Interview with Peggy Hall Davis

August 11, 1994

Transcript of an Interview about Life in the Jim Crow South
Tallahassee (Fla.)

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**ID:** btvct10092

**Interview Number:** 1084

SUGGESTED CITATION

Interview with Peggy Hall Davis (btvct10092), interviewed by Tywanna Whorley, Tallahassee (Fla.), August 11, 1994, Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South Digital Collection, John Hope Franklin Research Center, Duke University Libraries.

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BEHIND THE VEIL:
DOCUMENTING AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE
IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH:

PEGGY DAVIS

AUGUST 11, 1994
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW:

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Mrs. Davis, where were you born?

PEGGY DAVIS: I was born ( ) County, Tallahassee. Right here.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Oh really. Oh my. When were you born?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, the 15th. Saturday's the 15th, ain't it? I was born 15th of August, 1911.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: 1911. Wow. Where did you live here in Tallahassee?

PEGGY DAVIS: 607 Raleigh Street.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Raleigh Street?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: When you married did you move there, in the black community?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I'll tell you. There's just quite a few people, cause you see where I lived it's a big garage there where people work on cars. Well, they work in the day time and at night they don't. But the lady where I lived next door to is a friend of mine. Well, she's in the hospital. She's suppose to be home today. Sally Kearny. And there's some people, I tell you, the people move there and they move off. And I have a cousin, Mattie Calloway. She lives near me. And the people move so fast it gets so there's a lot of houses. The people move so fast 'till you don't get to know them. They move so fast. But those what I know around there they are really nice, cause this lady where, you know, away in the hospital. She just thinks that I'm her daughter and she can tell me. Peggy, I want you to cook so and so. Well, she been ill for a long time you know, but she's real nice. I been knowing her about 25 years fore I moved there. I been moved there soon will be five years.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you know any of the kids that move into the area?
PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I know her sister's children. I know of him. The man named Billy and the girl, his wife, well, they just got married and I forget what. The girl named Trina. And I know, let me see who else. Mattie Calloway. She don't have any children.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What did you all do for fun when you was little kids?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, when we was little kids we would play seek and go hide and play ( ). And we'd go, they'd have parties and then we'd go out to the parties. The boys would be blowing their harps and we would be dancing and ( ). And we had a big time. No fussing. No fighting or nothing of the kind. Every party. Them that wadn't playing in the ring they'd pull them and we'd start them to playing in the ring. We all went to one school near bout just a one roomed school and it was about as big as from that post back to the wall. And they had just about a hundred head of children there and wasn't but one teacher teaching us. But honey, did we know not to go wrong. You see, when the people was letting their children get whippings at school they had better children and the children wasn't as terrible as they is now. Now they'll tell you if they in the
street doing something I know it's the ( ), cause I sit on my porch and listen at them talking that kind of talk back to they parents. And I know if it was me I'd stay in jail, but see, all of my children is grown.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What school did you go to?

PEGGY DAVIS: Donkin's Poem. Donkin Poem. I know. It's right on the Thomasville Road going into Thomasville and they moved that school down to Lake McBride. Do you know where Lake McBride? You get at Bradfordville and you turn to your left and drive right into that big school. That's where we all, all my children and part of my mama's children went to school, to that same school.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did you go to high school or what?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I'm going to tell you. All of my sisters left and we all started to Lake McBride to school and my mama was beginning to get ill and I had to be home with her and to help send them other two to Lake McBride. I went to Lake McBride about three years and then I had to stay home and help mama and my other three sisters, well, they went on through
TYWANNA WHORLEY: So what grade did you end with?

PEGGY DAVIS: In the 8th grade. Uh huh. The 8th grade, when I stopped and jumped up and got married and then after I got married all the children, all the large children to that school, the Gaines and all. Then they married. And then they hired me back there for four years to cook to that same school.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: You say your mom got sick. Did you have to take care of her or did you work?

PEGGY DAVIS: I worked around the house. You see, it was 14 head of us and my brothers always, when they got up some size, they always would work and then they'd make their money. They'd bring it and give it to my mama and I just stayed around for, you know, to see after her.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What would they do for a living? I mean, would they do odd jobs?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. If they'd
work. One was, you know, he, different work that they would do, you
know, for the people, 'cause you see we lived on the Baker's
plantation. We didn't have no rent to pay. We didn't have to pay
a dime to go to the doctor. We didn't have to pay a dime if
anything got the matter with our eyes or teeth or anything. They
did all of that and we all come up working under them. On
the plantation. And they got forty some thousands of land. I
mean they got land, land, land, but all the older heads, you
know, they passed away and that left nothing but the young. But
they still come down and hunt every year. You know, they comes
down and hunt quails and I run the laundry there for twelve
years.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Their name was Baker?


