

Florence Williams (d/o John C. Porter, s/o Andrew J. Porter) Track 1 1980

JC: You said your sister Mary (Parker) was married in Rowan County? (KY)

Florence: Ya.

JC: Any of your other brothers and sisters married....

Florence: I don't know where they was married at.

JC: How long did you own the store over there? (Elliottsville)

Florence: We stayed there a long time. (0:35)

JC: Did your dad get married again?

Florence : Ya, he married again. He got another woman. I don't know if they married or not. He just got somebody. His kids didn't like her.

JC: You didn't like her too well? Did they live in Olive Hill then?

Florence: They lived in Olive Hill, and they went to Florida some, stayed down there. And everyplace that my dad lived, he had a business there in Florida.

JC: Oh he did? Where about in Florida?

Florence: I don't know, what part. (1:10) Me and my husband lived in Portsmouth. We left Kentucky and I lived in Portsmouth. He come to visit me, but he didn't bring her. (Martha Jane Adkins?) (1:20)

JC: What made them decide to go to Florida?

Florence: Lord I don't know. (1:30) He loved to travel. He went to Wisconsin to see his brother (Steve Porter), and everywhere.

JC: Oh he did.

Florence: He loved to travel.

JC: How did they travel around then, on a train?

Florence: On a train.

JC: How long was he in Florida?

Florence: He must have stayed down there a couple years. He bought a grocery store, set him up a store? (1:50) Then he come back to Olive Hill and he passed away. He had three homes there in Olive Hill ____ (1:57)

JC: Did he work anyplace there in Olive Hill at the end?

Florence: No, he didn't work no where. _____? (2:08) But he didn't set around. He might have done something that I don't know anything about, I don't know. He never just sit. He had kidney trouble.

JC: He did a lot of preaching when he was young didn't he?

Florence: He ate dinner with me the 12th of August and he died the 24th. I said, "Dad, If you'll give me that old farm down there, and that big house, I'll come back to Kentucky and live" I tried to bum him out of it, but he never would. (3:05)

JC: Was your dad one of the richest in his family?

Florence: No, they all worked hard. They all had a real good livin. My dad had...where my dad made, we got in the store and the post office, you could count on that every month, you got your money. Back then, it amounted to an awful lot then. You take \$15.00 a month now, you couldn't buy nothing with it. Things is so much different than they are now. He wasn't no millionaire, just had a real good, he didn't want for nothin. (3:48).

JC: Ya. Where did you buy your house from, the old log house?

Florence: I don't know. There was one up above that one there, when they first got married, mom....they lived up above that. When you went to that log house, there was a road straight on up from that, I imagine about half a mile, and there was a pretty log house up there. But my brother got it and they said he burned the house down.

JC: On purpose?

Florence: No, just wanted to burn it down. There was a big log house with a room up above it and a kitchen behind it. Had a big garden and a well, that never went dry. That was a real good living back then. If you had that, you was doing good. (4:35) You just can't hardly realize how things has changed.

JC: Your Dad & Mom lived there when they got married, a little house back there?

Florence: Uh huh. Then they moved down to this other house that you seen.

JC: I wonder if that is where your grandpa (Andrew) Porter lived? Did they (John C. Porter, s/o AJP) live with him (AJP) when they first got married?

Florence: No, they come there and they cleared that out. I guess they stayed with someone until they got a house built.

JC: He might have stayed with his dad until he started?

Florence: Ya, he might have?

JC: I'll bet that is where they lived. Let's see, they were married in 1884. (5:08) And Andrew Porter died in 1888. His wife (Lucy) had already died. So they might have just moved in.

Florence: They might. They probably did. You know back then if you had a bed and a stove. They

had very little, they didn't have carpets, and you went to housekeeping. I can remember ___? (5:30) that house up there, someone got married. They just had a couple chairs, a bed and a stove. There was a fireplace, and they went to house keeping. That'd be a good way to go, just sweep the dirt out the door, wouldn't it? (laughing)

JC: Did you ever hear your dad talk about his younger sister Emma?

