

Irene Keeney 6-22-1980 (daughter of **James A. Porter**, son of **Levi Porter**, son of **Andrew J. Porter**)

JC: The next recording is a phone call to Mrs. **Irene Keeney**. K, double E, NEY. 608 Nelson Place, Newport, KY 41071. Her phone number is area code 606-291-7193. She is the daughter of **Jim Porter**, the only child of **Jim Porter**, the lawyer, the son of **Levi (Porter)**. The time is about 2:20 PM Sunday June 22, (1980).

Irene: (1:12) Yes.

JC: Is this Mrs. Keeney?

Irene: Yes it is.

JC: This is **JC Porter** up in Marion, IN.

Irene: Well Hi.

JC: How are you?

Irene: Pretty good, and you?

JC: Oh, pretty good.

Irene: I was hoping you'd call me.

JC: I thought you were, I got you letter and I thought I would give you a call and talk to you for a little bit.

Irene: Well how far away are you from me?

JC: Well Marion is about half way between Indianapolis and Ft. Wayne, so it is about 150 miles probably.

Irene: Yes.

JC: When you mentioned in your letter, it was post marked Cinti, is that Cincinnati?

Irene: Right.

JC: Abbreviated?

Irene: Uh huh. I'm just across the bridge in Newport (KY)

JC: Ya.

Irene: I wonder why your letter was postmarked Cincinnati.

JC: Ya, that is kind of strange.

Irene: Uh huh.

JC: I don't know why they would do that.

Irene: What's the J.C. for?

JC: James Christopher.

Irene: Well.

JC: You mentioned that I was a great-great grandson of Levi. You got a little mixed up I think. Levi's brother (Alex) was my great-great grandpa.

Irene: Well what was his name?

JC: **Alexander Porter**

Irene: Alexander?

JC: Ya that was Levi's brother.

Irene: Alexander the Great.

Irene: Yes.

JC: (laughing)

Irene: Right?

JC: I don't know.

Irene: Well my father was named that, I told you that. James his first and after "the Great."

JC: Is that what they really named him, or did he just say that?

Irene: He always said that. But I never knew my grandmother.

JC: Oh you didn't?

Irene: No.

JC: But you knew your grandpa?

Irene: I never saw him, but I remember my father speaking of him. His name was **Levi (Porter)**, but I knew John. He was a great violinist.

JC: Levi's Brother John?

Irene: Uh huh. (3:01) (Could this Uncle John be a husband of one of **Bettie Porter Lundy's** sisters?)

JC: I've never heard of that before.

Irene: No, my father's brother.

JC: Your father's brother?

Irene: My father's brother. He played before all the crowned heads of Europe. (3:13)

JC: Well did your father have a brother named John?

Irene: Yes

JC: He did?

Irene: Yes.

JC: Well who was some of your other Uncles, your dad's brothers?

Irene: We I can't remember them. I remember meeting John, I was just a child. (Irene was born 29 Aug 1910) I thought they were all from Kentucky, but in your letter, you think they came from Virginia.

JC: Your grandpa was born in Virginia, **Levi Porter**.

Irene: Are you sure of that?

JC: Ya, he was born about 1845 in Virginia. And he was in the Civil War, he was a Confederate.

Irene: Oh.

JC: Your dad was born about 1875?

Irene: I guess honey. As I say, I can't even remember. My mother wasn't 35 years old when I was born. (4:12)

JC: Ya.

Irene: I had a brother who died the year before I was born.

JC: Ya.

Irene: I was born in 1910. I figure you are around 30, am I close?

JC: No, I am only 20.

Irene: Are you only 20?

JC: Uh huh. You mentioned my family in the letter. I'm not married. I still live at home.

Irene: You do?

JC: Ya. (4:41) I've been working on the family tree for about three years. I've just been digging in to it to see what all I could find.

Irene: Well I wish you could come and see me. A lot of my relatives have.

JC: Well I might get a chance to sometime. I go down around Cincinnati when I go down; I was born down there around Olive Hill.

Irene: You were?

JC: Uh huh.

Irene: That's how you met **Ronald (Jarvis)**, Huh?