TYWANNA WHORLEY: Why was it that your father didn't have
to pay for the land? Did you family ( )?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, we all lived on the plantation. Yeah,
we all lived on the plantation, but you see, my mother and my
daddy separated when my sister was seven years old. And with
dad gone, you see, all them big older boys, see, there was four boys was older than me and they was just, you know, old enough to manage jobs and to help my mama and to raise her. Because long in that time the people wasn't as strict on the men people by making them take care of them children and things, but we had to work. And then, we was running the farm and we made many stuff you know on that farm.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What did you make?

PEGGY DAVIS: Butter beans, corn, okra, tomatoes, and carrots and all that kind of stuff.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did you grow cotton too?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, but all of us got around mama and told her, mama, this is the last year I'm picking cotton. She say, why? My back hurts. You don't have no back. Ain't got nothing but a ( ). We laugh about it sometimes now, but my mama and my daddy, they, you know, they never did act like they were separated, but they was. See, my daddy was living down here and my mama was living out there. So then when he got my mama to, they moved down here, they never acted like they were separated.
He'd go see her every other week. He wouldn't go every week and then both of them died they up there to Milton Hills. Both of them passed. Up there to Milton Hills. And if you carried her one cookie in a bag, she'd broke it into and give him a piece of it. So I'd say, well, I just don't know what kind of separation that was.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did you all like the white people that you lived on the land with?

PEGGY DAVIS: Did I like them?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Yeah, the Bakers?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, Lord I loved it. I loved it all. And do you know how many people, I reckon she had about 200 houses on the plantation and everybody lived in them houses. They didn't have to pay no rent.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Why? Why was that?

PEGGY DAVIS: On the Horse Shoe Plantation. It's the house there now. Then when I come here, I was moved out there. I was
living on Horse Shoe Plantation and I knowed the difference. Your house needed fixing they would fix that. You see, they say they was some of the richest people they was in the United States of America. They'd go up north and they'd live up there six months. They'd come down here and they'd live down here six months and they would hunt the whole while they was done here. They'd go fishing. They'd hunt quails and things like that. That's where we all was born. Every child my mother got, 14 head was born right there on that plantation.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: ( ) because I'm thinking, you live on a plantation ( ) what are they getting out of ( ).

PEGGY DAVIS: Huh?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What are the Bakers ( )? They would just let you move off?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah. They was really nice. Any time you wanted to go to the doctor, if you was attending a doctor down here in Tallahassee and you didn't like that doctor. If you wanted to go to Thomasville, that's where they sent you. To Thomasville.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: What would you say made them different from other white people during that time?

PEGGY DAVIS: I don't know. Well, we have a lot of rich people out there, you know. The plantation. The Four Shade Plantation. The people is rich there. They joined the Bakers, the Bakers' Plantation and it just. And they house they lived in when they would come down, they'd have 32 rooms in it and then all of us who worked there we had our own room. They had the big laundry there and we had our own room. We washed our clothes. See, we was all working there and if we got sick and wanted to go to the doctor they sent us where we wanted to go.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Oh, so you all worked for them.

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah. We worked for them. All of my life that's where I mostly worked and then I worked to cooking to Lake McBride. I worked there, you know, a good while until I got tired and I told them I had just give out.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What kind of jobs did you and your brothers do for the Bakers?
PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I run the laundry. I was the head lady running the laundry and my brother was the head man on holding their horses when they'd go out in the field. And I had another brother. He run the dog kennel. They had their own dogs. Their own horses. Their own buggies what they go out. They own trucks and they had about 20 some cars. If you couldn't get one car to carry yore people to the doctor, you got a truck or just what was there to go. And they even had, two of us had, the boys had airplanes and the air base was right down below this house where I'm telling you about, cause we called it the big house. And it was two kitchens. I cooked in the little kitchen and a friend of mine, she cooked there for the Bakers. And they had white help. They had about 12 white ladies and mens they'd bring down from New York every year to, you know, to work for them. To work for them and then all of us down here. So they had people working in the yards, keep the yards clean, rake leaves, and they'd work the peoples little children like that. When they'd get out of school, they'd always leave the children something to do. And I think the children enjoyed it.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: How much did they pay you?
PEGGY DAVIS: I'm going to tell you. They paid different prices for the type of work you was doing and you'd get from $60 to $75 every two weeks. But the mens got way more than the ladies got, you know, because it just like you be the head of something, you'd get more than I would get. If you the head of the laundry, they paid you more and we didn't have to pay no rent and we didn't have to pay no doctor bills and everything. We always run a little farm, me and my husband, children, and everything you made in that farm went to you.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did your father sell the cotton that you all ( ). Did he sell there in town?

PEGGY DAVIS: Did he sell what?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: The cotton.

