

Harlan Porter 1908-1982 (son of **Alex**, son of **Andrew Porter**) 11-23-1979 Track 2a (tape 26 side 2)

JC: The following recording is at **Harlan Porter's** house with **Harlan Porter** continued from another tape. This is Nov. 23rd, 1979

Harlan's son: Walk up the hill. Or was that was **Levi (Porter)**?

Harlan: Yeah, that was Uncle **Levi**.

JC: What did he do?

Harlan: Well, see, this time we never went to Uncle **George's (Dwelly)**. We went to **grandpa's (Coffee)** over in **Fleming County**. Uncle **Levi**, he had a horse, worked him to a buggy. I rode with Uncle **Levi**, and he walked part of them hills. We had a pair of mules to ours. Couldn't hardly hold them on the ground. Had a two-seater, two-seater outfit. He'd get out and walk a ways. Well, we got out to **Grandpa Coffee's** (1:01) Uncle **Levi** went on with my dad to **Robertson County**, and he said that it didn't hurt him to ride in the two-horse outfit like it did. He said the one horse jerked a feller. Dad said he'd walk to save his horse. Dad said he rode up the hills with them mules. That's what made him as sore as that walking. (laughing)

JC: Somebody said something about **Levi** swam across the river to come over here, on a ferry or something.

Harlan: I never heard that.

JC: Never heard about that one?

Harlan: No, I don't think so.

JC: He must have been something else?

Harlan: Awe he was son. My dad (**Alex Porter**) said that grandpa (**Andrew Porter**) always favored Uncle **Levi**. You couldn't hardly blame him if he went to war in his place. He spoiled Uncle **Levi**. Uncle **Levi**, I've heard him say, he wished there would never be a drop of whiskey in the United States. He said he could not pass a bar without stopping and getting a drink.

JC: **Levi** said that?

Harlan: Yeah. I never remember seeing him without that beard in my time. See, I was a grown boy when that doctor opened up **Levi**. (2:34) See he lived not too far from here.

JC: He did?

Harlan: He raised his family. He raised a great big family. There was **Ed** and **Art**.....

Gladys: ____ in **Rowan County**?

Harlan: Yeah.

JC: How tall was your dad? (3:09)

Harlan: He was just about my height, about 5' 10 or 11.

JC: Did he have blue eyes?

Gladys: Yes.

JC: Did he?

Gladys: **Arabelle** had blue eyes. He had pretty blue eyes. Do you remember Aunt **Arabelle**?

JC: I remember seeing her once. I was little then.

Other Lady: **Arabelle** had eyes like her dad. I remember that much about grandpa.

Harlan: Do you reckon he just had two sisters? (talking about his dad **Alex Porter**)

JC: No, he had six sisters.

Harlan: Six sisters?

KC: Yeah. There was them two (pointing to **Mary Dwelly** and **Martha Day** in picture). Then there was **Elizabeth Hunt**. She lived down in **Allen County**, KY. She married in **Virginia** before they ever came (to Kentucky). I think **Levi** probably introduced her to her husband because he was from Allen County, and he was in the Civil War. I guess that he introduced them, and they got married right after the Civil War, and he was from **Allen County** (KY). They had one named **Sena**, and she married **Flem Brown**.

Harlan: Yes sir. That is right.

JC: You have heard that name?

Harlan: Yeah.

JC: I knew her name, but I didn't know who she had married. **Charlie Porter**, your half-brother had written this down and given it to **Elaine Conley** in **Sandy Hook**. She is **Steve Porter**'s great granddaughter.

Harlan: Uh huh.

JC: Do you know anything about them **Browns**, their family?

Harlan: No I don't.

JC: Did she die a long time ago and he remarried?

Harlan: I don't know. My daddy come in a hair of shooting Uncle **Flem Brown**. Somebody had threatened my daddy and Uncle **Flem** come to see him, and hollered down there at the house, and my daddy mistook him for another feller. Some man had threatened my daddy. They had had trouble.

