin: Zack, Z-a-c-k, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And where was his family from?

Virginia Franklin: You know, I don't know that. When we grew up, we just knew they were just a distance from us.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you ever know your grandparents?

Virginia Franklin: Oh, yes. My grandmother, I'll have to show you a picture of her. I got a picture of my grandmother. I don't have a picture of my grandfather. I know he was a -- they lived

-- after we grew up, you know, to get around and we used to go over and sit, and take care of her, and look after her.

Isabelle Chewning: Was this your mother's parents?

Virginia Franklin: This was the grandmother.

Isabelle Chewning: Your mother's mother?

Virginia Franklin: My father's mother. Our mother died when we were young. [According to the Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society's Rockbridge County Cemeteries, Esterline Franklin died April 1, 1932.] And we didn't get to know her too well. We were -- I wasn't raised by a mother. My father raised us.

Isabelle Chewning: How old were you when she died?

Virginia Franklin: I figured I was about seven, yeah. And of course, my younger sister, [Eleanor Franklin Hawkins] she don't remember her at all too much.

Isabelle Chewning: How many children were there in your family?

Virginia Franklin: There was 10 of us. I had five brothers. They all gone now, and five sisters too.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, what were your brothers' names?

Virginia Franklin: Henry was the oldest.

Isabelle Chewning: What was his name?

Virginia Franklin: Henry. My oldest sister that was next to Henry was Mary, yeah, Mary Ann. And my other sister was Katherine. And George was a boy next to Henry. No, next to -- I know I had another brother, Mack. Golly, one got -- Mack. And then I had another brother. He was in the Navy, Edward. Is that all of them? Well, we have -- the last brother that passed is Daniel. Daniel Franklin, he was our younger brother. And I think that's all.

Isabelle Chewning: And then you have one...

Virginia Franklin: I have another sister, Margaret. She passed some time -- many years back.

Isabelle Chewning: And what's your sister's name who lives in Takoma Park?

Virginia Franklin: Eleanor.

Isabelle Chewning: Eleanor.

Virginia Franklin: Eleanor Hawkins. She has, let's see here, one, two, three -- three boys and a girl.

Isabelle Chewning: Do they all still live around here?

Virginia Franklin: They live in Maryland, most of them.

Isabelle Chewning: Do you see them very often?

Virginia Franklin: Oh, yes. I have big dinners. I'm going to have a big dinner, Christmas.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, you're going to have people here for Christmas?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I told them to come over and I'd do the cooking.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, what are you going to cook?

Virginia Franklin: Well, the other day when we were here, Saturday -- my grandson lives with a family of people and he's been living there quite a while. They just fell in love with him. And they brought us food, four or five boxes of food. I got a turkey now I got to cook because I'm scared that it'll go bad. And I put that in the freezer. And I saw the family. We have a cousin. I went to see him yesterday. He's in the hospital. I told him I didn't know whether you'd have time enough, maybe I could bring you by to say hello. But he's at the hospital. You've probably been there, haven't you?

Isabelle Chewing: Which hospital?

Virginia Franklin: Washington Hospital Center. It'd be on Irving Street, Michigan Avenue. I was over the other day and took him some food, but he couldn't eat it. He wanted me to bring him some food. So there's some of our pictures on the wall there now. There's my sister's boys there.

Isabelle Chewing: Oh, is it? I see all three of them there. And is that her daughter up above?

Virginia Franklin: No, that's her granddaughter.

Isabelle Chewing: Ah.. she's so pretty.

Virginia Franklin: There's my brother [Daniel Franklin] and his wife right in the middle there.

Isabelle Chewing: Who's that on the top?

Virginia Franklin: That's him too.

Isabelle Chewing: Which brother was that?

Virginia Franklin: That's Daniel, the last one. That's my cousin there. He's in the hospital.

Isabelle Chewing: And so you grew up out there on that big farm?

Virginia Franklin: Yes.

Isabelle Chewing: And who raised you? Did your older sisters help take care of the younger ones?

Virginia Franklin: Yes, they did for the younger ones. My oldest sister, she was good and she was -- she used to -- she and I used to stay around together, yeah. And...

Isabelle Chewing: Which one was that?

Virginia Franklin: My oldest sister, Mary. And we had our own -- we didn't have any refrigerator. We had a spring. We'd take our food there and -- like butter and stuff like that. And then we'd have to go down and pick it up for lunch, and then we had to take back. We'd walk about a mile maybe.

Isabelle Chewning: Where was the spring?

Virginia Franklin: Down the hill was a little branch, and the water was running fresh all the time, you know. Then we'd go down there in between the -- we did lunch 'cause we only had -- and then later, we got one of those ice -- a refrigerator you had to put ice in it. And we got one of them, which I've been trying to get. I've been going to all these places. I haven't found one. [Laugh] It'd be cheaper! And we -- I'm the one at the house -- after my oldest sister died, I had so much more to do. I had to do the cooking and the cleaning. And we didn't have a washing machine or anything. You know, we had a board, a washboard. I got it in there now. My youngest sister, she -- Eleanor, she used to ride -- catch the school bus that'd come and pick her up. And it went to -- she went to Lexington. She did real good. And I'm real proud of her because she tells me a lot of stuff that I didn't get to learn. I went to school. We went to school but I didn't get to go every day. And...

Isabelle Chewning: How did you get to school?

Virginia Franklin: We walked. We had about a two and a half, three hours [miles] to walk. And when the weather was slick or something, we'd slide down the hill on our bags [laughs]. I tell the kids that all the time. That's my picture over here when I was -- I was sitting [Miss Franklin stands up and crosses the room; audio is inaudible] and a fella...

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, what a pretty picture. How old were you in this picture?

Virginia Franklin: I was very young, I don't know. My daughter -- I have a daughter. She scratched all of that when she was young [indicates scratches on the photograph].

Isabelle Chewning: That is such a pretty picture. Where did you get that picture taken, do you remember?

Virginia Franklin: I sent a small one out to some company.

Isabelle Chewning: When you were -- when it was taken originally?

Virginia Franklin: Yes.

Isabelle Chewning: Who took it? Was it...

Virginia Franklin: I mailed it.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it taken at your school when you were young?

Virginia Franklin: No, it was at home. And I -- and they sent that back and I made a lot of them off for her, my picture, and sent it to different ones.

Isabelle Chewning: That's a good picture. So do you remember your mother very much at all?

Virginia Franklin: Not -- I might remember a little bit, not that much. I know she stayed sick a lot.

Isabelle Chewning: What did she die of?

Virginia Franklin: Well, you know, they told me she died from bad teeth, but she had so many babies, you know, it was hard with them. But that's what they told me. I don't know. She had a lot of brothers, and her brothers used to come out and sit and eat breakfast. We'd have big breakfasts, you know, oatmeal...

Isabelle Chewning: A big pot?

Virginia Franklin: And what else we -- fried food. We had to cook lunch 'cause our father had people working for him all the time. We had to have big lunches. We had one huge, big table. Everybody sit at the table, the oldest one first, and then the next, and the next [laughs].

Isabelle Chewning: So you were kind of at the end of the table since you were one of the younger ones, right?

Virginia Franklin: Yes, right, yeah-huh. And my cousin, he was there too, the one I was telling you about right there. And he used to sit -- he used to stay over there all the time. And you know when...

Isabelle Chewning: What's his name?

Virginia Franklin: Russell.

Isabelle Chewning: Russell Franklin?

Virginia Franklin: Mm-mm. I had a son and he was -- we didn't have a bathtub. You know, it was one of those tin tubs. And he was getting ready -- I was getting ready to give him a bath and he was running, running and he fell in the hot water and his skin rolled off his leg and one of his hands. But the doctor -- we took him to the hospital. My father took us. He had a car. When he got his new car, he got that car, we some happy because he was -- we didn't have any transportation. We had to walk everywhere. I'm a- I've been a walker. I'm a walker now.

Isabelle Chewning: You look like you're in good shape.

Virginia Franklin: I feel great. And I did a lot of walking. I used to work for a man, Mr. Greeson, he passed, in Georgetown. I walked day -- I walked over and then walked back.

Isabelle Chewning: From here to Georgetown?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, my goodness. You are a walker.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I'm a walker. I -- that's keeping me alive [laughs].

Isabelle Chewning: [Laugh] That's a good recommendation for walking then 'cause you look great.

Virginia Franklin: Some woman asked me, "What'd you do?" I said, "I walk." That's your medicine.

Isabelle Chewning: That's good medicine, I think.

Virginia Franklin: It is, wonderful medicine.

Isabelle Chewning: And you said your sister, Mary, died and then you had to help with the cooking and cleaning.

Virginia Franklin: I had to do more help, yeah. You see...

Isabelle Chewning: Was she pretty young?

Virginia Franklin: No, her -- the younger one died. Katherine, she died before. And we had a brother, he died. He'd never be -- Mamma, we used to tell her when we were -- I remember we used to tell our older sister, ya'll used to petting him up so, and he'd stay in bed. He never did work much, but he was a great -- he used to go shopping and get all us gifts for Christmas.

Isabelle Chewning: Which one was that?

Virginia Franklin: Mack, yeah. And he was more of a family man, but he didn't help me much around the house. And mostly it was just me around the house. And see, I had Mary- my older sister- when she was living- yeah. She died in '88.

Isabelle Chewning: Which one was that?

Virginia Franklin: My oldest sister, Mary. We had deaths now from, let me see -- my sister, Eleanor. She's the youngest. She lost her son. He was the first, '81. And my sister, Margaret was '82, my brother, George, was '83. So we had death just one after another. But we got along all right, but it was something. And I still had a lot to do [laughs].

Isabelle Chewning: So you did a lot of the cooking and cleaning in the house?

Virginia Franklin: Right, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And this is still house out at -- on the Wade's farm? [According to Eleanor Franklin Hawkins, the house on the Castle Carbury property burned, and the family later moved to 3569 Brownsburg Turnpike which was a house on the Martin farm.]

Virginia Franklin: Yes, uh-huh. It's still up there.

Isabelle Chewning: And then tell me about going to school. Was Miss Peters your teacher?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, Miss Carrie Peters, yeah. And I used to -- I'd tell the kids how they'd -- and I had a cousin, and him and I used to eat peanut butter in the school. We'd bring our own spoon. I'd bring the peanut butter. They'd say, "How'd you get it?" And I'd say, "Well, it's just one teaching."

Isabelle Chewing: She couldn't watch everybody.

Virginia Franklin: No. She didn't get after us. I wasn't no bad person -- student anyway, but I did eat the peanut butter. [Laugh] I don't eat peanut butter too much now anyway.

Isabelle Chewing: I don't eat much peanut butter either.

Virginia Franklin: No, I try not to eat too much now anyway.

Isabelle Chewing: So you would walk to school?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, we'd walk to school.

Isabelle Chewing: And then would you stay all day?

Virginia Franklin: All day. But if the weather was rough, he'd come by and pick us up.

Isabelle Chewing: Who would?

Virginia Franklin: Our father. He'd come -- we'd catch him home.

Isabelle Chewing: And what was -- was he driving a car?