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. They would go and sometime when my daddy was home, sometimes the boys would get done with their plowing, he would have two bales of cotton like that. And you know along in then I didn't never know what they was getting for that cotton because you know old people didn't let their children get in their business like they do now. And you was
afraid to ask them. If they told you something, you just had to believe it and keep on getting up, cause they didn't never tell you their business.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Where did you mom and dad work for the Bakers?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, my mama cooked there 22 years and that's who I been in the kitchen behind. She was the cook there for 22 years and my daddy never did work for the Bakers because he mostly, you know, now I tell you he did a little carpentering job. But now my husband, what I married, he was a real carpenter in ( ) but he passed, it's been 21 years ago now. But he did all their painting and stuff like that.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did you know your grandparents?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, my granddaddy was, well, I had two, four. My daddy's mother was named Peggy Ann and that's my name. He named me after her and granddaddy he was named Thomas Hall. And my mama's daddy he was named Luke Jones and his mother, her mother was named Charity Jones.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Where did your ( )? Did they live on a plantation too?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yes, oh Lord. So many people done died and gone away, but it's still some people out there and they still comes down to hunt, you know. But they live six months down here and six months up yonder. But they's still come, but the things not like it used to be cause you see, so many of the houses, the people moved out of and didn't keep them up and they just rotted and she had them took down.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What do you remember about your grandparents' home?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I know my grandmother, my mama's mother, she was a mid-wife. And well, my daddy he mostly farmed a little bit, you know, cause when we got up big enough to know them my grandmother did a lot of fishing. Now she loved just to go fishing all the time and she would take me right behind her going to fishing all the time. Me and my brother who I was next to. She would take us fishing and she fixed us a little pole and we'd catch the little fish bout like that and throw it back.
That was something we be doing, catching fish. Well, she would get the big one. She would catch big fish and I reckon she knewed we couldn't pull the big ones out of the water, 'cause we wouldn't never go in the boats. We'd be on the bank. But we really enjoyed having, my mama's people, they farmed. Yeah, they farmed, and right out to the end of their home they had a big grave yard and that's where we buried my grandparents. Before you get to the Thomasville highway, you cross the Thomasville highway, I'm the first house where we lived and they lived, they used to live in that house. But I remember when they lived there. Yeah, I knowed my grandparents real good.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did they ever talk about what went on in slavery at that time?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, uh, no, cause we never did, like they was asking the children now about slavery, you know, the old parents stuff. Well, some of them can remember things about the old slavery, but I just didn't ever know. I knowed about when they was going to serve in the Army, cause my mother had a brother went to the Army and I didn't even know where he lived, but I remember when he came home. Cause mama and them was just running all over the floor just crying and going on and when he
came out of the Army, he had, they used to wear something they called wrap leggings. You don't know nothing about it.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: I've seen them.

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh. Well, that's what, when he came home he had on the Army clothes and you know they used to stick way out. Them khaki pants they used to wear. And he had on a suit of them and I saw a lot of them, you know. Different people, you know, went in and served, but I didn't even know when my uncle, my mama's brother went. So this is what I would hear them say that the grandmama, I mean our grandmama say that her son, he was named Levy Tucker, said he was in service and he came home and they did some crying, hugging and going on. I was standing looking at him. I didn't know no reason as to why they was crying and going on 'till I got up and mama say, and I'd ask my mama questions. And she said, well, we was glad to see him back in the home again. Said, because he been off fighting war. And that's all we knowed.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: He fought in the war?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh. First World War.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Oh, wow. So you don't remember any stories that they told you about slaves.

PEGGY DAVIS: No, that's all I know, because I didn't never talk to grandma Charity and old man Luke Jones about slavery, but I guess my mama could tell you something about slavery because my mama was 107 years and a week and a half old when she passed. My daddy was 104. My mother always did say she was older than him and both of them passed up there to Milton Hill. You know where that at?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Uh uh.

PEGGY DAVIS: That's where they send most of the old people when they, you know, they don't wait until they get too sick before they send them up there and if they wants to go up there, they'll send 'em and they still sends them up there cause I have a lot of people up there now. Young people, you know, is up there, but it's a great big place and they give a big picnic up there every May. They give that big picnic and we all go up there and join with them and have singing and speaking and doing and it's real nice. Real nice. And then they got a place up
there. They say they going to let it, but it's got about 20 some rooms. And it's not far from me. I can walk right up there where they at. And so I have a lot of people, you know, that passed up there. Aunts and things like that. But my mama was the oldest child her mother had. She was the oldest one and then she had two boys. Robert and Net, cause they was next to her and she had about, she said 12 head. They all was grown. I lived long to know all of them.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: ( )

PEGGY DAVIS: Huh?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Any stories they ever tell you?