(5:07) and he was just pranking with my daddy. My dad, he wasn't talking. My dad said, "I'll make him talk." He just went in the house and got his rifle. My dad said that made him so nervous he couldn't hardly stand on his _____ and shoot. (5:33). He said Uncle **Flem Brown** _____ (5:40)

JC: Yeah. And he lived in **Elliott County** did he, over here someplace?

Harlan: He didn't live close here. Now I couldn't tell you where he lived. He had been waiting, he just, well really, if you come too far you just had to go by horse and buggy. You might have thought it was a long way and it might not have been too far. That was horse and buggy days, you didn't have no way of going nowhere. In my day, I can remember when the closest road we had was **Olive Hill** to **Morehead**. Over here on **Christy Creek** from **Hog town** over here to **Morehead** you rode out on a little bottom then back right back into the creek out through a little bottom then right back in the creek all the way into **Morehead**. Well down this road here, now they built this road up from **Lawton** here, in their place. Now I was working at **Tavern Rock**, down here up this side, you know where **Burly Mabry** lives down there where you cross the bridge?

JC: Yeah.

Gladys: Harlan, where _____ live? (6:55)

Harlan: Where's he live? He lives out on **Brown Ridge**. (7:00)

Gladys: Well that is in **Elliott County**. That is not **Rowan County**.

Harlan: Now he could live in **Elliott County**.

Gladys: Well if he lives on **Brown Ridge**, I'm quite sure he does. (7:12). I thought he lived out this ridge below the post office there.

Harlan: I could be wrong to. That is where his dad lived out there.

JC: I think your dad had two other sisters that weren't married. **Jane & Emma**. She was the very youngest.

Harlan: **Emma** was the youngest?

JC: She was younger than **John**. I guess they (**Jane & Emma**) were never married.

Harlan: Uncle **Jim (Porter)** was the baby wasn't he?

JC: No, after **Jim** then there was **John** then **Emma**. **John** was the next one below **Jim**.

Harlan: I'll say **Jim** was the baby.

JC: He looks awful young doesn't he?

Harlan: I believe someone has mistold you. I believe Uncle **Jim** was the baby.

Gladys: He's _____ (8:18)

JC: He does look awful young.

Gladys: Well it is on Uncle **Jim**'s tombstone.

JC: Yeah, he was born in 1859, and **John**'s tombstone says 1862.

Gladys: See Dad.

JC: I found it in the census that way too. You know they come around and take that every 10 years.

Harlan: Yeah. Well that tombstone would tell that. They wouldn't have that wrong. I always thought that Uncle **Jim** was the baby. I know my daddy said, (8:51) Uncle **Jim** got killed. He (dad) said, my grandad (Andrew Porter) said, that Uncle **Jim (Porter)** would die with his boots on. He was always off making a fight. (9:07)

JC: He was?

Harlan: Oh yeah.

JC: Your grandpa (**Andrew Porter**) said that about him?

Harlan: He said **Jim** would die with his boots on. I've heard my dad say that. He said they all pranked with him.....

JC: They all did what?

Harlan: They always pranked with him when he was a boy. They said he would fight till he'd die. (9:25) He said he was so bad to fight. That was the reason my Grandpa said he would die with his boots on. A man killed him at **Sandy Hook**. Cut him with a knife. It was over, (9:39) he was getting, he tried to get a school for **Andy**.

JC: His boy **Andy**?

Harlan: Yeah. I don't know whether this man was superintendent or not, but they fell out, and Uncle **Jim** grabbed a chair, and this feller run underneath him. Cut his heart. (9:59)

JC: That family probably took that pretty hard, didn't they?

Harlan: Uh huh.

Gladys: Then his boy got killed. (10:10) Did **Ed** get killed before Uncle **Jim** did?

Harlan: About a year later. He had a son **Ed**, that got killed.

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: They killed him too. (10:19)

JC: How did that all happen?