Virginia Franklin: No, he was in his wagon. Had to unload it to his -- to different ones. I don't know what he got a price for it. I don't know what it was then. He wasn't getting much.

Isabelle Chewing: And he worked on the farm? Was that his...

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he worked on the farm. I used to help him out a lot, and he'd say, "I don't want you to help me because -- You don't have to." But I used to help him. We'd blade the cane. We'd raise cane for molasses and stuff like that. And we'd make great big kettles of apple butter and peel the apples. Oh, we was just busy all the time! I told him I done worked my time, but still I just keep- [laughs]. We'd have to peel apples but they were free -- everybody would help to peel apples when they was going to make apple butter. If this family was going to [make apple butter], we'd go up to their house and peel apples for them 'cause they were going to make apple butter. And then our father used to butcher hogs [in] about weather like this [the day of the interview was cold and blustery]. And he'd hang them up and let them freeze, you know. And then we didn't have to buy no food much, because he butchered beef and we had -- he butchered -- we had lamb. He butchered the sheep, you know, and hang them up, and make lamb chops. And he'd send the beef out for people to fix it up for him. For big steaks. And so we didn't have to buy really anything but flour.

Isabelle Chewning: You had a big garden?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you work in the garden a lot?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I worked in the garden. It got -- we used to save our greens. We'd cover them up with hay, too, and be able to eat them during the winter.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, so they would stay alive all winter.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. We'd keep them good and warm. But I used to help him. I'd help him a lot. We'd raise everything, watermelon.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, you did?

Virginia Franklin: Mm-mm.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have chickens and eggs?

Virginia Franklin: Yes. Oh, my goodness, we had chickens. I used to go out and get the chickens. I'd tell them now -- we wouldn't have anything for dinner, so I'd go out and get us a chicken and pop!

Isabelle Chewning: And cut its head off?

<laughter>

Virginia Franklin: But we had chickens, yes. And then we had cats, dogs, yeah. And so I used to -- when I -- we left the farm after he [Miss Franklin's father, Zack Franklin] had passed. We lived in a house along the highway [3569 Brownsburg Turnpike]. It belonged to -- let's see, what was their name, Mrs.-- what was that woman's name? She has one son living. We see him when we go down to homecoming at Brownsburg church. His name is Martin. What is his name?

Isabelle Chewning: Is his name Bud Martin?

Virginia Franklin: Bud Martin. Bud Martin. Yeah, Bud Martin. He's the only one living. So we lived in that house on the highway a long time.

Isabelle Chewning: And that was after your father had died?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. Well, he lived there a while. He lived there a while.

Isabelle Chewning: And how long -- how old was he when died?

Virginia Franklin: He was a young man, 65, I think he was, around that age. [According to the Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society's Rockbridge County Cemeteries, Zack Franklin died in September 1955.]

Isabelle Chewning: And what did he die of?

Virginia Franklin: He had a heart attack. They found him. My brother right there, younger brother, he'd found him up there laid -- he was up on the -- near the garden up where we had a -- you know, a garden up on the hill. And I was working, and my brother came and got me and told me that he had died. It was a great shock, you know. And he just -- he hadn't had a car too long. One of those Model T's. I didn't want my brother to sell that car. I wanted him to keep it, and I wanted to bring it up here <laughs>, be a -- you know, he'd get a lot of money for it.

Isabelle Chewning: Right.

Virginia Franklin: And- but he sold it. And he had a -- we had a -- my mother's youngest brother, he took care of him for a long time, my brother, Daniel. That was his name, Daniel. And he had a car. He had a nice old car.

Isabelle Chewning: What did -- your father worked on the farm and you said he cut wood? Did you tell me he delivered wood?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he delivered wood already cut up and everything in a wagon. He had a horse. That's what he used to -- he used to be a doctor [veterinarian] but he didn't go to school for it.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, that's what I've heard people say, that if their animals were sick...

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he was like that.

Isabelle Chewning: ...Zack Franklin was the person who took care of them.

Virginia Franklin: He used to tell some -- tell us, he'd say this lady used to always cook his meal and he couldn't eat it. I say, "What'd you do with it?" He'd say, "I stuffed it in my pocket" [laughs]. And so, he had to go out different hours at night 'cause they would call him. And he had to...

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have a phone or did they come and get him?

Virginia Franklin: No, we didn't have any phone.

Isabelle Chewning: So they would come and get him if they...

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they would come and get him 'cause they knew where he lived. And he'd go out and stay a long time.

Isabelle Chewning: What kind of work did he do on the animals, the veterinary work?

Virginia Franklin: Nothing else that I know of.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he deliver calves?

Virginia Franklin: No. There weren't no cabs there. Most people walked.

Isabelle Chewing: Well, I mean calves.

Virginia Franklin: He had horses. Oh, calves. He raised stock, cows, horses. He used to sell them. His ponies, you know, when they were- - 'cause I helped him one night and I told him, "Let me go with you." And there was a little horse had been born, but he couldn't get it -- it didn't live but a couple days, but he was used to it. So he had a beautiful -- he named him after all of us. I had a horse. My sisters all had horses. He'd named them after us.

Isabelle Chewing: Ah.. so were they work horses?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. They were beautiful. He used to go and clean them up and everything, you know. This youngest brother [Daniel Franklin] used to help him with the horses and things. And he and I was more alike, because he'd stick with me. And everyone else would be, "Daniel, go with me." I'd say, "So-and-so, come on, go with me somewhere." And I'd say, "I can't go. You go with Dad. I can't go." And -- 'cause I had to cook a meal or something. We had to have hot meals all the time, you know. The other people they'd work for him.

Isabelle Chewing: Who worked for him?

Virginia Franklin: We had our cousin, James Brown. Now, he loved Dad so much. And there was Glasgow Craney, he used to help him. He lived in Brownsburg, you know, and who else? Pidge Brown. Pidge. He lived in Brownsburg right up the hill there, and I think that's all of them.

Isabelle Chewing: Would they walk out there to the farm every day and work?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. I think some of them might have had a car, like, Glasgow Craney had a car. He used to drive out there. And we would cook up some meals, chicken and dumplings, you know, stuff like that.

Isabelle Chewing: Oh.. I bet that was good.

Virginia Franklin: And he -- we used to have a lawn party on the first Saturday in August at our church [Asbury United Methodist Church in Brownsburg] and he would make ice cream during it.

Isabelle Chewning: Who made the ice cream?

Virginia Franklin: Our father would make the ice cream. And I made the chocolate fudge cake. And he would make the best ice cream, ooh! Melt in your mouth. He'd make two kinds, a pineapple and chocolate. They were delicious. And of course, my other sister, Katherine, she used to fry the best chicken. And my son was very small then, and he -- she would have him on her shoulder, and frying that chicken and making those biscuits [chuckles].

Isabelle Chewning: You're making me hungry!

<laughter>

Virginia Franklin: You know, chicken doesn't taste like it used to be when we were in the country, you know. It'd turn nice and yellow-looking you know, and, you know, fresh. We had fresh chicken. We didn't have -- we had eggs. We didn't have to buy eggs. We'd make those One-Two-Three-Four Cakes, great big cakes, you know.

Isabelle Chewning: I don't know what that is.

Virginia Franklin: Cakes.

Isabelle Chewning: One-Two-Three-Four cakes?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, one cup of sugar and then two cups of flour and all that. One-Two-Three-Four cake.

Isabelle Chewning: What's three?

Virginia Franklin: What is three, the egg? I think it's the eggs.

Isabelle Chewning: Three eggs, and what was four?

Virginia Franklin: It must have been the flour, yeah. And I used to make -- cook the beans, string beans, you know. We used to make cakes like coming up near Christmas time. We never had no refrigerator. We had a big box with a top on it. And we'd make like four kinds of cakes and leave them out. And people would come by and visit with you and you know, you always

give them coffee or something like that. We didn't have -- we had coffee and you know, in one of those great big pots, you know. It sat on the back of the stove. Oatmeal like this in great in big pot. I don't don't eat oatmeal too much now [laughs].

Isabelle Chewning: 'Cause you were feeding a lot of people and you had a lot of...

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, a lot of people. My sister, Katherine, after she died, it was -- things were getting -- we didn't do too much then. Let's see, yeah, 'cause she used to help me out, my sister, Katherine. Yeah, she was great. I have a picture of her. I'm going show you a picture of her girls.

Isabelle Chewning: I've got all this stuff in your way here.

Virginia Franklin: No, that's okay.

[Telephone rings. Temporary interruption in audio.]

Virginia Franklin: [Shows photo of her mother] My brother, George, looked a whole lot like her. He had high cheek bones.

Isabelle Chewning: Your mother? He looked like your mother?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: And where was that picture taken?

Virginia Franklin: She was -- she was -- she had a lot of Indian blood. They say we got Indian blood in us.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh.. where was that picture taken?

Virginia Franklin: Up there where we first lived, by the Wade's 'cause she was sitting out in the yard and they came by.

Isabelle Chewning: And that's your sister?

Virginia Franklin: And you see they had midwives then when you delivered. That's who delivered her.

Isabelle Chewning: Is that -- were you delivered by a midwife?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I guess I was but I don't remember. She was a -- and I remember her 'cause she [Eleanor] was delivered by a midwife.

Isabelle Chewning: How much older are you than she is?

Virginia Franklin: I'm right much -- she's got a birthday coming up in next month. No, in February and she say she'd be 80.

Isabelle Chewning: So you remember when she was born then?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. Yeah, I remember her. And she used to -- we used to have to go church in the evening sometimes. And she didn't have any shoes to wear -- 'cause she was going to be in a program and she was going to sing. She used to sing beautiful when she was young. [chuckles] I told her now, I said, "Listen, you used to sing." We had to put pasteboard 'cause the top was gray patent leather, you know. And she was all -- we had her all dressed up [chuckles]. She sang too, beautiful.

Isabelle Chewning: I remember Dan [Franklin] was a good signer.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: I always liked to hear to him sing.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, Dan was -- he would sing. Him and I used to -- when he was sick, he and I used to sit here and sing. I used to take him to church when he could go.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you go to church most every Sunday at Asbury?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, we had to go to church. We had Sunday School.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it a big congregation then?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, pretty big. A big one, mm-hmm. And our grandmother used to sit at one spot and she used to -- our father used to take her to church. And she used to have Russell to hear for her, 'cause she couldn't hear real well in the late years. But she was a beautiful woman. I got to let you look at her before you go.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, I'd love to see the picture.

Virginia Franklin: And she [Mary Jane Franklin] was the most beautiful woman I ever was around. She was beautiful. She used to have -- let's see, she'd have -- I forget what she called it, a Sunday Night Prayer Meeting. She didn't call it a prayer meeting though. Every Sunday night, we'd have to go over there, and then she would make wine. She would give us a little -- a wee little bit.

Isabelle Chewning: What did she make it out of?

Virginia Franklin: I don't know, she'd -- she had a lot of kids, so maybe they -- some of them brought her some berries or something. So I made some wine one time, and I said, "Oh, gee I believe it's got the top on it, too." We heard all this explosion. And one day I looked at it and I said, "Oh, well, it's good. It's ready to- you can have- drink some." So it was good.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it good?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah [laughs].