PEGGY DAVIS: I had one uncle. We used to worry him so bad till he'd hide from us. Making him tell old things, you know, and things that happened and I reckon that he passed, cause he been passed a good while. I forgot some of 'em, but he would often have us, and he would say I'm tired of ya'll children. Ya'll go on home to your mama. And that was my mama's brother. But he loved, he would go clean to our house. He would cook for us. Oh, that was a number one cook I'm telling you. When
we knew Uncle Phil was coming, oh, buddy, we would tote that wood up. Was cooking on a wood stove then. We'd tote that wood up and get. I mean he could cook. Make from a cake on down and tea cakes. He could do all of that. He was a good cook and he was a clean man. I knowed him. He was living by himself and my mama said he had two wives. Yeah. Said one had passed and he married again. And I think that one quit from what mama told, because I loved to ask mama things you know and have her laughing about it. But now here's a man be out there. He don't come out our road. I mean, buddy, he can naturally born tell about slavery times from what his parents told him. And I'm older than he is, but he every 20th of May we have this big picnic out to our church and he'd get up and speak on it, you know. I speaks on about all of the old people I know. Huh?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What is the 20th of May?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, it's be to our church. We all fix baskets and carry out and just sit long tables like this and everybody who want to come just come and eat and drink. And they play different games and win different prizes, cause my daughter won some of the nicest prizes out there last year. These silver platters and the glasses and all like that, they
have, you know, the white peoples helps us out a lots. Because, oh, all our drinks and we just have crates of sodas like that they sends out and all the boxes of candy and all that kind of stuff. And then we make fried chicken and fish and make cakes and salad and all that and just put it on the table. And everybody go on by and get what they want.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: ( ) the 20th of May?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, we just, when we got up old enough to know our old parents would celebrate the 20th of May cause they would sell to the 20th of May, but we don't sell. We just give it for the people freely. And of course, I remember, I was going to the 20th of May when people had these tables out there and they sold fish and ice cream and soda and all that kind of stuff like that. What they would sell on the 20th of May, but we don't sell it.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: The question I asked, what did you celebrate on the 20th of May? Why did ya'll have this gathering and things?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I don't know. I don't know. I'm
telling you now, I don't know why would they celebrate the 20th of May, but we would. We'd celebrate the 20th of May and when I got up to know, honey, the people would be to that. Oh, people from everywhere. Thomasville. All over. Miccosukee. All them places would meet there, you know, and they would be selling stuff there. And we'd go out there and enjoy it. When I started to courting, I'd come more near getting a whipping on the 20th of May. I call it a whipping, you know, cause I reckon one of the girls would court on the boyfriends. The next day, the next week after the 20th, they'd come, I'm going to give your company back to your mama. The young boys used to ask to come see the girls. I'm going to give your company back. You didn't, we'd slip around there and we'd do some courting on the 20th of May and even us girls told our parents say, yeah. They hadn't turned us out to courting, see. So Louella, me and Louella got together and Louella told her parents and I told mine. I said, well, mama, I went up to the fence on the 20th of May, but the 4th of July I'm going through the fence. Mama said what does that mean. I'm going to turn my own self out to court. And mama laughed. I thought, you know, she might have whipped me. And Louella told her parents the same thing and she said her parents laughed. But if you talk with them boys, you'd have to hide before they turned you out to courting. And I
don't know why they have to let you get so old before they, you know, let you start to taking company.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: When was this age? The normal age that they turned you out to court?

PEGGY DAVIS: Eighteen.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Eighteen?

PEGGY DAVIS: Eighteen. And we would, we done been courting ( ), cause when we was little children we used to say such and such a little boy. He's so cute. That's my boy friend.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: All right.

PEGGY DAVIS: But we has much fun and I, we have singing and

(interruption)
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did your parents or your uncles or aunts talk about those things like that?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, no. They didn't talk about them too much, because they say they didn't want to make the children afraid to see ( ), but they never did, you know, talk about ghosts and different things. Now I had a sister. My sister could see them things. Uh uh. She could see 'em. The one, there's a boy between me and her and you know, he's older than she is and she was born with a veil over her face there the midwife said. She had, and she say she going to see ghosts and she go be a nurse and she been nursing for 30 some years in Miami and she retired last year. Yes sir. And her daughter is a nurse and she is a nurse. But she used to sit back up on the porch. She said, Sister, she said, I saw Uncle Phil's car just awhile a go. Sometimes you'd be in the yard and she'd say get back. Get back. And she said, them things would come before her face, but the older she got, she grewed out of it. But yeah, she shore did. Just come to me. She shore did used to see them things and my uncle had a car and he would mostly pass our house all the time. If he was going, you know, somewhere, he'd pass our house and she said I saw Uncle Phil pass here in
that car. Just that day she'd say it and mama said, uh uh, cause mama, well, when she got a chance, she told me, yeah. Said grandma told me that Jenny was going to see them things and she could hear out in the yard ( ). And she'd just tell them to get back, get back, get back. And she'd say I saw so and so and so and so just now. Yes sir. She could see 'em, but we didn't never.

We didn't know what ghosts was and I still don't know, but we didn't have sense enough to be afraid, you know, of what she be saying she see. And then mama had told me, say, yeah, she was born with a veil over her face and she was going to see them things. Said, but she would out grow. That's what her grandmama told her that she was born with a veil over her face and I said I was going to ask her what was a veil. She said it's just a white cover be's over the face when they born. Some of 'em ( ) with that veil over their face.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: When ya'll couldn't make it to the doctor or anything what types of home remedies did your mom and grandma used like if you got a cold.