Harlan: Well, this was over a girl someday. I don't know, he was going to see this girl. Some other man married this girl. Now **John Holbrooks** is the man that killed him. This man, Uncle **Jim** went to this girl before he married her. And it was over this woman some way, this happened. (11:09) Now **Ed** lived. He lived a right smart bit. I don't know if he just lived a night or what. There wasn't no hospital to take him to. It was at **Stark**, they just fixed a room, kept him there.

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: I don't know how long he even lived. He lived a while. (11:31) I'd say a week or so.

JC: Was he stabbed, or shot or what?

Harlan: He was stabbed, I think. I believe that is right. They had trouble. Now you take **Andy** and **Ed** both. They were not afraid. They were like a team. They would about say what they wanted to say, regardless of who it was. (11:48)

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: They got friendly with em. They told him to go to the store and he got killed there. (12:05) The store at **Stark**. _____

JC: Did **Jim** use to run that store at **Stark** or something?

Harlan: I believe **Jim** owned that store at **Stark**.

JC: He did? He owned it and ran it?

Harlan: Yeah. He run it I don't know how long. Probably when he got killed, he was running it. Now I don't know if that is right or not. But he run that store. I know I have heard my dad talk about that.

JC: What do you know about your Uncle **Steve (Porter)**?

Harlan: Well, see, Uncle **Steve** was a preacher. "Want something to eat?" (Speaking to a man who just walked in.) Uncle **Steve**, he used to live right over here, below, well you know where **Charlie** lived.

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: He lived right down there. He sold out here, well, I imagine it was before my time. Moved to **Wisconsin**. He married a **Bumgardner**. She died. Aunt **Sis**. He come back here, and he married her sister.

JC: He did?

Harlan: Yeah. And went back to **Wisconsin** and _____ (13:41) I went up there in (19)52.

JC: What, to **Wisconsin**?

Harlan: Yeah. He had a boy named **Charlie, Marvin**, I don't know ____ (14:07) **Charlie** was there. He wanted to take me, Uncle **Steve** built I know of three churches he built in **Wisconsin**.

JC: Oh really?

Harlan: Yeah. ____ (14:21)

JC: He would?

Harlan: Oh yeah.

JC: How's that?

Harlan: I mean for fun. ____ (14:28)

JC: Oh yeah.

Harlan: You couldn't get him (**Steve Porter**). **Houston Goodman** was pretty tight. (14:35) He told **Houston**, he was a buying a cow for some widow woman. He was a good ____ (15:08) He wanted **Houston** to put in a dollar. He didn't want to do it. He said, "I'll tell you what I'm gonna do. If you don't put in a dollar I'll go over there and make your wife put in two." **Houston** gave him a dollar. He knew he would do it.

JC: **Steve** told him that?

Harlan: Yes sir. They started to build the **Fairview Church**, that one they've got up there.

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: Uncle **John**, Uncle **John (Porter)** had more money than anybody.

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: Uncle **John** got up and was talking about it. There was another church house that was built the other way (other direction), it was small, and they wanted a bigger church house. (15:51)

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: They was talking about it one Sunday. I was little but I never forgot what I seen. (15:59). Uncle **John** said, now if we had so many men that would put in, it seems like he said \$100 a piece, I guess ____ talk about building the church. (16:13) Just as soon as he said, ____, Uncle **Steve** jumped up and said, "Never mind honey, we'll get the money." (laughing)

JC: That is what **Steve** told him, huh?

Harlan: Yeah.

JC: Was **John** the one who said if we have so many men to put in \$100...

Harlan: Seems like he said ten men. It might not have been one hundred. I don't know the correct figures. If we had ten men who would put in so much, we could talk about building the church, not just ____ (16:47) Never mind honey, we'll get the money. (laughing) Uncle **Steve** went down over the hill there and picked up a great big rock. Carried it up there and said I'll lay the first stone.

JC: That same day huh?

Harlan: That day. Yes sir. So they got in, elected some trustees you know. _____(17:09) _____

JC: How long had **Steve** been preaching?