Florence: You said that on there, and I never know'd he had that....he just had two sisters.

JC: You never heard of her?

Florence: No.

JC: I don't know what happened to her. She never married, she must have died. In the 1880 census, your dad (John C. Porter) was living with his sister Emma and his Dad. (Andrew J. Porter) Then there was the oldest sister living with them. She had not got married yet. She was 30 years old.

Florence: That one must have died when she was small?

JC: I guess. She must have died a few years before your dad was married.

Florence: I never did hear her name. The only two I knew of was Aunt Mary and Aunt Martha on his side.

JC: Your Dad had six sisters all together. The oldest one was Nancy Jane. I can tell you what I've found.

Florence: They must have died when they was small.

JC: Some of them moved away. Levi Porter, he was the oldest one.

Florence: Ya, I know Uncle Levi.

JC: The next one was Nancy Jane and she never got married. She must have died in her 30's. She was living there at home in 1880, with your grandpa (Andrew) Porter, and her and your dad (John C. Porter) and the youngest, Emma. Elizabeth Porter was next, and she married a Hunt. They were married back in Virginia, and they moved down by Bowling Green, KY. So the families lost contact there. Steve (Porter) was next. Then there was one named Sena, she married a Brown. They lived in Carter County up through 1900, but she died back about 1880 something. Then the Brown's moved away. That is why they lost contact with that family. Then Alick (Alexander Porter) was next, then Mary. She married George Dwelly, and they lived in Robertson County. Because the Porters moved over to Robertson County.

Florence: Ya, Aunt Mary and Uncle George, I remember them. I've heard talk of them, I never seen them.

JC: They say your dad (John C. Porter) used to go out there and preach barn revivals, him and Steve (Porter).

Florence: I don't know? (8:20)

JC: She has a daughter in law who is living that is 82 years old, I think. She lives in Robertson County, Mt. Olivet, KY. She told me about it. She remembered John & Steve coming out there and preaching a revival. (8:35) I talked to another lady. She said that Mary Dwelly used to get up in church and start spinning in circles, swinging her arms out. She was afraid she was going to hit her. Your Uncle Jim was next. Then your dad. Then there was that Emma. She was the youngest. They were all born in Grayson County, VA. Your Dad and all of them.

Florence: I only heard of two of them. If we could have kept that old Bible, probably their names would have been in that.

JC: I imagine. Alick had a son named Charlie Porter.

Florence: Ya, I know Charlie.

JC: Well he had all of these written down, so he had heard of them, but he was a lot older.

Florence: Well he's dead ain't he?

JC: Ya. Uncle Everett is living, (9:31) Charlie's brother Uncle Everett, he is 87. And Harlan and Irene. Your Uncle Steve has a daughter living, Jewell Shanks.

Florence: Where does she live at?

JC: She lives in Arizona in the winter and in the summer, she lives in Wisconsin. She is up in her 80's, 86 or something like that. Your Uncle Jim (Porter) has two kids living. I just went and saw his daughter Kate, she is 91 years old. She lives in Middletown, Ohio. Sarah, the youngest....

Florence: Now Sarah, she is more about my age, she is younger.

JC: Ya, she is about your age. Let's see, I've got her birth date. Ya, she was born in 1902, and she is living out in Montana. And I talked to her on the phone. That is all of your cousins that are living that I know of. Maybe some of the daughters have some living. I don't know.

Florence: How come you start the _____ (10:45)

JC: I don't know.

Florence: I wondered about that. (laughing)

JC: We went around one day looking at all of these cemeteries getting the names.....

Florence: I'll tell you, if my oldest grandson had time, he loves to go to the old cemeteries, and he is the only one. See Ruthie married.

JC: Is she your only daughter?