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, they give something, some people call it rabbit tobacco, but they would ( ) over ( ). That's what grew about that tall and it got a white blossom. Now buddy, that
now. I don't do without mine, because I got a quart and a half in the back of my Frigidaire and when that cold starts coming on me all I got to do, put me a little bit in a pot and heat it and buddy, it makes the flowers bloom and buddy, it really is good for that cold. Now if it don't knock out that cold, honey you better go and see a doctor. And long in then, a lot of people used to go to the doctor and the doctor would tell them right straight what to go home and do and some of the doctors that's what they would do, but you know you can't hardly find that stuff now. You can't hardly find it. A boy found me some last year and he brought it to me and a woman came there and she wanted to buy it. So ( ). I told her no, I'll give you some. And I give her some and she had that cold so bad. She went home and made that tea, and shucks, she was at my house the other day telling me about it. Said, Peggy, I just don't know what. And you know people say, and you know what the people call me out at the old plantation, Dr. Davis.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Dr. Davis!

PEGGY DAVIS: Dr. Davis. That's what the most of the people call me. Them children, we went to Thomasville one Sunday and to my husband's people's house. And so his wife had
went to church and the daddy and the son was home. And he say, you know, say David taken with a vomiting this morning and say everything he eat. I say what kind of food you give him. I said, well that was too heavy. He said he just eat regular food. I said do you have some tea. He said yeah. I said, well, get me a cup. He went and got the cup. I said you have some Irish potatoes. He said yeah. I said bring me one. He went and got the Irish potato and my husband standing there laughing cause he know what I was going to do. I said well get me a Irish potato. He went and got the Irish potato. I washed it and put it in the pot and I let it boil. When it boiled I strained it out and give it to him. And told him, David, I said if you drink this and it don't do you no good I'm going to take you to the doctor. He turned it up and he drunk it, because he had gas once or twice since he had this. He turned it up and he drunk it and so he felt sleepy. I told his daddy, he said he sleepy. I said put him in the bed. I said he's really sleepy, but you put him in the bed and you be sure, I said bring me the tea now. He brought me the tea and I say you got some lemon juice. He said yeah. I said get me the lemon juice and I give that boy some tea and then some of that tea and that lemon juice. Shucks. That boy ain't vomited no more and went on and got in the bed and awhile ago, about three weeks ago a boy
called me from down, you know, he lived here in town and I live here in town. He said my little boy done taken with that vomiting. What did you tell me to do and I told him. And he then did it, you know, and I said now you be shore you have him something to eat when he wake up cause he's going to wake up hungry. And he went and got it and give it to that boy and that same Sunday that boy come on to church. A little boy about that tall. He came on to church. And my mama. Sometimes I used to go down there. She was quick to take with that thing too and a lot of people have it now, but if that Irish potato don't stop it and that tea bag you better go see a doctor.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What kind of tea?

PEGGY DAVIS: Any kind. In the little bags, you know. That you squeeze out in the little bag. You can fell bad in yore stomach and go get you, if you don't have none of them little tubes of lemon juice to squeeze out just get you a lemon and cut it and squeeze it and drink it.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Can you get Irish potatoes in the grocery store?
PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah. You can get them out of the grocery store. Just wash it clean where you know all the grit will be out and boil it and drink it. And shucks, and people out there call me just as big and ask me, Ma Davis, what did you say was good for so and so. They was crying. I said, so and so and so and they'd go to work and do it and get healthy.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What would all the people who had like chicken pox do?

PEGGY DAVIS: When we always had the chicken pox my mother put us in the hen house.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: In the hen house?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh. In the chicken yard and close the door awhile and let you stay there a little awhile and then open the door and then you squat out in there and the chicken would fly over your head. That chicken pox gone. Yes sir. That chicken pox gone. Yes sir. That chicken pox gone. Yes sir. It's gone. And the measles. Well, they always would give us, go in the barn and get those shucks, a ear of corn, a ear of corn. Wash the shucks real good. Put 'em in a pot and boil 'em
and give you a big dose of Epsom salts. And you know what Epsom salts is?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Uh huh.

PEGGY DAVIS: Give you a big dose of that and the next day them bumps go to drying up off you and then the measles it done got, you catch it before it get in the end or too far on you and you use nothing but let that chicken fly over your head and see won't it get. But, buddy, you talking about some children hollering and screaming. My stars. ( ) used to put his whole heart in his screaming. He was scared of the chicken. I said they not going to bother it. And just open the door and them chickens, know how they fly out, you know, just come out of there. That chicken flying ( ) but you got to pour that Epsom salt, shucks you well of it. But you got to take that a thought to keep it from getting in your blood. And just fly up and just use Blue Seal Vaseline. You know what that is. You keep yourself greased good with that. And you see a lot of people scratch it, but don't scratch it. If you have to scratch it, get yourself a towel and do it like that over that. Don't you scratch it with your fingers cause every thing you scratch it spreads over.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: What about for a cold?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I'm going to tell you what I uses for a cold. Now I use that ( ) and then I use, I got peppermint candy. I mean straight peppermint candy, not the mint, because they'd pull that mint off on you cause I had to half way fuss with a man just going Saturday about. I said, yes, you got some peppermint candy back there. I don't want that mint. See, them little round black balls that's the mint, but now peppermint is in little blocks like that. And you won't pay for it cause that one little bag cost me 90 cents and I got some home. I believe I got some in my bag now. Let me see. If I don't, I mostly, you go to getting that cold you get that peppermint candy. I might not have none in here, but I thought sure I had some in here and I was going to show you what it looked like, but it's pure peppermint. You just get that peppermint and some peoples don't want to do it, but that peppermint candy and get you a ( ) or a good whiskey.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Yeah.