Harlan: I don't know what age he started. He must have been around 80 when he died. He preached about everywhere he went. (17:38)

JC: Yeah. Did **Levi (Porter)** and **Jim (Porter)** go to church. I know this (picture) was taken at the old church. There they are on Sunday.

Harlan: Is that **Fairview Church**?

JC: Yeah, that is the **Old Fairview church** I believe.

Harlan: _____

JC: Well there is another picture taken the same day with them and their wives out there, and you can see the building and it looks like the church. Papaw (**Everett Porter**) said that is probably it because it looked like it faced the other way.

Harlan: Yeah. He thinks this is the smaller church?

JC: Yeah.

Harlan: Well you know he is a little older than me. He is about 73 ain't he?

JC: Yeah, 75.

Harlan: Is he?

JC: Yeah. He was born in 1904.

Harlan: Well I am 71. Now I never did know of Uncle **Levi** going to church.

JC: He didn't?

Harlan: All the rest of em would go to church. Uncle **Jim**, He would lie about going. (18:46) But he was there. Uncle **John** was a preacher. My dad, (**Alex Porter**) I never seen him not go to church. (19:02)

JC: Is that right?

Harlan: The first of my recollections, they took me to Sunday School. ____ (19:18) Of course his first wife, **Charlie**'s mother, she was a, you've got her.

JC: **Laura Fulton**

Harlan: (19:34) Yeah **Laura Fulton**. I believe he married her in **Robertson County**. (19:53) Is that right?

JC: Yeah, that is what I found. I guess **Andrew Porter** lived out there didn't he?

Harlan: I don't know. I never knew where my grandfather lived.

JC: Did you ever hear anything about your grandpa and the whole family living in **Ohio** right after they came from **Virginia**?

Harlan: No.

JC: **Ed (Porter)**, **Levi**'s boy, the census said he was born in **Ohio** in 1868. Nobody else knows anything about it. Then the lady I got this picture from (**Nona Dwelly**), **Mary Dwelly**, her mother-in-law told her that the **Porters** lived in **Ohio** for a short time.

Harlan: Probably did. I don't remember hearing my daddy say anything about it. But I thought he said he married **Laura** in **Robertson County** (KY) (20:48) He married a woman (**Lizzie Stewart Williams**) the second time and it broke him up to get a divorce.

JC: He did? What was the story behind that?

Harlan: She would steal away a little while and leave. He said she left and was gone a year twice, and he let her come back. Finally, he got tired of it and got a divorce. He liked to have never got it.

Gladys: You know there is always a story behind all these things. You think you know it all and you don't know any of it really. You just hear one side of it.

JC: Yeah. I like to talk to a lot of people and get all the sides. Several sides anyway.

Gladys: But do they always correspond?

JC: Not always.

Gladys: That's right.

Harlan: I always just tell em like I hear it if I tell anything. ____ (21:49) now that's not right.

JC: Did she want to get a divorce? Was she sad about that?

Harlan: Yeah. She fought it.

JC: She didn't want a divorce?

Harlan: No. She had been gone for about a year at a time, twice.

JC: So, he got tired of it?

Harlan: When he was trying to get a divorce, he wrote her a letter and told her to never come back. He said if they could have produced that letter, that he couldn't have got a divorce. But his lawyers got that letter, and it never was produced. (laughing)

JC: She was from out in **Missouri**, wasn't she?

Harlan: Yeah, I think so.

Gladys: It isn't that hard to get a divorce now, is it?

Harlan: Most the time, it is just a handshake and a shack up. (laughing)

JC: How did they meet, him (**Alex**) and **Lizzie**?

Gladys: The mail honey. It was advertised.

Harlan: No, I don't think so Mommy.

Gladys: The Lovelorn is what they told me.

Harlan: She had some relation in this country. They was **Clays** that lived here. **Everett** (son of **Alex**) could tell you a lot about that. He was at home.

JC: He was.