Isabelle Chewning: Did you make it out of grapes?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. We used to pick berries. We used to go pick berries early in the morning. I stopped picking cause a big old snake came and blow! So I said, "Let me get away from that."

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, I don't like snakes. What kind of berries were you picking then?

Virginia Franklin: They might have been blackberries, I think, or raspberries, one of them. You know, they were the fresh raspberries, blackberries, strawberries. I didn't pick too much 'cause I poison one time and...

Isabelle Chewning: From poison oak?

Virginia Franklin: Some kind of poison oak. Yeah, I broke out, but it got all right. I don't think we -- I think our father had some kind of medicine that he put on it. We didn't go to the doctor much anyway.

Isabelle Chewning: Bud Martin told me that he -- your father would sometimes go out in the woods and pick things and use them for medicine.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. I've been looking for this tea. We used to have it in the winter time and we kept that on the stove and it was so good. It was like wood. And I've been looking for it around.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it sassafras tea?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, mm-hmm. I've been looking for that but I haven't been able to find it yet. I thought maybe the farmer's market might have it, but I -- they haven't had it. I haven't seen it yet. And my brother -- I had that brother was in the Navy. He wasn't home very much. He got injured very badly. He came home a little bit, but not much.

Isabelle Chewning: Was he in the war, World War II?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. I had three brothers there.

Isabelle Chewning: In World War II?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, George, Daniel was in World War II and Edward, three of them. Our oldest brother, [Henry] he didn't -- he wasn't, didn't go in the Service. He had a stroke, high blood pressure. I don't think he ever went to the doctor.

Isabelle Chewning: And you didn't go to the doctor very much?

Virginia Franklin: No. I didn't go, no. I still don't like doctors. I'm taking some kind of stuff now to keep my health together, and walking, and eating a lot of vegetables and stuff like that.

Isabelle Chewing: Good. So how many years did you go to school in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Well, I guess I started out when I was about 7. We had to stop 'cause our mother -- I think she was gone, passed back then. I don't know whether she was still living or not. It was a long time. I might not have gone to school 'til I was later in years, about 8 maybe or 9 and -- 'cause I had so much to do at that time, helping. I was a -- they treated me like I was the older one or something, 'cause I was a busy person.

Isabelle Chewing: You got a lot done?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Isabelle Chewing: How many children were in the school when you were there?

Virginia Franklin: Oh, we had a whole house full. I mean, yeah, a whole lot of them.

Isabelle Chewing: And Miss Peters was a good teacher?

Virginia Franklin: Yes, she was a good teacher.

Isabelle Chewing: And she was the one teacher for all the students?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, all the students. She did good though. She did good. It wasn't -- you know, they were interested in school, not like it is today, you know. [chuckles]. Everybody got along fine. I never -- I never heard of anyone having any problems, fighting or anything. I had one now [chuckles] this young -- this lady. She's passed and gone now. Fannie Bell, she used to get jealous of me 'cause I used to fix myself up! [Laugh] And she'd get so -- she'd say, "Here you are, all dressed up today like that. What for?" And I said, "Well, I- this is my style, this is my life."

Isabelle Chewing: And what was her last name?

Virginia Franklin: Fannie Bell Ogden [??]. She was a Stewart but she married an Ogden [??].

Isabelle Chewning: And did she live down in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they came out of Brownsburg, yeah. They used to live around the hill, we said [on Dry Hollow Road]. Where recently or Carrie Peters lived, back there [1486 Dry Hollow Road].

Isabelle Chewning: Right. And she was a Stewart?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, 'cause her mother was a Stewart?.

Isabelle Chewning: I had talked to Sammy Dock Stewart. Is she related to him?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, but I can't remember now. Let's see.

Isabelle Chewning: And her name was Fannie Bell?

Virginia Franklin: Mm-hmm.. Fannie Bell. She was real tall. And let's see, I'm trying to think who else. They're the ones we had to peel apples for, too. Yeah, growing up. And I'm trying to think what else.

Isabelle Chewning: And someone told me they always waited 'til your dad was able to help them butcher 'cause he was the best.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he'd always help, helping all the people. He went out early in the morning. And I'd go up there and get the -- what is that -- tenderloin and cook it. You know, the long strips. And my brother would come from up here [Washington, DC]. I wasn't living up here then. I came up in '53 after our father passed. And he used to come and get the chitterlings. I didn't know what chitterlings was til he came down there and got all those chitterlings out there. And he used to cook them. And I'd go and help him with the meat. And we kept the cook -- putting meat, you know, grind all that up, you know. Ooh! We were so busy at that time. But you didn't have to worry about people or anything stealing anything. They'd be out, you know, hanging out [the carcasses]. And he'd fix up the hams, and the shoulders and hang them up in a the little smokehouse we called it, and cooked. And all those chickens, we used to have.

Isabelle Chewning: And you said you...

Virginia Franklin: Oh... we had a trap for rabbits. We'd have to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and go and get -- see if we had any- caught anything. We used to catch them, and sell them, skin them, you know. Yeah. Oh, I do remember that! Me and -- I don't think anybody else went with me. It had to be my -- maybe it was my brother right there [indicates picture of Daniel]. He and I used to hang out together. Him and Eleanor used to be so close too, our youngest sister. They used to be close. They were close in age anyway. They were the younger ones.

Isabelle Chewning: Were they the two youngest?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they were the two youngest.

Isabelle Chewning: And then you're the next?

Virginia Franklin: No, I have another sister. She was younger, a little younger than me. And my brother, he was a little -- he was younger than me, the one [that] was in the Navy. And that's -- Katherine was older than me. George was older than me, my brother George. I came in after George. George and I were close together. Yeah, George and I were close together.

Isabelle Chewning: Do you remember any of the ministers that you had at Asbury?

Virginia Franklin: I did used to remember. One of them had taken us on trip somewhere. Abernathery took my sister and I -- my sister, Katherine and I to Conference once year. But I don't remember what year it was. She had -- they two had two children, I think. And the one that married my brother, I think that's -- no, it was another minister that married my brother and his wife. I remember I about going with them. And she had on this little hat. She told me she had saved that hat, and I tried to find it somewhere but I couldn't. And I had one on, but the wind blew my hat off. And hers, I wanted it so bad, but she's got on there. And she was such a beautiful girl. She'd help us. We'd go down there, and they'd cook up all this -- we used to go to him and her's house, my brother's [Daniel Franklin]. They'd cook up these huge steaks and have baked potatoes. And we'd get out in the yard. We all went down there one summer, all my sisters, her and her kids and my brother and -- all went down there. We were having a ball, sit up and play cards all night. I went to sleep. I didn't -- I wasn't no card player much. I used to play Pakino [??] and stuff like that, but I wasn't a card player. My brother in the Navy could get and play cards and drink beer. We had fun then. He would have steaks. I'd help him to cook steaks, fried the eggs on the outside out there, you know. It was wonderful. We had a lovely time in his house. He sold his house. And he used to -- he was making big money then though. He made big money.

Isabelle Chewning: Well, he built houses, didn't he?

Virginia Franklin: Yes, he [Daniel Franklin] built homes. You should see the houses that he built. Now, he showed us all those houses. But maybe Eleanor can remember them. The spots that he showed us. But he used to build all those houses, never had to buy nothing. Oh, he was good! I'm telling you, he was great. He really was. And I wouldn't give him praise for it, because he didn't get married [laughs]. He'd bring all of us and didn't get married. And he loved my mother's sister. He told her she could come anytime out there. And she used to come out there. And we had an aunt that braided her hair. She had beautiful hair. She used to braid all of our hair and everything.

Isabelle Chewning: What was her name?

Virginia Franklin: Monroe [sister of Zack Franklin]. She just passed not too many years, but she was down in Petersburg. And my younger sister had her picture. I've got to get one and have made off, and bring it, and I'm going put it right up here. And she used to -- was good at that. She fixed hair -- and could cook! And her grandfather, he used to sit in under a tree at home. They had that beautiful tree -- when they used to live right over from us, after we moved to the highway. And he was so jealous of her. He didn't like none of the church men go to see her [laughs]. And so she never was a person -- my grandmother never was a person to get excited. Everybody come to see her and she loved it. And that's the way I am.

Isabelle Chewning: What was her name?

Virginia Franklin: Her name was -- was her name Mary? Mary Jane.

Isabelle Chewning: Mary Jane Franklin?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, Mary Jane. And they -- she had a son who was born crippled. And he stayed with her all the time.

Isabelle Chewning: And that's your uncle?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. 'Til her -- one of her daughters came and brought him up here. And he got sick and he wasn't able to get out like he used to down there. And he used to play a guitar and sing. Oh, he really sang and played the guitar. But they would sit her -- him would sit at the table. We'd go over there some times. She'd make this bread, you know, and that hoe cake. They didn't call it hoe cake then. And she'd have a pot for him -- and a pot for him to get and eat. And she'd let him sit there and eat. And she did that clabber milk, sour milk.

Isabelle Chewning: I don't know what that is, sour milk?

Virginia Franklin: Sour milk and she'd dip her bread down in there. And I said, "Whoa!", I didn't eat that though. Sour milk, just like cottage cheese. We used to make- I used to make cottage cheese.

Isabelle Chewning: How do you make that?

Virginia Franklin: Let your milk -- I forget now how I used to make it. I used to make cottage cheese but I've forgotten how. But it was good. That's the kind I really love. I like cottage cheese now.

Isabelle Chewning: So how old were you when you finished school?

Virginia Franklin: I really don't know. I don't think I finished school. After I came up here, I went to -- my sister and I went over there to -- where'd go? Garner Patterson down the street not too far, on 11th Street, I believe. Yeah, 'cause that's where I got to go to vote, down there. That's where I go vote.

Isabelle Chewning: So you- how old were you in Brownsburg when you stopped going to school? How old were you?

Virginia Franklin: I don't know exactly how old I was. I guess I must have been about maybe 16 or 17, something like that.

Isabelle Chewning: And then did you stay at home and work?

Virginia Franklin: No, I stayed at home and then I used to work -- helped the Wade family out. I used to go up there and...

Isabelle Chewning: What did you do there?

Virginia Franklin: I helped cook and -- mostly cooked.

Isabelle Chewning: And which Wades were they? Who lived there?

Virginia Franklin: That would be Jen Wade [Heffelfinger] and Eleanor [Marchant]. Eleanor was the youngest one. We're named from them. Our family was named from them. He had one named Jen. Ginny. Jen or something. She married a rich man. He used to give me money all the time.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, Mr. [William] Heffelfinger?

Virginia Franklin: Heffelfinger. He'd come by for dinner. He was a nice man, a very peculiar man, but he was nice to me. Whenever he came, he gave me respect and everything. And I used to cook for them and they'd come by. And they had one sister. She was kind of sickly. She had a heart condition. She stayed there [Kate Wade]. And then they had an uncle they took care of 'til he died. And they had another sister. She moved out and she lived in Stuanton, Virginia. And she married and had one son. I'd like to see that boy. He's a grown man now. I wouldn't know him if I see him. And the other boy, Jen Wade, she married a Heffelfinger. That's right. She had a daughter [Grace Heffelfinger] and a stepson [Steve Heffelfinger]. Her daughter [Grace] got killed at a very young age, 27 or something like that. And she had this -- married this man. He had a son [Steve] and I used to take care of him. He was so dirty. I used to wash him. And he said, "What are you trying to do?" I'd say, "I'm trying to clean you up." [Laugh] And he's already passed. And I don't know who's living now.

