

Oscar Kegley 1981 Interview with JC Porter

Transcribed by JC Porter in November 2012

Oscar Kegley was a neighbor to the Porters when he was a boy on Porter Creek. Oscar was not related to the Porters, but referred to several of them as "Uncle."

JC: Indiana. Yeah my dad moved up there when I was about three I guess. That's where we live.

Oscar: Who's boy did you say you was?

JC: **Don (Porter)**. Everett's oldest boy Don.

Oscar: Oh yeah.

JC: What's your first name?

Oscar: Oscar.

JC: Oscar Griffey?

Oscar: Kegley.

JC: Is your daughter related to the Griffey's somehow?

Oscar: My mother was a **Griffey**.

JC: That's how it was. I hear so many names, I get confused.

Oscar: She was a **Griffey**, my mother was. That records it?

JC: Yeah, it should be. Do you want to hear yourself? I'll play it back and let you hear that.

JC: So you know all of them old Porters, huh?

Oscar: We lived up there among em for I don't know, six or seven or eight years.

JC: Is that right? Are you any relation to that **Kegley** that killed **Jim Porter** (s/o AJP in 1906)?

Oscar: Ya.

JC: Was he a cousin?

Oscar: He was a distant cousin. That was **Henry (Kegley)**.

JC: What ever happened to him?

Oscar: He went down there about Hanging Rock. Down below Hanging Rock, Ohio, below Ashland there. It's over on the Ohio side. He raised 15 children. I was talking to a man a few years ago that

had dinner with him, that fellow did. He said he had had dinner with Henry and he had 15 children. My father died when I was three years old. I stayed with my grandma. She lived back over at this side of Stark (KY). I stayed with her, and I reckon I was about 6 or 7 years old. Mom married again. I was raised down there at Olive Hill most of my life. My step daddy was a **Tackett**.

JC: He was?

Oscar: He used to live up there on **Porter Creek** at the mouth of where it comes off the hill by **Sheepskin**, down from old Uncle **Alick Porter's** (s/o Andrew J. Porter) up there. We lived there for two or three years. **Sam (Porter,**? s/o Alick Porter) lived up on the bank there. Just one person up there that I guess would know anything about, know anymore.... There's **Will's (Porter)** boys that lives up on top of the hill there. **Will Porter**, (s/o John C., s/o AJP) one of em sells tombstones and \_\_\_\_\_ on the highway there. The other one, **Tracey (Porter)** works for the school district over there. He was working for the school district last year.

JC: Did they ever put that **Henry Kegley** in jail?

Oscar: No, him and old **Jim Porter** was there, kind of in an argument or something. They fell out over school business. **Henry (Kegley)** was a school teacher. There was there about **Sandy Hook** there somewhere, when he killed Uncle **Jim Porter**. They buried Uncle Jim over there at the Old Fairview place.

JC: Why didn't they put him in jail? Did he claim self-defense?

Oscar: I reckon it was self-defense some way. I don't reckon he ever did go to jail. They lived back over there, Kegleys (4:32) did on the other side of where grandma lived. I stayed there, the farm was right there close, and land. Farmed over there when Henry got into that trouble killing **Jim Porter**, he went down to Hanging Rock, Ohio. There was several of them Kegleys over in Ohio? I've got two boys that works at Mansfield, Ohio up there. They are acquainted with a lot of people that lives all up and down, congregating together a whole lot, the Kegleys. (5:23) Where they come from in Old Virginia.

Harve? (5:28) lived over here at Morehead died, he died, he's dead now. He went back up there and stayed about a month. They lived in Old Virginia. He went up there and stayed about a month with em. He said that was about all that was in that. The whole neighborhood was a bunch of **Kegleys**. There is more of them people over there ? (5:52), I see them every once in a while in the paper. There is several of them over here around Morehead.

JC: Do you remember that **Jim Porter** (s/o AJP) pretty well?

Oscar: I remember seeing him, knowing him when I was a kid. I was just a boy there. Knew his boys **Ed (Porter) & Andy (Porter)**. Ed was killed too if I ain't mistaken, **Henry Skeens** I believe killed him.

JC: Was **Henry Skeens** dad a preacher, or what?

Oscar: **Henry Skeens**, I don't know what ever did become of him. Of course I left that country when I was young when we left there and come to Olive Hill. Then back up here on Porter Creek, stayed 6 or 7 years out on the ridge there.

JC: What do you remember about **Levi Porter**?

Oscar: Old Uncle Levi, he was a brother to **Alick (Porter)** and **John (Porter)**. There was Alick and John and Uncle **Levi (Porter)**.

JC: Jim and Steve.

Oscar: Huh?

JC: Jim and **Steve (Porter)**.

Oscar: Ya, Jim and Steve. Now **Steve (Porter)** lived down under the hill from Old **Fairview**, there was a little church house there. We used to, when I was a kid that's where we went to church all the time. I think they use the big church out on the ridge now, other side of the graveyard there about **Tracey Porter's** somewhere. I don't think they use that little one so much anymore.

Oscar: Uncle **Levi (Porter)** was a faith Doctor.

JC: He was a what?