PEGGY DAVIS: And put it in there and put a little lemon
juice in there and just let it set up there. Every once in awhile you want it, you go get you, you know what a tablespoon is? Get one of them and just pour you out a tablespoon, put it in your mouth and swallow it and see won't the next morning that cold'll be gone near 'bout. I sent some people some, and my boy, I got the peppermint candy. Cause, you see I told you I void. My daughter ( ) going to tell I found it. I ( ) in Dix since last Saturday. Well, they won't give you peppermint candy if they don't have but a little bit. They'll say they don't have none. But that whiskey and that lemon juice and that peppermint candy, and honey. Honey. You know what honey is? Mix all that together and put it in a bottle and just shake it up and pour you out a spoonful and see what it will do for you.

It's really good. I'll be sitting up here on the porch sometimes and think about the peppermint candy. I'll go in there and get me a piece and my daughter just left home this morning, she spent the night with my granddaughter, and she come out. Sister, I got some of your peppermint candy. My children call me sister. I say, yeah, that's all right, cause she was coughing one while last night, but she say she got a piece of peppermint candy. I said well, I got to fix your mama some tea for ya'll. I call it tea. And honey, more people, more people ask me, now what did you say you do. I don't tell them for to
put whiskey in it cause some people just don't want whiskey cause I don't drink it, but I have to take it when I take with a cold and then I just take a spoonful and go on about my business and it'll do the trick. But that honey is really the trick for you. I went to a doctor once a long time ago and he had me using honey in my coffee.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: When you were living in Tallahassee did you ever hear about the KKK and white folks around here hanging black folks?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I hear peoples talking about it, cause my mama told us one time that they, a man got hung and his name is Isson, I believe she said, and said he, they hung him and he just killed a white man about a dime. The man owed him a dime or something or another, but anyway he killed the man and they said they hung it. And said when they hung him said a lot of the people who was working to that place said he said, well they got him on that thing. Mama used to tell us how the thing was made and you pull it up and let it drop down through something and break your neck. So the man said, told, said you want to speak to anyone. Said, yeah, I want to speak to my mother. Said, so they let his mother went
there. Said he said, well, mama, said when I took them Sunday school books and carried them home you uphold me in it and something else mama said he said he took. And said he just reached up and bit his mama on the ear. And said, now they fixing to hang and hold me I got something to tell you and say bit her on the ear so bad till she had to go to the doctor.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: At any time were you scared or were the black folks scared about the KKK, the white folks coming along?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I don't know. I imagine they was. I imagine they was, but I don't know cause I didn't know nothing about it cause them old people could tell you things and you'd believe what they'd say. But shucks, these children, I don't believe, cause they get worse instead of getting better. Getting in to their devil's mess. It gets worse.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: So how was Tallahassee like in the 30s.

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, it wasn't as bad as it is now. Nothing like it is now. When they people used to come to town from way out there where I lived in wagons and ( interruption ).


TYWANNA WHORLEY: ... to the city. Did they use to go shopping in town?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Now what did you say?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: I said ya'll used to go shopping in town and ride the wagons?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah. The wagons and surreys and buggies. That's what the people used to come to town in and it was one man out there, he had a carriage and it had two seats and four horses to it and then he .....
town?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Where do you usually go?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uptown. The Hub Store, then Sam Brothers putting them stores up there. Yeah, we'd go uptown to the store.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Would you buy clothes or things?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, clothes and everything they mostly got here down, we used to could buy it, you know, out of the stores. Cause it was some old stores uptown. Daniel's and all of them stores was around uptown then.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Like any of the white stores?

PEGGY DAVIS: Huh?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: The white stores downtown.
PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it was one or two. Wasn't many no way like it is now. No, wasn't many stores like it is now, but we used to go to the store. The Hub Store. We'd go there.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What about, did you used to call it French Town?

PEGGY DAVIS: Will I tell you, I never did like French Town much cause it looked like it would be too many people down there for me and I never did, you know, like French Town too much.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What was wrong with French Town?