Virginia Franklin: Was Miss Margaret Wade living there?

Virginia Franklin: She was away most of the time. She'd come home on special holidays or something. She died. It's been years ago, yeah. Was only one -- Mary Wade, she used to live there. And she used to be the one that liked to go out in the afternoons and visit her friend, Elizabeth Ward. She owned the corner house [2763 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And it was another one lived in that other big house. What was her name? Right there in Brownsburg, the big house as you go to turn to Fairfield, there's a big house there [Sleepy Hollow at 2645 Sterrett Road]. I remember Elizabeth Ward. Mary Wade used to run around with Elizabeth Ward's brother. She used to have fun with him. And then she had a friend, she used to go with him all the time. And we thought she was going marry him, but they both -- I don't think he ever got married, and I know she didn't ever get married. But she used to go with him. She used to have fun going up on the hill and talking to them. And she was nice. I loved Mary. Kate was a very sick person. And I didn't do anything but just cook a little bit. That house up on the hill was a very big house. And they sold it. Did they sell it -- to a doctor? Doctor -- what's that doctor's name? My youngest sister worked for that doctor. I can't think of his name. But Dr. Joe Williams, he was our doctor in Brownsburg in the later years.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it Dr. Taylor?

Virginia Franklin: That's right, Dr. Taylor, yeah, mm-hmm. And he lived there in Brownsburg a long time. He was a good doctor. And Dr. Williams, he was a nice fellow. He was a doctor in Brownsburg for years. Have you interviewed Isabel [Sites]? Oh, you did?

Isabelle Chewing: I haven't talked to her yet.

Virginia Franklin: Oh, you haven't talked to her yet. Oh, you busy all the time!

[laughter]

Isabelle Chewing: I have a lot of people to talk to. No, she's on my list to talk to.

Virginia Franklin: Oh, she is?

Isabelle Chewing: Mm-hmm.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I used to walk up the hill [Sterrett Road] when it's -- I used to sleep over at the Wade's house [2613 Sterrett Road].

Isabelle Chewing: Oh, you did? You stayed there?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I stayed there. And I used to walk up and see Isabell and Dora and stayed until about 8:30, 9:00. But one night, I came home and this car was following me. I said, "Shoot. I ain't going home. I'll be up at y'all's house unless you're going and walk home with me." And they -- we used to have a lot of fun. We used to go to the drive-in movies. When there were drive-in movies. That's the one thing I do remember we did was go to drive-in movies. And then we'd go out on the weekends, Isabel and her sister and I we'd go on weekends to Lexington to...

Isabelle Chewing: What was her name before she got married?

Virginia Franklin: Isabell, she was -- what was her name? I'm can't remember now.

Isabelle Chewing: I'll have to ask her.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. Oliver.

Isabelle Chewing: Oliver.

Virginia Franklin: Mm-hmm. 'Cause then...

Isabelle Chewing: And what was her sister's name?

Virginia Franklin: Dora Mae.

Isabelle Chewing: Oh, Dora [Franklin, Dan Franklin's wife]. And is she still living?

Virginia Franklin: No, Dora is gone. She died before he did, yeah, last year. He used to go to Lexington and get Harry Holtz. You remember him?

Isabelle Chewing: I know of him.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. He used to take us up for two or three dollars. He'd take us to Lexington and go to a movie or something. And then he'd wait on us and bring us back. We had fun! I loved drive-in movies. Movies now cost too much money to go to. They got all these tapes and things, though.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you ever learn to drive?

Virginia Franklin: No, I -- when I was in the country, I used to tell him about that old Model T Ford. And I drove it a little bit, but not that much. I'm sorry, too. I always tell my granddaughter-- and these are my grandchildren [shows photo], there's one, the first one. And there's the boy. He's the baby. He just turned 13. There's a lot of [pictures of] them over there. [Miss Franklin crosses the room to point out photos.] Here's all three of them together. This one is -- that's the baby one, and this is my granddaughter. And Marcus, he goes to school down in Virginia at the Christ Church School, not too far. He was home for a couple of hours on Sunday. But he -- when he comes, he likes to stay with all of them. They just want to stay with me all the time. I was almost put out of this place. They stayed here, and stayed here, and I was sick over it! They didn't come in late and they'd come in early. And a lawyer wrote me a letter and said, "If they don't get out, we're going put you out."

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, because this is supposed to be adults only?

Virginia Franklin: Oh, yeah. Only you live by yourself. And I said, "Oh, my goodness, I can't stand that." So I took it. I raised a young girl. She's 37 or 38 right now and you should talk to her. I raised her. And she come as a baby. Her mother traveled all the time, and I took care of her, raised her. She'd stay -- she would stay with me at night time. She'd say, "I have some friends coming by," as she got a little older. I said, "Oh, yeah?" She said, "Will you let them in?" I said, "No!" Boy. And I said, "No." She said, "Well, I'm going down then, to talk." And I said, "Okay. But wherever you sleep, I'm going to sleep!"

[laughter]

Virginia Franklin: She said, "You're so mean!" I said, "Well, I got to because I'm going to take care of you." And she said, "I'm going to leave the light on on the front porch." I said, "Okay, go ahead. Go ahead and leave it on." I said, "But you're not going out tonight. And if you go, I'm going."

[laughter]

Virginia Franklin: She used to get so upset with me. And so after she got older, you know going to school, I said- and she claimed she was sick a lot when she was little, coming up. She was school age and she said, "You know I'm so sick, I don't feel like going." So I said, "Okay, I'm going to call the doctor and take you to the doctor." And she said, "I don't need a doctor." I said, "Yeah, but we'd like to check you if you're sick, so you can go to school the next day." And she stayed there all day and drank her water and stuff, and wouldn't eat. The next day she got up and I say, "You going to school?" And she said, "Yes, I'm going." I said, "You going with those beat up tough clothes?" She said, "Yeah, that's what the style is, you know." I said, "Okay, go ahead." And one day she was home when I came in and I knew she was home 'cause, you know, you can feel it. She jumped out right quick and she said, "I was hiding from you." I said, "Where's the boy?" She said, "I didn't want you to know I was home." I said, "Uh-huh." I said, "I would have found out anyway." But she's just as sweet as gold to me now.

Isabelle Chewning: And is she -- are these her children?

Virginia Franklin: No.

Isabelle Chewning: Are they her...

Virginia Franklin: I got her -- pictures of her kids.

Isabelle Chewing: And who's children are they?

Virginia Franklin: Those are my sister's. My...

Isabelle Chewing: Your grandchildren?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, my grandchildren, yeah, my daughter. I have a daughter.

Isabelle Chewing: And what's her name?

Virginia Franklin: Phyllis. Phyllis Jean. She says she couldn't stand that name. And I called her Jean all the time.

Isabelle Chewing: Do you have other children?

Virginia Franklin: I have a son, Edward. Edward's the oldest. He works up here at UDC [University of the District of Columbia] and been there for 30-some years.

Isabelle Chewing: And so you live -- does he live close?

Virginia Franklin: Not too far. He's in Silver Springs, not too far.

Isabelle Chewing: And where does Jean live?

Virginia Franklin: Jean's in Southeast [Washington, DC], yeah. And my grandson, he -- I told you, he's going to high school down there, boarding school, which is real nice. I was down there, a real nice school. And this...

<recorder is briefly turned off>

Virginia Franklin: Young lady, I raised she -- her mother and father got divorced. I was there. I got so tickled. But she got very upset. She would have one week with her mother -- and stay at

the house there. And I'd have to help to stay there at the house. And then the next week, she'd go to her father's. Well, I worked for her father, too. I'd be cooking a little bit. But the father's wife -- what was her name, Fran -- she never did have no food in the house. I had to scratch up food for her to eat. But she had two kids and the boy. They got used to me. I told the boy-- the boy, he couldn't get used to me for a long time. I just let him alone; let him do what he wanted to do. Then finally he came home one night. I said, "Why are you so late tonight?" He said, "Oh." I knew he had a bottle. And so I was going to make his mother pay me and I said, "Listen, you better check your son out. He's doing something that's not right, and I think you better talk to him." They went and talked to him. I think he got upset with me, but I don't know. And so he did, he had hid some kind of bottle. And they got upset and told him they were going punish him or something, but I don't think they really did 'cause he was out of control. And then now they married, I think. I'd like to see the girl, 'cause she-- I really changed her attitude. She wasn't good at all, but of course it wasn't her fault. It was the mother.

Isabelle Chewning: Can you tell me a little bit more about the Wades? How long you worked for them?

Virginia Franklin: I worked for them for years and years. I worked for the Wades for years. I was very young when I started working for the Wades.

Isabelle Chewning: Do you know how old you were?

Virginia Franklin: About maybe 12 or 13, or something like that. Or I might have been older than that; I might have been about 17 or 18, 19 or 20, 20 some.

Isabelle Chewning: And did you cook mainly?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. First they kind of taught me how to. But my older sister, Katherine, she taught me how to make biscuits and stuff like that, fried chicken. They would have a lot of company, too, the Wades, you know? They had a huge house, huge house.

Isabelle Chewning: Now, was this in Brownsburg or was this out on the farm [Castle Carbury]?

Virginia Franklin: It was out on the farm, yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: But then you worked for them when they lived in Brownsburg, too?

Virginia Franklin: Let's see. Where'd they live in Brownsburg at?

Isabelle Chewing: Just down below Isabell Sites'.

Virginia Franklin: Oh, yes. I did. Yes, I did. I worked for them. I worked for them down there a long time. Yeah. That's when they were all able to get around. They weren't all at home. Margaret Wade, she was away and she'd come home. And Jen, she got married, and married a Heffelfinger. And Eleanor was in Staunton, Virginia. Wasn't anybody there, but Mary and Kate, the one I had to look after most of the time. And their uncle, until he passed.

Isabelle Chewing: But out at the big house on the farm, they had a lot of company? People would come?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. Yeah. People would come in and spend a week or so. I don't remember now who they were. I know I was up there when their mother passed. Their mother was a beautiful woman. Oh, she was pretty; real pretty. And her youngest daughter, [Eleanor] she was pretty like that, too. And Mary, of course, Mary, she was a beautiful woman. I did love Mary. She was such a beautiful person. And I'd get a lot of fun out of her. She'd be talking, "I can't stay down here. I've got to get going!" she'd say. [laughs] She tickled me. And Elizabeth Ward, she used to come down a lot and visit them. Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Do you remember my grandmother visiting them? Her name was Edna Sterrett?

Virginia Franklin: Yes, she used to come and visit them. They were great friends together. Who else used to be friends with them? I forget who else. Where's Mc [Sterrett] living, your father?

Isabelle Chewing: He lives right there, on the farm.