Oscar: Faith Doctor. He doctored by faith you know. (8:02) You've heard of Faith Doctors haven't you?

JC: You mean Steve, or Levi?

Oscar: Levi it was. Levi was a faith (8:13) doctor. He was bad to drink but still he would break the saddle a whole lot. He could put any body to sleep, anything that way, just start your hands to rolling. He used to come to our house. We lived right on the road there, right down in there. Uncle Levi would come along there and stop. My step dad, he never would fool with it. He know'd all that stuff you know. And he come along there, Uncle Levi did one time. We had a little girl that stayed there at our house, and she had, every tooth in her head was loose.

JC: It was?

Oscar: Her mouth was the awful lest shape in the world. All sore. She was a hired girl, her mother had her there. They got Uncle Levi to stop there. He come along. He took a red cloth and went to the kitchen. It was dark, night. He went in the kitchen, and uh, he took that red cloth, and doctored that red cloth some way or another. He come back and gave it to this girl and she put it around her neck, down there some way. He cured her mouth, all them teeth, they set in there, it was solid. She stayed at our house till she got where she was well, then left there.

My step dad, finally he admitted... Uncle Levi just kept on tormenting him, his name was John, **John Tackett**. (10:12) Uncle Levi kept tormenting my step daddy. He said, "Just lay your hand down, and let me just lay my hand in yourn, and see if you can move. He said, just let it lay there. I'll tell you when to move." When Uncle Levi took his hand up, he just stuck to Uncle Levi's hand, he just raised it right up. (10:50) \_\_\_\_\_ Uncle Levi was.

JC: I'll be darn.

Oscar: He'd been over there on Sinking, Uncle **Sam Kegley** lived over there. He built him a new

house that summer. It was late fall, and he had Uncle Levi come and build him...he was a brick layer or rock layer, built chimneys around for people in the country. He went over there and built Uncle Sam a chimney that day. He started home, and he got to our house, and when he got to our house they overtook him, Uncle Sam took a sick spell, some kind of a spell, I don't know what it was. They caught Uncle Levi there and took him back with them. He went back with them. Uncle Sam died.

Oscar: And you have been raised in Indiana?

JC: Ya, we moved up there when I was about three I guess. I was born down here.

JC: How did old Uncle Levi learn how to do that?

Oscar: He had books.

JC: He did?

Oscar: He learned from books. He tried to get mother to take the books and read them you know. She was afraid of that hypnotism or whatever they put on people. He could tell you how many hogs that you had, or he could tell you if one was in the pond or one was in a thing like that. Now it is hypnotism.

Now **Wint (Porter?)**, old Uncle **Alick (Porter)**, son of **Andrew J. Porter** had a boy named **Wint (Porter)**. He practiced that. He lived down here in Olive Hill, right on this side of what they call Clark Hill up there. Wint, he could make a table just rock back and forth you know. He would take his hands, he wouldn't lay them on the table, but just a little bit above it and it would just rock. He could rock a table and (13:39) anything like that. Wint could do that. They called it knocking spirits. I don't know what it is. It is something that some people can do, raise that stuff.

JC: You remember **Alick Porter** pretty well?

Oscar: Oh yes, I remember Uncle Alick. We lived right there by em for 2 years or 3. Ya, I know'd all them Porters. I never was much acquainted with old Uncle Steve. (14:20) I went to church when he went to church. I went out there to church where he went, come up there to meeting. I was never acquainted with him like I was with old Uncle Alick. Uncle Alick so often \_\_\_\_\_ (14:37). Of his boys I only knew one of them. **Everett (Porter)**, son of Alex, s/o AJP) just died this summer.

JC: Ya, I heard about that. I went over and talked to him a few times.

Oscar: Ya Everett, he was just about my age. Me and him used to run together a whole lot.

JC: You did?

Oscar: Ya, when they lived there by us.

JC: How many daughters did Levi have?

Oscar: One. **Arabelle**. She married **Boone Walker**.

JC: That was Alick's daughter wasn't it?

Oscar: Ya, old man Alick.

JC: What about Levi?

Oscar: Uncle Levi just had one.

JC: What was her name?

Oscar: I don't know, she married...Alick's girl married **Boone Walker**, and Uncle Levi's girl married Oscar, **Oscar Walker**.

JC: Was her name **Lula**?

Oscar: I couldn't tell you to save my life. I've studied and studied. I used to know way back there when we lived out there by them, close to them, not very far from them, Uncle Levi. Her and some of them Walker boys came up to our house. They was raised you know by a step father. We had sold our house down at Olive Hill and built another one. Them boys would come up there, and these girls would come out and meet them. That's where they done their sparkin at.

JC: You ever hear of **George Roberts**?

Oscar: **George Roberts**?

JC: Ya.

Oscar: No, I never did hear of him.

JC: I was told he married one of Levi's daughters.

Oscar: Na, Uncle Levi never had but the one girl, and she married **Oscar Walker**.

JC: Were any of Levi's boys into that hypnotism?