PEGGY DAVIS: Huh?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: ( )

PEGGY DAVIS: They had a big picture, you could go to the show down there and they had a few stores down there in French Town, but not too overly many. Like, you know, like they do, after the town went to building up so well. Yeah, cause my husband's brother used to run you know Curt Davis, he used to
run a cafe and they had stores down there.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did they sell soul food?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: ( )

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, they had plates. Anything that you would want down there. Fish markets and stores. New stores. It wasn't built up, you know, like it is now.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Were the white people nice to you when you went down?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. What was there. It was black and white, you know, had places there. They was real nice. She worked for one of them places a long time down there.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Was things in there segregated? Like they had places for the black folks different from the white folks?
PEGGY DAVIS: Well, I couldn't tell you about that part because, you see, I would go down there to my cousin's place and I didn't never see nothing but the colored in there, you know, buying, you know, getting dinners and stuff like that. But, it was there and that's where we used to go to the show. Down there in French Town to the show.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: How often did you go to the show?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well, we'd go every Saturday. Every Saturday evening. There was a boy out there driving and he would take us with his family.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you remember how much it cost to go to the movies?

PEGGY DAVIS: Let me see. I'm fixing to tell you 20 or 15 cents. Yeah.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: You got to stay all day?

PEGGY DAVIS: No. We'd go in the evening, you know. First light and they didn't, I don't know whether they ran any in the
day or no but we would go, you know. In the evening. This boy would get off from his job.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did you live on a plantation for a long time or did you move into your own place in Tallahassee?

PEGGY DAVIS: No. I lived where my mother used to live when I moved down here. That's been about five years ago I been down here.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: So you're one of the biggest grandmas?

PEGGY DAVIS: My mother was the mother of 14 head of children. Every one of them was born on that plantation. Every one of us. And then, all mine. My three born on this plantation. Well, I married a man worked on the plantation and so we all lived on the plantation. And it's still the plantation, but you know there's not as many people out there as it used to. Cause you see, the houses got old and the people passed. They passed. So many of the people passed away.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: You said that the Bakers used to spend six months in New York and then they'd come down here for six
months.

PEGGY DAVIS: For six months.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Who ran the place while they were gone?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, they had boss mens. White boss mens and black boss mens. Down here. They ran the place while they was gone away. And then up north, if you wanted to go up north with them and work, they'd carry you cause they tried to get me to go. I said, oh no. Uh uh. I'm not going up there and stay them six months. So I didn't go, but my son went. He said he enjoyed his self. They really was nice to him. Well, I know they was real nice people. Yeah, they was real nice. And I reckon they had about 30 fish ponds on the place and every one of them had plenty of fish in them. If you didn't want to go in the boat or you could sit up in you a chair up on the bank and fish. And that just tickled them to death. They would pass and make pictures of us. Say, ya'll fish like that all, when we be gone. Say, yeah. She thought it was the prettiest thing. Old Lady Baker did, and she'd take pictures. Of course, they'd make a picture if you was laying down and you come to find out they was a making your picture. But we got along nicely.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: And everything.

PEGGY DAVIS: And the big laundry was there and everything here in Tallahassee was in the laundry here, in his house on the plantation where we moved from.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did ya'll do your laundry there too?

PEGGY DAVIS: Huh?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Did ya'll do your laundry there as well.

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. You washed for your family right there. They had the iron up. They had four different machines for to wash their things in and three or four, the waiters did their own washing, you see, who waited on tables. They did their own washing. And we had a room for them to wash theirs in, cause couldn't all that washing going on in that one place. (speaking to visitors)

Oh, Lord. When he don't be here, then we be wondering where he at. That's the worse man. Now he used to could tell you a lots about the plantation because he was one mannish boy.
Well, he wasn't mannish, but we say he was mannish, because see he had a aunt who lived out on the plantation and they was poor and they'd bring them out there, you know, and we would be working for these people. And they had a goat and they used to put the goat to the wagon. The goat'd get down the hill and wouldn't come back. They'd take the goat out from the wagon and one would pull the wagon back and the other one would lead the goat back. And he'd tell the boys, I used to whip him. I said, no, cause I was working with these people at the time. I said, I used to push him out of the way. And he'd tell the people I used to whip him. But they was really nice boys, you know. There was three of them.

(speaking to visitor)

(tape cut off)

PEGGY DAVIS: And she just left. Well, my son will be down here after the table some time today, but they ain't fooling me
I know.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: You were born here in Tallahassee, right?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah. Yeah.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Are you widowed now?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What was your husband's name?

PEGGY DAVIS: The last one was Levy Davis. I been married twice.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Levy Davis?


TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you remember when he died? When he passed?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, 1971 I believe it was. Yeah, 1971.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Was he born here in Tallahassee?


TYWANNA WHORLEY: What did he do for a living?

PEGGY DAVIS: My husband? Oh, he was a quick carpenter. He did carpenter work and painted.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What was your mama's name?

PEGGY DAVIS: My mama? Susie Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you remember what her maiden name was?

PEGGY DAVIS: Jones was her name before she got married. Yeah, Jones.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you remember when she died?

PEGGY DAVIS: Now I got all that at home, but I can't remember but five days back. It was in the summer but I just
can't remember it.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Was she born in Tallahassee?