Virginia Franklin: Oh, he does. He's still on the farm.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you decide what to cook or did they tell you what they wanted?

Virginia Franklin: They told me. I did the baking, like making biscuits, and I can't remember what else they had.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you bake a lot of bread?

Virginia Franklin: Yes. Seems like to me I cooked all the food, though, because we had a lot of food; a lot of company. I can't remember now what I cooked.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you go to the store and buy what you needed?

Virginia Franklin: No, they had an old car and they used to pick the food up, yeah. Let's see. Yeah, they used to cook a lot. I wonder who -- Mary used to help, the oldest one. She used to do a lot of cooking. And Eleanor, if she would come in, she would cook, the younger one; she's the last one that passed, Eleanor. Because she used to drive, yeah. I used to have pictures of them. I don't know what happened to them.

Isabelle Chewning: And so they would do the shopping for the food?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, shopping for the food. They had a brother, but he didn't live long. I mean, he was an adult when he died. He was a grown man when he died. But he was a nice man. I remember him. His name was John, I think.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he work at the bank?

Virginia Franklin: Yes. He worked at the bank, and there's another one worked at the bank. Was it Jen?

Isabelle Chewning: I think so.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I think it was Jen. Jen worked at the bank. Yes, she did. Jen Wade. And Margaret was a schoolteacher. She was the one that didn't stay home all the time. She came in. And on special occasions, I'd go in there. We'd fix up, like Christmastime, they'd celebrate Christmas, and we had steaks. You know, they ate a lot of steak. They wanted me to have mashed potatoes. I mashed potatoes. Oh, I used to mash up some big batches. I still had some last week here. The lady I work for now, she lives out here on 29th and Military Road. I got out there on -- going out tomorrow, stay a couple of hours, and she brings me home. And we went to the store and I told her I needed this and that, and so she got some things, some potatoes.

Isabelle Chewning: So do you go out there and cook?

Virginia Franklin: No, no cooking. She don't eat no more. I used to cook.

Isabelle Chewning: What do you help her do?

Virginia Franklin: I wash the laundry right now. I wash the laundry and put her clothes away, and that's about all I do. I don't do anything else. She never did do too much. She never did do anything. When I started working for her, she'd be laying up in bed, unless she wasn't home. First when I started working for her, she was in the hospital, and I didn't see her for a long time. I saw her husband. I met his mother first. The first one I met was his mother, where I'm working now. And she told me to come back next week again. I said, "Oh, really?" I was sitting at home that day. I said, "Gee, I don't feel like sitting at home. I think I'll go down to the unemployment-- that's what they called it there -- and see if I can get me a day's work." She said the people saw me and they said, "Yeah, I've got a job if you would like to go to," and I said, "Oh, yes, if it's close. I don't want to go far." And she said to me, "The lady say for you to get a cab and she'd pay for it." She'd pay for my cab fare. And I went on out there and stayed awhile. And I said, "Dang, this house is dirty." I did a little bit of cleaning up; no cooking. There wasn't no food in the house. The lady right now, she was in the hospital and her husband wasn't there. I didn't see them for a long time. And then they wanted children, and she had the baby-- the young lady I raised-- and she asked me would I stay all week, and I said yeah. Could go and come. And then after the baby came, she didn't want to look after the baby because she wanted to work. She still was working every day herself, going out of town traveling. Then she called me up one time. She said, "Virginia, I believe I've done killed the baby." I said, "You better get out of here!" She say, "She was trying to ride a bicycle." And I said, "She's too little anyway to ride a bicycle!" She said, "Her head, I hit her head." I said, "Oh, my." I said, "Let me see if I-- I'll be out there in a little while." But she was all right. She didn't -- but now, I taught her how to ride a bicycle. I used to take her everywhere.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you used to ride a bicycle when you were growing up?

Virginia Franklin: No, I didn't ride no bicycle. My younger sister, Eleanor, used to ride the bicycle. They used to ride a lot. Then I didn't learn to ride no bicycle. I didn't learn none of that stuff when I was just little!

Isabelle Chewning: When did you move up to D.C.?

Virginia Franklin: When my father died in '53. We stayed down there a long time and run the farm. It was just -- and then after my brother [Daniel] got married and everything --

Isabelle Chewning: Who did he marry?

Virginia Franklin: He married Isabel's [Sites] sister, Dora.

Isabelle Chewning: Dora, right.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, Dora. And we came up here. He brought us up here.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have a job up here?

Virginia Franklin: Let's see. Did I? Just odds and ends. Didn't have much. Used to sell bottles. We used to sell -- they would take bottles and cans, you know? And I didn't have nothing to eat one day, and my oldest sister had gone to work and I was sitting at home. I said, "Gee, I want to go to the store." I hunted up some bottles, empty bottles, and took them to the store; had enough money to get me some potatoes and onion -- one onion, and three or four potatoes.

Isabelle Chewning: Who did you live with up here?

Virginia Franklin: They had an apartment on 13th Street.

Isabelle Chewning: Your sister did?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. My sister and another sister, Margaret. She's passed now.

Isabelle Chewning: So it was three sisters living here together?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. And they used to play cards. My oldest sisters, they used to play cards all night. And I didn't play cards. She would sit there with some friends that she knew, and they would play cards all night long. I'd curl up and go to bed. They had a nice apartment on 13th Street, right over here.

Isabelle Chewning: Did they have regular jobs?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they had regular jobs. My oldest sister had a-- she was working somewhere. I can't remember now. And Margaret was working. She worked -- I can't recall where she was working.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it hard to get a job?

Virginia Franklin: Not that bad. Not that bad; it wasn't hard as I thought it would be, from the country. And let's see, 13th Street; 13th and Monroe. The church was right there. I joined that church at 13th and Monroe.

Isabelle Chewning: What kind of a church was it?

Virginia Franklin: Methodist Church. It was a nice church. I used to walk every Sunday. I did more walking.

Isabelle Chewning: Do you remember any of the revivals at the church down in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Yes, I can remember going with my grandmother. We'd taken her and then we'd stay in there, too. Yeah, we used to have them. My uncle, he used to shout. Wooh!

Isabelle Chewning: Who was that uncle?

Virginia Franklin: My mother's brother, one of her older brothers. Uncle Dude.

Isabelle Chewning: He shouted?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. Uncle Dude and Aunt Mag. And Aunt Edna [Pleasants] was her sister, too, you know.

Isabelle Chewning: Was whose sister?

Virginia Franklin: My mother's sister, Aunt Edna.

Isabelle Chewning: So [your mother] and Edna were sisters?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they were sisters. Let's see. Did she have any more sisters? I don't think so. She might have. I can't remember. I remember Aunt Edna because Aunt Edna stayed around us a lot. Aunt Edna [Pleasants] and Uncle Andrew [Haliburton] those were the ones I favored. They stayed around us.

Isabelle Chewning: What was their last name?

Virginia Franklin: Haliburton.

Isabelle Chewning: Where did they--

Virginia Franklin: Haliburtons and the Franklins and the, let's see, those are real respectable people in Brownsburg. Haliburtons in Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewning: The Craneys?

Virginia Franklin: The Craneys and the Pleasants [ph?].

Isabelle Chewning: And the Pleasants?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. See, the Pleasants were our first cousins. They all gone except one now. I've been trying to hear from him because he said he was coming by to see us; only the baby son, now. He was in service for 32 years, and he's 65 now, he say. And he hadn't seen his mother in 14 years, so he said he came down to the cemetery and stayed a long time down there just -- gone for 32 years. So we seen him when Dickie died, our cousin.

Isabelle Chewning: How often do you get down to Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: There once, we were going there every year, staying all day and having lunch and enjoying the day. It was beautiful.

Isabelle Chewning: Are you parents buried in the cemetery there?

Virginia Franklin: Oh, yeah. Yeah, both of them are buried there.

Isabelle Chewning: Are you grandparents buried there?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they were. Our father had a -- Dan [Franklin] got a, what do you call those things, for a marker?

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, a headstone?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. He got a headstone for our father down there. And our brother got one, too, for him. He's got all our names down there. I'm on the marker. And I told him, "I think when I pass I'm going to be--" what do you call it?

Isabelle Chewning: Cremated?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. I could ask my granddaughter would she spread the ashes down there in Brownsburg, and a couple of them up here. [laughs]

Isabelle Chewning: Spread them out.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, spread them out. She said she would. I don't know. [laughs] But we might -- we going down, though. I'm going to get a bus. I got a bus one time, a mini-bus, and went to -- took a lot of people down there for Homecoming. Yeah, it was beautiful; had a good time.

Isabelle Chewning: Good.

Virginia Franklin: I'm going to try to go this year because all our drivers have passed and gone, and our cousin, he's not no well man. He probably won't be able to anymore, to drive. So I'm going to try and get a mini-bus and take as many as I can down there and help them out. As long as I stay well and able, which I feel like I am, but you don't know. They depend on me. My family depends on me, all of them. All of them They call me. They can't find me, they call my youngest sister, Eleanor. And my niece, she had this big party for me, and I didn't want to go to it. I told her I wasn't going. When I was 85, she gave me this big party. Said <inaudible>. I don't like excitement. And she say, "Well, they're looking for you." Well, they had my cousin -- no, my niece's husband to pick us up. Very slow, you know? And I said, "Well, maybe they're not going to pick me up." We waited, and I was dressed, and I got all upset and I didn't want to go. Maybe they aren't going to pick me up. I went on anyway, and they say, "We thought you weren't coming." A young lady, Penelope is her name, one of the girls I raised, she wants to be along with me all the time, but she was having a baby then. She had to hurry home. [laughs] David is the little boy's name. Oh, he was cute as a pie.

Isabelle Chewning: What do you remember about World War II, when you were living in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Not too much. I was thinking about my brother coming home.

Isabelle Chewning: Your brothers were there?

Virginia Franklin: Yes. I just remember about George, my oldest brother -- next to my oldest. No, George wasn't next to -- Because George, let me see, he used to come by all the time. He was married to Hattie Franklin. He married before he went into the service, I think, or did he? I don't know. He used to live on Crescent Street with my oldest brother. I used to go up there a lot.

Isabelle Chewning: Here in D.C.?

Virginia Franklin: In D.C., up on Swan Street.

Isabelle Chewning: And he was the one who was wounded in the world war?

Virginia Franklin: No, my younger brother, Edward.

Isabelle Chewning: Edward?

Virginia Franklin: Edward was wounded in the service. And they kind of -- he came up there. That's where he stopped at, and lived with Henry, my oldest brother, for awhile. But he went on back into the Navy. He didn't stay long.

Isabelle Chewning: After he was wounded?

Virginia Franklin: Well, he got -- let me see. No, he got better enough. He went in the hospital over there. We didn't hear too much. He was always in contact with my oldest brother, Henry. Henry used to drink a lot, but he was nice. He used to come down to the house. But he had a lot of girlfriends. They were nice. [laughs] And George and my oldest brother [Henry], they used to be up there on Swan Street, and we used to be up there kind of looking after them. My oldest sister [Mary] and I, we used to hang around with them in this house. The lady used to cook, and Henry -- I used to go over there -- go over there and cook breakfast for them sometimes, fried potatoes and onions and I don't know what else. Fish sometimes. And they'd all come back because they'd know I was cooking. And I always wondered to myself, "How in the world could one person do as much as they did like I did for other people?" I wondered to myself, "How could I do all that?" And I was hanging around them to keep them out of trouble maybe, keep my

brother out of trouble. And they would -- my sister and I would always be around them, my oldest sister and I, because Eleanor, she didn't like that kind of life anyway. She was more of a baby. And this is my oldest sister, now, Mary. She hung out. Yes?