Florence: Ya, I had two daughters, and one died? A way back. (11:10) Her husband got killed in the

service, and this John? Made that. He never seen his dad. He'd go to these old cemeteries if he'd get a chance. He works all the time. He'll just look, and he likes stuff like that. He went off to Columbus today. (11:35)

JC: Your daughter's husband passed away?

Florence: And Ruth had the baby, and John never seen his daddy. She married again, she married a Young. She's got some children by him. She teaches school. John just loves anything like that. He'll just listen and listen. It's what you enjoy, you do.

JC: Does he live at home?

Florence: He is married and has three children.

JC: He doesn't live with his mom then.

Florence: No, he has a place out there. He is a psychologist.

JC: Oh he is?

Florence: He served in the Army, ROTC, Boy Scouts, and all that stuff.

JC: Do you have his address? Could I write it down, I am getting addresses of some of the relatives. Are any of your other grand kids living away from home?

Florence: Ya, they are all away. Two of them.

JC: Do you have their addresses also?

Florence: John is John McHenry, South Webster.

JC: Is his last name McHenry?

Florence: McKenna, Uh huh.

JC: Do you have his address?

Florence: I don't know what his box number is. Would that be in the phone book?

JC: I don't know, what about your other grand kids?

Florence: There is two of them, and I don't have their address. They are in Mississippi.

JC: Do you know what town?

Florence: I believe I might have that here somewhere.

JC: I got a letter from your daughter. She wrote back to me.

Florence: Nathan Todd Young. That is a funny name. YAZOO City. Jeff Young is there too.

JC: Oh do they live in the same house?

Florence: Ya.

JC: Well, can you think of anything else, that you've heard about the old Porters?

Florence: That is about the story, all I know. (laughing) I wish I did know. I've just lost out, been gone too long. Back there they didn't keep too much records. It's not like it is now. It'd be nice if they had.

JC: What did you think about your Uncle Levi?

Florence: He was a grand old man. ____ (15:30) He'd come and visit us so much, and set around you know. We always loved him. I can't remember whether he died first, or Aunt Betty. Maybe the reason he come so much, he was lonely, I don't know. I know he would come and stay with us all the time.

JC: What about his wife, did she come with him?

Florence: She didn't come very much like that. But he would come and stay with us. I think maybe she must have passed away after I studied about that. (16:11)

JC: You think she already died?

Florence: Must have been, because he wouldn't have left her so much. He'd come and stay two or three days at a time. Ride a horse ____ (16:20)

JC: Have you ever been over to Levi Porter's place?

Florence: No, I never was there. I've probably been there but I never remembered. I walked to one...they lived back there somewhere. Back in there somewhere from Olive Hill. I don't know where Uncle Alick lived.

JC: Do you remember going to your other Uncle's houses?

Florence: No, just Uncle Alicks, we went there all the time.

JC: Oh you did?

Florence: Me and my brother.

JC: Who, Jim?

Florence: Uh huh. Me and Jim.

JC: Why would you go over there, just to visit?

Florence: They had a...Uncle Alick married Aunt Kate, and they had a girl and boy just our ages. We

went over the hill. We had a path to go see them from our house, it wasn't too far. We'd visit you see. We'd go to church, then we would go home with them on Sunday, and the next Sunday, they would come home with us. The school house, where we went to school, last time I was out there, it was tore down. It was a log school. (17:25)

JC: Was that Rock Springs School?

Florence: Ya.

JC: Did you go to school there?

Florence: Uh huh, till we moved to Hog-town.

JC: Who was your teacher there, do you remember?

Florence: I don't remember who taught there, but Mr. Fouch was the teacher when we moved to Hogtown. I guess my brother taught school back there.

JC: Oh he did? Will did? At Rock Springs School?

Florence: Uh huh. He taught Singing School too.

JC: Was that at Rock Springs?

Florence: Ya, that was a big thing to go and sing at night. You didn't have no where to go.