Oscar: No, I don't know of any of them. He had 3 or 4 there. I never know'd none of them to try it. **Will Porter** did one time. He (Levi) had one they called **Byrd (Porter)** (17:17) all the time. He married some woman over there, and **Byrd (Porter)** put her to sleep. He was gonna have to wake her up. He had to run after his daddy to come and wake her up. That was the only one ever I know'd fool with it. **Ed (Porter)** & **Arthur (Porter)** and **Byrd (Porter)** was all the boys, and Uncle Levi had the one girl.

JC: You lived next to Alick for a while.

Oscar: Oh ya. I lived right they by old Uncle Alick. Close there \_\_\_\_

JC: Do you remember his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife **Lizzie**?

Oscar: His 2<sup>nd</sup> wife was named Lizzie?

JC: Ya. Do you remember her?

Oscar: I remember his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, I didn't know what her name was, but I thought she was a Coffey.

JC: That was his 3<sup>rd</sup> wife wasn't it, Kate?

Oscar: **Kate Coffey**. She married a **Pelfrey** before and had **Lena**. When they brought her over there, when she come from over there, I don't know where Kate lived at. **Bert (Pelfrey)** lived...he never did come over there (18:57) to Uncle Alick's. When he lived back over there later on, a man lived there, Dr. K\_\_\_\_\_ had a child that had something like fever you know. They had to go get him a time or two. **Bert (Pelfrey)** lived right above where this fellow lived there. I know'd Bert well. He was over every little bit. I was well acquainted with him. **Lena (Pelfrey)** married **Reese (Porter)**, that was **Wint's (Porter, s/o Alex, s/o AJP)** boy. She is the only woman, her and them two Porter boys up in that country that I know of anymore, all back in there.

JC: Which one was your favorite out of those Porters?

Oscar: I never did have any favorite. They was all good people. I liked them all. They was good people. Uncle Alick said, Millard & Jas, that's your grandpap.

JC: Ya, that's his dad.

Oscar: **Jasper (Porter)**. He come back over here. I think **Millard (Porter)** got killed in the quarry up there. There was Charlie then. He lived a few years before he died. He used to come down here to Olive Hill and trade. I went down there about once per month, and I would run into **Everett (Porter)** and **Charlie (Porter)** and them down there. A fellow by the name of **Frank James** had a store there, and they'd come down there and trade.

JC: Did you call it Oliver Hill? Did they use to call it Oliver Hill?

Oscar: They called it Olive Hill.

JC: Old Uncle Alick, what did he do for a living?

Oscar: I reckon he just farmed.

JC: Did he ever have a Blacksmith shop?

Oscar: No, Alick never did have none that I know'd of. Ain't none of them Porters ever run no Blacksmith shop.

JC: Levi, was he ever in the Civil War?

Oscar: Uncle Levi, might have been. He was the oldest one of that set of Porters. He might have been. He wasn't in WWI, cause I was married and had two children by then.

JC: What about the Civil War?

Oscar: He wasn't old enough for the Civil War. I don't think he was. Now he might have been old enough for the Civil War? I had an Uncle that lived over here on Sinking. Old **Jim Brown**, he was an

old Civil War veteran. I was a grown man, and I seen him and know'd him. I was with him a whole lot of times. (22:59) He lived down there on Sinkin.

JC: Where did them old Porters come from?

Oscar: Lawd, I don't know. When I got acquainted with them, they lived up there. I reckon **Ed Porter** must have raised his family further out. Uncle Levi I guess they've been in there for years and years. Preacher **John (C. Porter, s/o AJP)** now he lived down the holler from where Tracy and them lives on the ridge.

JC: Did you ever hear him (**John C. Porter**) preach?

Oscar: I've heard him when I was a kid.

JC: Who was the best preacher, him or Steve?

Oscar: I don't know. I don't seem to remember anything about their preaching, or how they preach.

JC: Who was them old Porter's dad, I wonder.

Oscar: I never did know who he was. (24:15)

JC: Have you ever heard any old stories about Alick or Levi or any of them?

Oscar: No, I never did. Now Uncle Alick didn't drink. That was one good thing about him.

JC: He didn't?

Oscar: No, he didn't drink. Uncle Levi now, Uncle Levi drunk. Preacher **John (C. Porter)**, now he didn't drink none. He lived over there around on the creek, \_\_\_\_\_creek, branch. He took another man's woman and run off with her. Seperated them. Seems to me like that fellow shot him once, or shot at him down at Olive Hill. (Referring to Marshall & Martha Jane Adkins)

JC: What was your first name again?

Oscar: **John Porter.**

JC: No your first name.

Oscar: My name is Oscar.

JC: **Oscar Kegley.** Ya, I was just up there talking to your daughter. She told me that you knew the old Porters.

Oscar: Lord yes.

JC: Is there anything else you can think of to tell me about them?

Oscar: No, I couldn't tell you anything much about them. They were good people, that's all. We lived

right in there among em. Never did know Uncle John that well. He lived down over there.

JC: I'm going to run up to my grandparent's. I appreciate your time, talking with me and everything.

Oscar: I've been looking for you down here for some time, last an hour or so.

JC: Ya, I was expecting to get up here, but your daughter just kept talking and talking, wouldn't let me go.