[Visitor comes to door. Temporary break in audio.]

Isabelle Chewning: What people do you remember who lived in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: I remember the Craneys, the Pleasants, and the--

Isabelle Chewning: What were the Craneys' names?

Virginia Franklin: Glasgow Craney.

Isabelle Chewning: And was he married?

Virginia Franklin: To Agnes Craney.

Isabelle Chewning: To Agnes. And was Frances their daughter?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, Frances, Ruth-- they had two daughters.

Isabelle Chewning: Did they have any sons?

Virginia Franklin: I don't think they had any sons.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you go to school with any of the Craneys, or were they a little younger than you?

Virginia Franklin: I can't remember where the Craneys ever lived. I think they all lived in Brownsburg right along --

Isabelle Chewning: But they went to your school?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, they went to our school. I can remember Frances, I think she-- I guess before Ruth. Yeah, they went. They went to school with -- down there. Frances and Ruth-- I don't think--

Isabelle Chewing: And how about the Pleasants? What were their names?

Virginia Franklin: Oh, there was -- they had a large family. Linnie, she was the oldest. Linnie, Lucille, Nancy, Wynona, Helen. Those were the girls. The boys was Glasgow, Johnnie, and Charles, the one that's living. One's living.

Isabelle Chewing: Pleasants?

Virginia Franklin: Pleasants, they're our first cousins.

Isabelle Chewing: Where did they live?

Virginia Franklin: They live in Lexington.

Isabelle Chewing: Where did they live when you were growing up? Did they live in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, yeah, down there. They called it down the hill there, like behind the Craneys, down the alley [Still Alley].

Isabelle Chewing: Okay, down the alley?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. Yeah, they lived down there, because we used to go down there every Sunday and their mother, Maggie -- Aunt Maggie, we used to call her -- and we used to go down there every Sunday after church.

Isabelle Chewing: And who was Pitt Pleasants? Do you remember him?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, Uncle Pitt and Aunt Mag. They lived out there, too, on the hill. They didn't have any kids that I knew. They raised Aunt Mag's sister's kids, I think there was two of them -- Clayton and Margaret. And they'd had an older boy. What was his name? I forget his name. They're all gone. They're all gone now. Clayton died when he was very young. They

were Pleasants, yeah. And Aunt Mag and Uncle Dude, they lived out that way where the family home is [just below 1954 Sterrett Road]. We used to, I remember one time we had a -- let me see, a family thing, get together. And I remember me taking steaks out there. I had cooked steaks. I don't remember who went with me. I just remember that part. I was very young, and I remember my grandfather -- my mother's father -- he was kind of short. I remember seeing them on the front porch, and her. I remember that slightly. I remember him more than I did her. Our mother looked more like, I mean, more like her mother. I just remember them a little bit.

Isabelle Chewing: And you said she was the one that had the high cheekbones?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. That was our mother, yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: And her mother did, too?

Virginia Franklin: I think she did. I think she did. But she was very tiny. Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: But that house where Dude and Maggie lived was the home place?

Virginia Franklin: No, it was a little log cabin up there. They lived up in the log house, where Grandmother and Grandfather lived. Aunt Edna lived up there, too, because I don't know where she -- they was dead then, I guess. Aunt Edna lived there a long time, her and Clarence, until the trailer came in later [1954 Sterrett Road]. Leo, her son -- Leo is the only one living now of Aunt Edna's children. Leo, he lives in Texas, yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: But the house that Dude and Maggie lived in? Do you remember--

Virginia Franklin: They lived in--

Isabelle Chewing: They lived a little further down the hill?

Virginia Franklin: A little further down. It belonged to the -- didn't it? It didn't belong to you all's family, did it?

Isabelle Chewing: I don't think so. I don't know.

Virginia Franklin: But they had -- no. No, it didn't because there's one girl left -- Clayton, he had two kids, and I think the house belongs to them. I don't know what they're doing about it. It's probably done fell down there.

Isabelle Chewing: But that was where your mother grew up?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, that's where she grew up, all up around in there. We're supposed to have a lot right there. They say we've got some ground right there, or something. I don't know.

Isabelle Chewing: And where did your father grow up?

Virginia Franklin: You know, I don't know. Around there. I don't know. I guess he grew up over -- I don't know where he grew up at. It must have been around right there where their home was, though, because he had a home. It was his house. His father willed him that house that he grew up in, that our grandmother was in. That was when his father died -- before his father died, he willed him that house.

Isabelle Chewing: Which house was that?

Virginia Franklin: Where the grandmother and them lived.

Isabelle Chewing: And where was it?

Virginia Franklin: Right up over the hill, right close to us on the-- I don't know what route you'd call that. Is that the Fairfield Road? Raphine -- I don't know whether it's called Raphine. You heard of Raphine?

Isabelle Chewing: Uhm.. uhm..

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Do you remember any of the stores in Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, there used to be quite a few. Swisher's. Was that Swishers? Oh, we used to enjoy going to one store, he had all that candy and stuff. I used to crack walnuts and sell them. We'd sell them at -- I forget what store took them. Yeah, we used to sell walnuts. Walnuts

were -- they wasn't expensive. Now they're -- wooh! We used to sell walnuts. I remember picking a big -- like that -- and selling them. I don't know where we took our other things at, rabbit things. We used to have a -- I had a robe made out of it, and I don't know what happened to it.

Isabelle Chewning: Of the hides – the rabbits?

Isabelle Chewning: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know what happened to it. I used to put it on my feet, but I don't know what happened to it. It was nice. I tried to keep all that old stuff, but I couldn't do it. Couldn't keep all of it; too much for me to travel up and down the highway. <laughs>

Isabelle Chewning: Let me see what other questions I have here. You talked a little bit about the lawn parties.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, we used to have them on the first Saturdays. Our father used to take us and he'd -- when it was time to go home, he'd get on that horn and blow it and blow it and blow it and blow. One night, I says, "I ain't going home with them tonight." When he get home, he was calling my name. They said, "Virginia's not here." Katherine would say, "Yes, she is." She was taking up for me. [laughs]

Isabelle Chewning: Because you were still at the lawn party?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, so I got to ride home with someone else. And I heard him snoring and I say, "Well, he's sleeping sound now." I guess the steps would crack, you know? [laughs] "Who's that coming in?" I say, "Gollee. It's me. I missed you." [laughs] As bad as old houses crack, you know?

Isabelle Chewning: Did you get in trouble?

Virginia Franklin: Not really, no.

Isabelle Chewning: Was he pretty strict?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he was strict, yeah. He would never-- people around here always say their parents used to whip them, but he never whipped none of us girls.

Isabelle Chewning: No?

Virginia Franklin: Never. They would say, "Well, we got whipped." He didn't believe in whipping girls.

Isabelle Chewning: Did he whip the boys?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he'd whip the younger ones, like Dan and Edward, the one that was in the Navy. But he didn't whip the girls. He'd whip the boys, but not the girls. He didn't believe in it. He'd just look at us like he was going to eat us up, and we knew what was what.

Isabelle Chewning: So he was strict?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he was real strict. You'd think he was sleeping when he wasn't.
[laughs]

Isabelle Chewning: Was he pretty religious? Did he go to church regularly?

Virginia Franklin: He didn't go to church that much, but he always went, you know? He would go to church when we had Harvest Home in October, auction things off. He was good at that. He would take things, decorate it and fix it up and everything, and they would have him be the one to auction things off in the sale.

Isabelle Chewning: To make money for the church?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, to make money for the church.

Isabelle Chewning: What kind of things would they auction?

Virginia Franklin: They wouldn't have canned food. They didn't have canned food much. Most of it was fresh food. I can't remember now what. We'd have it every year, too, and we'd know who was going to do it. He was the one that did it, always. He was good at that. I can't remember now.

Isabelle Chewning: It must have been hard for him, having such a big family and your mother had died.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, it was. And several of his kids died before he did.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, really?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. Edward, the youngest Navy boy, he died before our father passed, and he had a time. My oldest brother, he went down there and told him. He didn't call. He came down in his cab. He drove a cab, my oldest brother [Henry]. That's what he did. He drove a cab here in the city, number 13.

Isabelle Chewning: In D.C.?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, in D.C.

Isabelle Chewning: How did everybody -- how come everybody came to D.C.?

Virginia Franklin: When my oldest sister [Mary] -- she was up here first.

Isabelle Chewning: And why did she come? Did she have a job?

Virginia Franklin: Maybe she did. I don't know. But she came up, her and my other sister, Margaret, they came up, got an apartment.

Isabelle Chewning: It just seems like such a long way to come.

Virginia Franklin: I know. We all had -- every last one of us landed up here in Washington, all of us. After they came up, and then later on after our father passed and our brothers said, "Well, we're going to not do no more farming," I said, "Oh, goodness, what are we going to do?" He [Dan Franklin] said, "Well, I'm going to be down here," so he went to Staunton. Dora [Dan Franklin's wife] had already -- they'd found a place, an apartment or something. No, they found an apartment. Dora had an apartment. But I think they gave that apartment up and got another apartment, her and Dan together. And then they -- he got married before they came to Staunton, him and Dora, they got married and they moved and everything until they got able enough to-- He was doing all that big what he did, did all that, and made pretty good money. And they bought that house down there, which I'm sorry I didn't keep. And that's what I can remember, but I only remember-- nothing else about -- I know we had Harvest Home because I mentioned up here at our church, I said, "We should have Harvest Home, let people bid." Harvest Home was what you have stored up, then you bring it and have it sold for the building -- keeping of the church. And I know he was really at that; he really took an interest in that. Everything he brought for the

Harvest Home was something; nothing that -- everything had been fresh, like he'd bring sugar cane. I used to strip cane.

Isabelle Chewing: How'd you strip cane?

Virginia Franklin: It would grow real tall. Then you'd -- I don't know how we made it. I used to take it to a machine or something, make molasses. We used to have molasses. Make a gingerbread. [laughs]

Isabelle Chewing: So making molasses and making apple butter and butchering were all big events?

Virginia Franklin: And we had a place down there we'd go and can peaches. We had a cannery. You didn't have to pay, you just went.

Isabelle Chewing: Where was the cannery?

Virginia Franklin: Right there in Brownsburg -- near the school. I don't know. We had it for a long time. And he'd take us in there.

Isabelle Chewing: But you didn't have to pay? You just took your peaches?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. You didn't -- I don't remember anybody paying anything, and we used to take a whole lot. And we'd be canning, and we'd have to buy the jars to put 'em in. And we did a whole lot. I wonder what we did with that fruit? Corn, we had corn, too.