TYWANNA WHORLEY: Was she a housewife and farmer?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. She did housework.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Oh, and cooking. Right?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, cooked. You know she cooked for the Bakers. Thirty years.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What was your father's name?

PEGGY DAVIS: Johnnie Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Is that n-n-y or i-e?

PEGGY DAVIS: I-e.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay. Was he born in Tallahassee?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you remember when he passed?

PEGGY DAVIS: I know he passed a little before my mama. I just can't remember when he passed, but my mama's, he passed ahead of my mother.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Would he just a farmer or a carpenter?

PEGGY DAVIS: Well he was a farmer. I just as well farmer, you know, because he'd work out, you know, sometimes.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you remember the names of your sisters and brothers?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay.

PEGGY DAVIS: Walter.

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay. And everybody born in Tallahassee, right?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, every one of us was born here in Tallahassee.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay. Walter.

PEGGY DAVIS: Leroy Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Leroy. Okay.

PEGGY DAVIS: Johnnie Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Named after your dad?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay.

PEGGY DAVIS: Luke Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Luke?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay.

PEGGY DAVIS: Peggy Ann Davis. Jenny Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: J-e-n-n-y?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh. Uh huh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay.

PEGGY DAVIS: Annie B. Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Was it Be or?
PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, just put a B in the middle.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Annie B. Hall.

PEGGY DAVIS: Now you got Annie B., Jenny, and myself.


(interruption)

PEGGY DAVIS: The last one you got is Johnnie ain't it and you got Annie B. And Carrie Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Carrie. How do you spell that one?

PEGGY DAVIS: C-a-r-r-i-e. Carrie Hall. Sidney Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: S-y-d-n-e-y?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh. And Larry Hall. James Hall.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay.

PEGGY DAVIS: And that was about all because you see two died when they was babies. And three died when they was babies.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: What's the name of your children?

PEGGY DAVIS: My church?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Your children?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, my children. Oh, Bessie Amos.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Bessie? Is that s-s-i-e?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Bessie. What's her last name?

PEGGY DAVIS: Amos. A-m-o-s.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay.
PEGGY DAVIS: And Pearl McClinton. James Hall.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Three? James Hall?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: You remember when they were born?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Let me see. I got all of that in that book. I wish I had of knowed this, but I knowed when I got old and I done aged you know and I have to look at it in my bible.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Were they all born in Tallahassee?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. All born in Tallahassee.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: How many grandchildren do you have?

PEGGY DAVIS: Oh, 15 grands and 8 great-grands.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Wow. Okay. ( )
PEGGY DAVIS: Mount Zion Donkin Poem.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Mount Zion D-o-n-k-i-n? 

PEGGY DAVIS: All right. Uh uh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Mount Zion Donkin.

PEGGY DAVIS: Poem. Just like you see a poem at Lake McBride.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Lake McBride? How do you spell that? B-r?

PEGGY DAVIS: I-d-g-e. I done forgot.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: McBride. Is it Brighton or Bride?

PEGGY DAVIS: Lake McBride. B-r-i-d-g-e. Those were the onliest two schools I went because the school was our church school and that's where we all was raised up at to that one school. People. People. People.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay. And both were in Tallahassee?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah. All of 'em was born in Tallahassee.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Okay. And what were the jobs that you seemed to do? Head of laundry?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah, head of the laundry. And then I cooked there ten years. Cooked ten.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Oh yeah. What was the name of the church that you went to?


TYWANNA WHORLEY: That's the name of the church?

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh uh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: D-o-n-k-i-n-s. Donkin's Point?

PEGGY DAVIS: Poem. Poem.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Is that AME?

PEGGY DAVIS: No. It's just a Baptist. Baptist.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: All right. What did you do for hobbies? What do you do here? Do you do ceramic things?

PEGGY DAVIS: Yeah. I help set up the table and take the flowers off and clean the tables and sometimes serve it. Help them serve in the kitchen.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you do like any knitting and things like this?

PEGGY DAVIS: Huh?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Do you do like going in, I mean, like ceramics and stuff like that?

PEGGY DAVIS: No. I don't go that. I think I have enough for me, because, we volunteers. We help set up the tables and I usually have my pin on but I don't. I don't know why. Well, I
had company this morning. I reckon that had something to why I didn't leave my pin. I help serve the food. Dip up the food to be served sometimes and then most, I have, help clean up. Help clean the tables up after the people be get through eating.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: And this right here. This is about the interview we just had. And this says that it's okay for people to, you know, you don't mind for people to listen to the tapes.

PEGGY DAVIS: Uh huh.

TYWANNA WHORLEY: And sign right there if it's okay.

PEGGY DAVIS: Right here?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Yes 'mam.

PEGGY DAVIS: My name?

TYWANNA WHORLEY: Yes 'mam.

PEGGY DAVIS: Okay.
TYWANNA WHORLEY: Ya'll are about to eat now.

PEGGY DAVIS: Right.

END OF INTERVIEW