JC: How much land did your dad own there at the old place? (2 story log cabin)

Florence: At the old place, I think it was 300 and some acres as I remember. (18:07)

JC: Did he buy it all at once, or a piece at a time?

Florence: Oh he bought it all at once I guess. It didn't take very much to get it see. It could have been over that, it was an awful big farm.

JC: What all did you raise on it? Corn or beans?

Florence: Ya corn and beans and hay, and all like that. See there wasn't no bugs. You didn't have no spray. You just raised what you eat.

JC: There wasn't any bugs?

Florence: There wasn't any bean bugs to eat your beans up. Now you've got to spray and watch everything. We'd take a sack out in the field and pick a big sack of beans. There wasn't a bug on them. Oh we dreaded that so bad.

Scott: Why weren't there any bugs?

Florence: There just wasn't any. Well there wasn't nothing to spray with. We didn't have no sprayer.

JC: We walked way up behind the house. What used to be up there. It looked like there was a fence row and a lot of blackberry bushes.

Florence: Back up there, there was a big orchard up there.

JC: Oh it was? Why was the hill in tiers?

Florence: It was just always that way.

JC: That was natural?

Florence: At right around this a way, there was a big cliff that stuck out over there. That is where we kept our sheep. Back under there, it was as dry as it could be.

JC: Was that cellar behind the house there when you lived there?

Florence: That was where we kept our milk. And there was a little creek coming out of the hill that ran right down through it, it never ran dry. You'd set your milk down on that to keep. It didn't keep too long, but that is where we kept it. My grandson just loves anything like that. You can talk to him about that, and he'll take time to listen.

JC: This old log house you talked about when your parents were first married, where was it at again?

Florence: Well you went to this first place. (two story log cabin). You go straight on up that way. I guess it might be a half a mile.

JC: You keep going up the hollow?

Florence: Uh huh. Keep going up the hollow. It's just a little ways. About half way up there, there was a spring over here on the right. That is where we carried all of our water. Since I lived there, they have drilled a well and put in a pump. I seen a pump there. You didn't have no wells. A spring or something, you carried your water.

JC: How do you get back to that old, is there a path there?

Florence: It should be straight on up there hollow, I don't know how it is now, if there is a path there. It might be growed up now. There is no house there now. They said my brother burned it down, I don't know. There was a well there that never did go dry. I would have loved to walk on up there, but there was so many of us, Jim's children was with us, so I didn't say nothing about it. We didn't go no further than the first old place. (21:24) (Florence talks about planting a tree with her family.)

JC: (22:20) You remember seeing this old log house way back there?

Florence: Oh ya, been there lots of times.

JC: What was it like? I mean the little old one that was back up the hollow?

Florence: Just one big log house room. The back there was a kitchen built, then there was an upstairs. There was just two rooms. You lived downstairs, and you slept upstairs.

JC: That's not the one you lived in, that is the one that was on back there.

Florence: No, that is the one that is on back there. I guess I often thought that is where my mom and dad lived when they got married.

JC: Why did you think that?

Florence: Well that one was built before this one down here was built. They come out there, and cleared out the woods, the men did, and just built them a home. That's the way they did it. And people come and helped you. A big bunch of them would come help you build a home, and then you would go help them build a home.

JC: Are you sure your parents lived there when they were first married?

Florence: Ya, that's where they lived, I know for sure.

JC: And it was one room downstairs and one room upstairs?

Florence: And a kitchen out back there. And a big well. They dug that well, then they rocked it up. They put big rocks in it. Draw your water out, just throw a bucket down the rope, draw it out and there she comes. (laughing)

JC: Was it (the well) real close to the house?

Florence: Just outside the kitchen door.

JC: About how big was this cabin? About as big as this room?

Florence: It was just a little bit bigger than this room, and the kitchen didn't come up as high, it was built out of logs.

JC: Even the kitchen was out of logs too?

Florence: Well you didn't have no furniture, so that was plenty of room. You didn't have to pay an electric bill and everything like that.