Isabelle Chewing: And how did you can it? Was there boiling water that you put the jars in?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, and you put the jars in something to pressure seal them up tight, yeah. We'd do that. That was a lot of work, too. I don't know who went with me. It seems like it somebody went with me. I'll have to ask somebody. I don't know who I'm going to ask. Maybe I can ask Eleanor. I don't think Eleanor went. Eleanor wasn't interested in stuff like that.

Isabelle Chewing: What was she interested in?

Virginia Franklin: Eleanor, I think she was at school. She was in school. She's the one went through high school, yeah. I think that's it. I can't remember that. Maybe I'll remember that back over when I'm laying in bed.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you celebrate Christmas when you were growing up?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. We celebrated, but we didn't -- no gifts.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have a Christmas tree?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, we had one, did one. Not in the beginning. In later years, we did. He used to bring us gifts: oranges, marshmallows, nuts. And that was under the Christmas tree and around the fireplace. And that's what he'd get. That was our Christmas. And he would go to town and get them all and everything, and have that there. It was wonderful. It was beautiful. I'd like that now.

Isabelle Chewning: He would take the horse and wagon to town?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: To Lexington?

Virginia Franklin: No.

Isabelle Chewning: Or to Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewning: To Brownsburg.

Virginia Franklin: And we wouldn't know we had them. And he'd bring everything out for us to roast the marshmallows and everything, which was wonderful. Now, as I think of it, you know.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you have a big Christmas dinner?

Virginia Franklin: We just started having a big Christmas dinner not too many years ago. We didn't have no television. I don't even know, but I guess we had a radio. I don't even know whether – I guess we had a radio. I don't know whether we had a radio or not.

Isabelle Chewing: Do you remember when you got a telephone?

Virginia Franklin: Oh, we didn't have no telephone at all, as far as I know. If we had one, it was one of those you stand up and ring. I don't think we had a telephone. I know we didn't have any turkeys for a long time for Christmas. We had ham. He used to get oysters. We'd have that for Sunday, Christmas. Fish. That's what he loved, oysters. And he loved fried fish. But his favorite food was oysters. He liked them raw. Some people do, you know? But I like them fried.

Isabelle Chewing: I like them fried.

Virginia Franklin: They're very expensive. I've been looking around trying to get me some now. They're so expensive. I can't remember -- I'll remember more of anything. That kitchen stove, a lot of time we didn't have wood, and my brothers and I had to go out in the woods and cut down -- it'd be so cold, we'd go and cut down limbs and dry limbs and saw them up and bring them home. I don't know how we brought them home. In a wagon or something.

Isabelle Chewing: Well, that kept you pretty busy, then, between getting wood and getting water from the spring.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewing: Is it hard to cook on a wood stove?

Virginia Franklin: No, we'd have it fired up. It'd be nice and warm in the kitchen. We had a huge kitchen, a kitchen almost as big as this. And that's where we stayed most of the time because we only had two rooms upstairs, I think. And I had one bed, I know. I had one bed by myself. It was a little flat bed, and I told them wasn't nobody sleeping in that bed.

Isabelle Chewing: So it was boys in one room, and girls in the other room?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. And I was the only one that took care of them a lot, because they were sick a lot. And I'd say, "Gee, I'm so tired of staying inside. I'm getting out of here." I went walking somewhere because they had flu, some of them. They had the whooping cough. And I

don't know, they were all sickly like. But they were well when they were well. But I told them I had to get out 'cause I didn't want it. I didn't have the mumps until I came here in the city. I came here in the city; I had the mumps. I said, "Just now catching them!." I couldn't open my mouth. I said, "What's wrong with my--" I had to go to the doctor and he said, "Mumps." After I came up here!

Isabelle Chewing: Did you have chicken pox and measles when you were young?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, I had that. I had the chicken pox when I was home, but not much. I didn't have too many childhood sicknesses. But I remember about the mumps because it was terrible, and I remember about chicken pox and the measles, little red measles. The little red ones, you remember, that itch you so.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you get a vaccination for smallpox?

Virginia Franklin: I don't think so. I don't remember going to no doctor never. I guess I did. I don't know. Maybe I didn't. We had so many remedies.

Isabelle Chewing: Do you remember what any of those were?

Virginia Franklin: No, I don't remember. I'll have to ask Eleanor. She remembers. [laughs]

Isabelle Chewing: Do you think she'd remember?

Virginia Franklin: I don't know. I've got to ask. I'm going to tell her today. I've got to ask her, but I doubt it. She ain't gonna remember. She might, though.

Isabelle Chewing: Did you ever go with your father out in the woods to get any of those?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, him I can remember. I used to go with him to Charlottesville -- and down in there to pick up -- get apples. And my sister Katherine was so sick, she used to be so sick, we used to take her to Charlottesville. I was smoking at that time. He couldn't stand to see a woman smoke. It [the road] was so slick. I'd say, "Listen, slick or no slick, smoke or no smoke, I'm going to smoke me a cigarette!" [laughs] And so I smoked a cigarette and put the glass down. And I don't know where he'd been looking too much 'cause he was worried about that, the weather, it was so slick. We had to take her to the doctor, over to Charlottesville.

Isabelle Chewning: All the way over to Charlottesville?

Virginia Franklin: All the way over to Charlottesville. I had to stay in Charlottesville. How'd this happen? That reminds me, I did. I stayed in Charlottesville before I could go to see her, by her being so sick. I don't know what her problem was. I stayed in Charlottesville, and I had to catch a cab. I don't know where I got the money at to catch a cab to the hospital to see her. I don't know where I got money at. Maybe he gave me some money. He probably did give me a little money. [laughs] That's something else. I remember that. We were going over the mountain, and it was so slick and so foggy he had to hold his head out to the window to see the road. Oh, boy. I remember that.

Isabelle Chewning: You were driving in -- was he in the Model T?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. I remember that. Yeah, he was driving the Model T. We used to make trips over there. Boy, I hated it.

Isabelle Chewning: That's a long way to go.

Virginia Franklin: It was. Cold. And we only had a fireplace -- we had one big one. Later on in years, we had a big stove, but to keep the fire all night, put a big log in. It was good.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you only have a fireplace in the kitchen?

Virginia Franklin: No, it was in the next bedroom, where my brothers and them used to sleep.

Isabelle Chewning: But it was cold upstairs?

Virginia Franklin: It was cold upstairs. We'd keep the heat pretty high, but if it got warm enough we'd just undress, and run up and get in bed.

Isabelle Chewning: Do you remember when you got electricity?

Virginia Franklin: I don't remember. That's when we was living at the farm [Castle Carbury], we didn't have it. We had lamps. I found the lamp. I brought a lamp up here from my brother's, and I got it in case the lights go out, I have the lamp. And I don't remember that. I don't think we -- oh, we did get electricity. We did, when we were at the-- in the country, on the farm. But I don't

remember when. I know we didn't have no TV. I don't even know whether we had a radio or not. I don't think so. I don't think -- you know, when you died, people at that time used to bring them home. And I said, "Oh, God," when my sister died. We picked -- had to bring her home.

Isabelle Chewning: Which sister?

Virginia Franklin: Katherine. She had some kind of kidney trouble. I think she was the only one. Was she the only one? That was something else.

Isabelle Chewning: So she was laid out at your house?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah.

Isabelle Chewning: Was it that way when your mother died?

Virginia Franklin: I don't remember about her. I guess it was, but I don't remember at all about that, for her. No, it wasn't that -- it must not have been, because when my grandmother died, I wasn't able to go. I had something wrong with my foot at that time. Some of them would tease me and said I didn't want to go. But my foot, it seems like I must have been to the doctor, some time, right? Something wrong with my foot on the bottom. I couldn't walk. And there was a big snow when we buried her, a terrible big snow. It was better when -- she was buried in a winter month. I think it was January, December, something like that.

Isabelle Chewning: And is she buried in Brownsburg as Asbury [United Methodist Church]?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, she was. I've got a Bible, you can hardly see all of the names and the deaths when they died, and everything. I don't remember about my mother being buried. I don't know, I guess she was brought home, too. I don't know. My grandmother, she was brought home. I don't remember my grandfather. Oh, yes, I do. He was buried at the New Providence [Presbyterian Church] -- had his service at New Providence church because he took care of the church up there and everything. Yeah, he used to clean up around up there.

Isabelle Chewning: What was his name?

Virginia Franklin: John.

Isabelle Chewning: Franklin?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, John. And he was a tiny, neat man; just as neat as you'd want to be, tiny. And he had a brother, too. He lived a long ways from us. He used to walk out of there, and his wife was a Peters, Miss Carrie Peters. I guess that was her aunt. But he lived back in those mountains. My other sister, Katherine, used to have to go back there and take care of them, and she was so upset. She didn't want to go. I told her I didn't blame her. I wasn't going! [laughs] Oh, boy. And then they both passed. I don't remember. They were back there in the hills. But it was rough back there. You couldn't get back there when the weather was bad.

Isabelle Chewning: Behind Brownsburg?

Virginia Franklin: Way out further from where we lived in the country.

Isabelle Chewning: Towards Newport? Towards Staunton?

Virginia Franklin: No. You remember -- let's see. What was the family that lived -- that's who taught Dan, my brother, how to-- my brother worked with him, McNutts. That's who taught him how to do carpenter work and everything, Hugh McNutt. I think he's passed. The girl lived there. I think I met her here not long--

Isabelle Chewning: Her name is Ann [Lothery]?

Virginia Franklin: Ann, yeah. Ann. She's still living, Ann McNutt. And her [father] taught my brother [Dan Franklin] how to do all that fancy work and everything, yeah. That's who taught him, then he went in business for himself. Because he used to come up here a lot, my brother, and do work for me on the -- you know, he used to come from Staunton up, when I lived in Brownsburg. And so he -- yeah, I remember that, that's who. Hugh McNutt. I don't remember my grandfather, about his funeral. All I know is, Grandmother's was in a big snow, and I couldn't go. And I haven't had any trouble with my feet anymore. I can't remember what kind of shoes I wore. I'd like to have my shoes, but I don't remember them. [laughs] I don't remember anybody go to no dentist or nothing. Sunday mornings I know we used to go to church all the time.

Isabelle Chewning: Did you walk or did you take the horse and wagon?

Virginia Franklin: I think we must have walked because we didn't take the wagon then. Yeah, we walked, a bunch of us. We would walk, not on the highway. We had a track in the field that'd

lead us clear to, almost to the church. And when we went home in the afternoon, we'd take that same trail on back, and we'd bring a dog of some kind. The dog would know the trail. [laughs]

Isabelle Chewning: Did the dog go in the church?

Virginia Franklin: No. No. The dog didn't go in the church, but the dog would sit out there and wait for us. Oh, goodness. We gave the dog away when we left. I didn't want to leave that dog down there. I used to raise dogs.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, you did?

Virginia Franklin: I used to have the most nice dogs. One day we were -- this dog I left and I said, "Listen, I'm leaving out now. Now don't you do nothing. If you do, I'm going to punish you." And I had a ham, and I said, "Oh, my God. Something's happened. I know you did something wrong," because he came to me with his tail down. I felt so sorry for him, and I said, "Now, you've done messed up. I know what happened. You done ate that meat up there." He'd eaten most of the ham, and I was so scared I couldn't even say nothing to him. I just, I said, "Oh, my goodness, you want to go out?" So he went out walking. I couldn't hit him or nothing because I knew he was --

Isabelle Chewning: He was going to be sick.