Harlan: Yeah. You talk to him. They was great big boys you know. My Dad said he couldn't hardly keep them from jumping on her? (23:30) (laughing) You just talk to him. "What about your stepmother **Everett**? How did you and her get along there?" You just start in with him, and he will tell you some funny things.

She (**Lizzie**) would take spells, she would just faint away. They run and got the dishrag and put it across there, said she had done passed out and she reached up and took it off. (laughing) (24:08) _____ but he's got a good reflection for an old man.

JC: Yeah he does. He does real good except his hearing.

Harlan: Yeah, his hearing is bad. He needs hearing aids. He had a hearing aid. He could tell you a lot of things.

JC: Yeah. What are some more old stories your dad told you that used to happen?

Harlan: What?

JC: What are some more old stories your dad told you that used to happen?

Harlan: Oh I don't know. _____ (24:45)

JC: Sounds like he told you quite a bit didn't he?

Harlan: Oh yeah. Yeah.

JC: He was an older guy when you were at home wasn't he?

Harlan: See my daddy was 53 years old when I was born. See he was 73 when he died, and I was 20. My dad, see there was four of us children. We had a baby sister **Ceola** that died ____ a week or so old.

JC: Yeah. Was she the last one? _____

Harlan: I think she was born before **Irene**, wasn't she?

Gladys: Yeah, she was born between **Irene** and **Herman**.

JC: Oh.

Harlan: Then **Herman**, then **Ceola**, then **Irene**. My dad was old enough to know, he petted us to death. (26:14)

JC: He did?

Harlan: That's right. He worshipped us. They wasn't no two ways about it. He'd take spells, he _____. You know how kids are. Take us something ____ They always enjoyed it, from an older person.

Gladys ____ I think that is harder for old folks.

JC: He didn't tell you much else about his dad though?

Harlan: No not a lot. He just told me, he (**Andrew Porter**) was a preacher.

JC: He was?

Gladys: Did he die when your dad was young? Do you know when grandpa **Porter** died?

JC: Yeah, 1888. The tombstone says.

Harlan: 1888. No I don't ...

JC: Your dad would have been 33 when his dad died.

Harlan: Yeah. I knew he wasn't too young. One time my dad (**Alex Porter**) said that grandpa (**Andrew Porter**) was sick. Uncle **Steve**, they had a doctor and they told him that if anything happened to grandpa, (27:39) he would see that he got his money for doctoring. He was just a Jew, Jewish _____. Said that grandpa got well and he said, ____ You said that if you died you would pay. Now that he has got well, who will pay? (laughing) (28:04) He thought that let him out of the trap you know.

JC: That let **Steve** out of the trap, huh?

Harlan: Yeah.

Gladys: Talk to him to pay his own debt.

Harlan: That is what that doctor asked him ____ (28:22) They said he returned to thank you _____
Said the good Lord talked to _____.

JC: June what?

Harlan: **Jewell Scragg** was an herb doctor.

Gladys: He was a **German**. ____ right down the road from my dad. (28:47) About half a mile.

JC: Did your dad have an accent? Like different than most people around here?

Harlan: No, huh uh.

JC: He didn't?

Harlan: No difference. No different accent. (29:05) ____ Sometimes it might be a little different and the children might not know it. I'm sure he didn't.

JC: I know in **Virginia** they talk a little bit different.

Harlan: Yeah. See they had been here so long you know....

Gladys: Did you get any of this desert? _____

Harlan: I liked that alright. _____

JC: What are some more of those stories about **Levi**? (laughing) I'd say he is the black sheep of the family, wasn't he?

Harlan: Yeah. (laughing)

JC: Gotta know the good with the bad.

Harlan: Well they all thought he was.

JC: They did?

Harlan Yeah, Dad said he was grandpa's pet.

JC: Your grandpa's pet?

Harlan: Yeah. You know why. He went to the service.

Gladys: He had to go to the army. Everybody was starving _____

Harlan: One of Uncle **Levi's**, they bought some _____ END OF TAPE (30:50)