Scott: That one up there (two story log cabin) it looked like you had to go outside to go upstairs. Is that the way it was?

Florence: No, you went up into the kitchen. They changed that. I seen that when we were out there. I said, well that's not right, the kitchen was right along the side here, and we went upstairs here. There was two big rooms upstairs to that house. Way back there, there was somebody come in there logging or something. Some old bachelors lived there at one time. It's been messed up. There was two big rooms downstairs and a big entry that went right through there. A porch right along here back when I was there. We had our yard all filled in. You know how we kept our yard mowed down? Our horse. Old Topsy.

JC: Old Topsy. Is that what his name was?

Florence: Uh huh. There wasn't no lawnmowers.

JC: Did you have horses or mules?

Florence: We had horses. (25:32) When we come over there to Hogtown, we had two mules.

JC: How many horses and cattle did you have?

Florence: We had quite a few. We raised all kinds of chickens, and great big red cows.

JC: And you had sheep too?

Florence: Ya, we had a lot of sheep. My Uncle, he had goats. He raised goats a lot of the time.

JC: Who was that, Levi?

Florence: No, that was on my mother's side, Uncle Bill Catron. Uncle Levi (Porter) just had horses and a cow. Everybody had to have a cow or two cows. If you had children, they needed milk or they would starve to death.

JC: In this old log house, where was the stairway in it? Was it inside?

Florence: The last one up the hollow?

JC: Ya.

Florence: It was inside. The kitchen door was right here, and right over there you go upstairs. They was built solid and real sturdy. I'd love to have a log house.

JC: Ya, I guess they stay pretty warm. Did it have a fireplace in it?

Florence: Big fireplace, they put logs in it that long.

JC: Did it have one upstairs too?

Florence: No, just down. They took ashes and put over it and kept a fire. If you didn't, bad luck. You kept fire through the night till next morning, They know'd how to put ashes. Did you ever see that? They know'd how to put the ashes, then the next morning you had to have kindling there to start your fire.

Scott: You didn't have matches?

Florence: You didn't hardly have a match. You had a coal oil lamp. You generally went to bed about dark. (27:35) If you got up early and worked all day, you felt like hitting the sack. (laughing) I'd just love to have some of them old people to sit down with and tell a story, the truth you know.

JC: Like your dad, and his brothers.

Florence: If they'd just had something like that recorder, wouldn't that have been good?

JC: I noticed in a picture of your dad, was one of his eyes crooked?

Florence: No. He wasn't too good of a scribe, but you couldn't fool him in arithmetic. He got his education sitting on a log. They'd have logs in school, they would cut em, that's where they went to school.

JC: Do you mean out in the open?

Florence: No, they had a little house, but they didn't have seats. They just took a tree and split it in two.

JC: And that was their desk top?

Florence: That was what they sit on.

JC: Where did he go to school at?

Florence: I guess he went back down there in Kentucky somewhere. He had a little home made desk (28:52) and that was it. The teacher didn't know much more than the children. I went out to Hog Town school, and I couldn't work a problem, I never was too good in fractions. All I know'd was $2 + 2$ I guess. In fractions, my teacher couldn't work it either. I said, "I'll take it home tonight and work it." I took it home, and my dad worked it. (29:16) He was just gifted that way.

Hog Town has changed now. I went back there, and the old house is gone and the school is gone. I don't even like to go back there. I go there to visit Jim. I am going back there when my grandson comes in.

JC: You have told us a lot that we did not know.

Florence: I'd just give anything to know all of it.

JC: I sent you one of these pictures of your dad didn't I?

Florence: Ya.

JC: This Mary Dwelly here, that is Mary & Martha. That was her daughter in law who had this picture. She lives in Mt. Olivet, KY.

Florence: Things sure do change don't they?

JC: Ya. Things change quick too.

Florence: Do you go to church?

JC: Ya.

Florence: What church?

JC: Up in Indiana. (30:36)