Virginia Franklin: -- sick of me and die before the night. But he didn't. I didn't give him nothing to eat for awhile. [laughs] Oh, he was nice. Candy, we had Candy first. Got her when she was a baby. Somebody gave me -- it was the Catholic man. They lived in the church across the street. And he gave me another dog, and he was a puppy. I had to train it and everything. And I love dogs. I love to take care of them. I asked them could I have a dog come in here, and they told me, "No." [laughs] He'd just sit there by himself until we came home. He was good.

Isabelle Chewning: The tape's about to run out again.

Virginia Franklin: Oh.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

Virginia Franklin: Those lawn parties were nice. Someone got shot at our lawn party.

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, my.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. What was his name, that did that shooting?

Isabelle Chewning: Oh, my goodness.

Virginia Franklin: I can't think now. If the Craney -- Frances, was living, she could tell me.

Isabelle Chewning: Did somebody get killed?

Virginia Franklin: I don't remember if they got killed or not. I don't know whether he lived or not. We used to have a lot of people in Brownsburg. We had a lot of people that came to church.

Isabelle Chewning: Not many people anymore go to [Asbury United Methodist] church.

Virginia Franklin: I know it. But I give them a lot of thanks for keeping that church open.

Isabelle Chewning: They really work hard.

Virginia Franklin: I know it.

Isabelle Chewning: There are not many of them, but the ones that are there really work hard at keeping it. They're trying to raise money to get the windows fixed up. They've been working really hard at that.

Virginia Franklin: I know they are. I remember this big wedding we had a church. Alexander. Bob Alexander, they had this big wedding for him. Her name was -- Harry Holtz, Harry Holtz' daughter. Do you remember them, they used to --

Isabelle Chewning: I don't.

Virginia Franklin: Oh, you don't know.

Isabelle Chewning: I don't know his daughter. I know who he is.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, well he had a daughter -- two daughters. And she's still living there, the one that got married. I guess she is, living in Staunton. I know the mother's dead. Harry Holtz' daughter married Bob Alexander -- yeah, Robert Alexander.

Isabelle Chewing: And did people have weddings back then when you were young? People get married in the church?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, he had a big wedding. I used to have a picture of that big wedding. I don't know what happened to it.

Isabelle Chewing: Did anybody in your family get married in that church?

Virginia Franklin: No, I don't think so. I don't know. They used to have some weddings in church, but I couldn't remember now. I don't know whether the Craney got married in that church or not. Frances's sister, Ruth, I don't know if she did or not. Maybe she did get married there. She had a big wedding, I think. I don't know. I can't remember now.

Isabelle Chewing: Anything else about Brownsburg you can remember to tell me about?

Virginia Franklin: Let's see. Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewing: I think I've asked all my questions.

Virginia Franklin: I can't think of nothing else happened in Brownsburg. Brownsburg, we used to have a lot of fun in Brownsburg, though. We had a lot of fun.

Isabelle Chewing: So you have good memories?

Virginia Franklin: Uhm.. uhm.. We had a lot of fun in Brownsburg.

Isabelle Chewing: Well, I know it seems like everyone sure thought a lot of your family.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, well Franklins were well-known people in Brownsburg. Always there, always willing to help, always went to whatever. They'd call on us anytime. They'd call on Dad. Dad would always be there to help. Whatever it was, he would help. Our grandmother used to

get so upset with him. He would drive his car and pick her up, and be in a hurry. And she'd say, "Wait up here, boy. Wait up here, boy."

Isabelle Chewing: Because he was driving too fast?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. But he never say no bad nothing to her. Nothing. He'd just be nice. She depended on him, oh, gracious! She just called on him all the time. We took food over to her all the time, see that she had food. And then she'd never say nothing, ever. But her children used to come once in a while. She had a lot of kids. She had one son lived in Lexington. He didn't come see her ever, and he's dead now. I don't think she had but -- she had three sons. Yeah, three sons. Dad and Lloyd and-- Dad, Lloyd and--

Isabelle Chewing: Lloyd? Is that his name?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, that's the one that was handicapped. He used to play and sing. The guitar and a harp, he used to play them. He was good.

Isabelle Chewing: What did he play, the guitar and what else?

Virginia Franklin: He had a harp. Yeah, what do you call them?

Isabelle Chewing: Harmonica?

Virginia Franklin: Yeah, harmonica. He used to play and sing and oh, he was good. She had a daughter named Virginia.

Isabelle Chewing: Is that who you're named after?

Virginia Franklin: I think so. And then she had another daughter named Arleeta [spelling]. Arleeta had a house right on Florida Avenue, not too far from where I live now. And Aunt Virginia could cook. Oh boy, she could cook. I had a picture of her. I don't know what happened to it.

Isabelle Chewing: Well.

Virginia Franklin: Is that it?

Isabelle Chewing: I think that's about it.

Virginia Franklin: I can't think of no more.

Isabelle Chewing: Well, thank you so -- oh, I know. Can you tell me what your sister's address and phone number are so maybe I can try to get in contact with her? What's her name? It's Eleanor, and what's her last name?

Virginia Franklin: Hawkins. I can have her to come here. It'd be easier for her; closer for you.

Isabelle Chewing: The Metro stop was nice. That's very convenient to get to that.

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. She doesn't have a Metro close like I have. So I can have her to come here, but I'll give you her number. 301-434-5403, Eleanor Hawkins.

Isabelle Chewing: It's H A W K I N S? Well, maybe I can get in touch with her, and then come back after Christmas some time and --

Virginia Franklin: Yeah. That would suit her better.

Isabelle Chewing: -- talk to her.

Virginia Franklin: Okay.

Isabelle Chewing: That would be great. Well, this has been-- thank you so much for taking so much time to talk to me. I really appreciate all your time.

Virginia Franklin: Well, I enjoyed you bringing my memories back.

Isabelle Chewing: Good!

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

Virginia Bell Franklin Index

A

Apple butter · 11
Asbury United Methodist Church · 17, 52
 Harvest Home · 44
 Lawn Party · 14, 43, 53
 Revivals · 35

B

Berry picking · 18
Brown, James · 14
Brown, Pidge · 14
Brownsburg
 Cannery · 46

C

Cannery · 46
Castle Carbury · 1
Christmas · 15, 47
Craney, Agnes · 39
Craney, Frances · See Porterfield, Frances
 Craney
Craney, Glasgow · 14, 39
Craney, Ruth · 39, 55

D

Dentist · 52
Diseases
 Chicken Pox · 49
 Measles · 49
 Mumps · 48
 Smallpox · 49
 Whooping Cough · 48
Doctors · 19

E

Electricity · 50

F

Farming
 Butchering · 11, 21

Chickens · 11
Garden · 11
Horses · 14
Sugar Cane · 11, 45
Franklin Family
 10 Children · 3
 Girls named for Wade Girls · 25
Franklin, Daniel · 13, 14, 22, 45
 Brother · 3
 Builder · 23
 Served in WWII · 19
 Singing · 17
Franklin, Dora Mae Oliver · 26
Franklin, Edward (brother) · 3
 Death · 45
 Served in WWII · 19
 Wounded in WWII · 38
Franklin, Edward (son) · 29
Franklin, Eleanor · See Hawkins, Eleanor
 Franklin
Franklin, Esterline Haliburton
 Death · 3, 7
 Indian Ancestry · 16
 Mother · 2
Franklin, George · 16, 22
 Brother · 3
 Death in 1983 · 9
 Served in WWII · 19
Franklin, Hattie · 38
Franklin, Henry · 19, 38
 Brother · 3
 Cab Driver in Washington DC · 45
Franklin, John
 New Providence Sexton · 51
Franklin, Katherine · 3, 22, 30
 Death · 9, 51
 Illness · 49
Franklin, Lloyd · 56
Franklin, Mack · 9
 Brother · 3
Franklin, Margaret
 Apartment in DC · 34
 Death in 1982 · 9
 Move to Washington, DC · 45
 Sister · 4
Franklin, Mary Ann · 6, 38, 45
 Death in 1988 · 9
 Sister · 3
Franklin, Mary Jane
 Grandmother · 18, 23
Franklin, Monroe · 23
Franklin, Phyllis Jean
 Daughter · 29
Franklin, Russell · 8
Franklin, Virginia
 Aunt · 56

Franklin, Virginia Bell
Birth · 1
Domestic Help for Wade Family · 24, 30
Move to Washington DC · 21, 33
School · 6, 9, 20
Selling Walnuts · 42
Franklin, Zack · 43
Death · 12
Farmer · 11
Father · 2
Veterinarian · 13

H

Haliburton, Esterline · See Franklin, Esterline
Haliburton
Haliburton, Maggie · 2
Haliburton, William "Dude" · 2, 35, 40
Hawkins, Eleanor Franklin · 3, 17, 22, 38
Bicycle · 33
High School · 46
School in Lexington · 6
Singing in Church Program · 17
Sister · 4
Heffelfinger, Grace · 25
Heffelfinger, Jen Wade · 25, 31, 32
Worked at Bank · 32
Heffelfinger, Steve · 25
Heffelfinger, William · 25
Holtz, Harry · 27

I

Ice Box · 6, 15

L

Lothery, Ann McNutt · 52

M

Marchant, Eleanor Wade · 25, 31, 32
McNutt, Hugh · 52
Midwives · 17

P

Peters, Carrie · 20
Dry Hollow Road · 21
Teacher · 10
Pleasants, Charles · 40
Pleasants, Clarence · 41
Pleasants, Clayton · 40
Pleasants, Edna · 35

Pleasants, Glasgow · 40
Pleasants, Helen · 40
Pleasants, Johnnie · 40
Pleasants, Leo · 41
Pleasants, Linnie · 40
Pleasants, Lucille · 40
Pleasants, Margaret · 40
Pleasants, Nancy · 40
Pleasants, Pitt · 40
Pleasants, Wynona · 40
Porterfield, Frances Craney · 39

R

Rabbits
Trapped for fur · 22

S

Sassafras Tea · 19
Self-Subsistence · 11
Sites, Isabell Oliver · 26
Sterrett, Edna · 31
Stewart, Fannie Bell · 20
Stewart, Samuel Dock · 21
Sunday Night Prayer Meeting · 18

T

Taylor, Dr.
Brownsburg Doctor · 25
Telephone Service · 13, 48
Transportation · 8

W

Wade Farm · 1
Wade, Eleanor · See Marchant, Eleanor Wade
Wade, Jen · See Heffelfinger, Jen Wade
Wade, John · 32
Wade, Kate · 25, 31
Wade, Margaret · 25, 31
Teacher · 32
Wade, Mary · 25, 31, 32
Ward, Elizabeth · 25, 31
Washing · 6
Water, Spring
Used for Cooling Food · 6
Williams, Joe
Brownsburg Doctor · 25
Wine, Homemade · 18
Wood Stove · 48
World War II · 37