JC: Well, he lives in **Globe**, and he is a good friend with my Uncle, because my Uncle (**Ed Porter**) lives there.

Irene: I think he is the only one that never married.

JC: Oh, is that right?

Irene: He was caretaker at Carter Caves at one time. It's like Mammoth Cave, only smaller.

JC: Ya, I've been there. That's real nice.

Irene: And he's working there now.

JC: I don't know if he is or not. Let me ask you some questions about your dad and your grandpa, OK? (5:43)

Irene: Alright.

JC: You say your dad (**James A. Porter**) was a teacher at Huntington College?

Irene: **Marshall College.**

JC: Oh, Marshall College. What did he teach over there?

Irene: Uh, Higher Mathematics.

JC: Oh did he?

Irene: Uh huh.

JC: Well you said he went to Law School, what kind of a ...

Irene: No, I said he stayed, they used to do it like doctors, they read, so they could pass the bar, you know. That's how he began _____ (6:18). In fact there is, I guess it would be a landmark case now, where he defended a man accused of murder. He got the case to the governor, and the governor, before he was even tried, the governor paroled him. I think it would be a landmark case now.

JC: Ya, I'd say so. Your dad did that for that guy?

Irene: Yes he did.

JC: What were some stories your dad ever told you about the old Porters?

Irene: Well, my father had TB of the bone. He was about 6' 2.

JC: 6'2?

Irene: Yes. He had TB of the bone. His mother, I can't remember her name.

JC: Bettie?

Irene: I don't remember. I never heard him mention her name. The name Levi stuck with me, because of Levi Strauss _____. Well he told me that he used to crawl across the kitchen floor, and take a tin cup and drink these herbs for kids _____(7:47). I thought that was quite interesting.

JC: I'll be darn.

Irene: They are all going back to erbs or herbs. That was wonderful stuff.

JC: Your dad was crippled later in life wasn't he? Was that because of the TB?

Irene: Yes.

JC: Was he just a boy when he got TB?

Irene: He was crawling. He would crawl. He would crawl across the kitchen floor and drink the herbs that his mother prepared for him.

JC: Huh. And that was how he got over it. Did he ever tell you anything about his grandpa (**Andrew J. Porter**) being in the civil war?

Irene: No.

JC: I mean your grandpa (**Levi Porter**).

Irene: No.

JC: He never told you anything about that?

Irene: I don't even know when he was born. All I know, he told me that he was born on the same day as the Battle of New Orleans.

JC: When it started, or the day of the Battle of New Orleans?

Irene: I can't remember.

JC: Was that during the Civil War, the Battle of New Orleans? (9:11)

Irene: I think it was after, wasn't it?

JC: It might have been. I'll have to look that up.

Irene: I'm not too versed at history. I enjoyed receiving your letter so much.

JC: I was glad to get in touch with you. I knew, I'd been told by some of the other relatives that Jim Porter had two children, and the boy died. Nobody knew where you lived. This **Ronald Jarvis**, he told me. Could I ask you about your own family, your two sons, who they married?

Irene: Yes, I have one named **James Porter Keeney**. I told you how to spell my name right.

JC: I'm sorry about that.

Irene: You wouldn't know. _____ (10:06) My husband (**Roy W. Keeney**) passed away in 69.

JC: Oh he did?

Irene: Ya. We had two sons, James Porter...

JC: Who did James marry?

Irene: He married, Mary, left me see if I can think of her...She was married before, so I have forgotten what name she went by.

JC: Well that is OK. Do they have any children?

Irene: Yes they have, I have to count. They have Jim, and Mary Ann, and Sherry.

JC: Are any of them married?

Irene: Yes.

JC: Oh they are?

Irene: Mary Ann the youngest was married. I don't know if she still is or not. She has a boy and a girl.

JC: I'll tell you what. Would it be OK if I write you again, and tell you exactly what I need? What I'm trying to do.

Irene: Sure,

JC: Someday I am hoping to write a book about our Porters, and in the back of it, I want a list of all of our descendants. In the meantime, when I write you, you could be looking to find out all of the kids names and who they married for me, if you would, and who everybody married.

Irene: I'd love to meet you too.

JC: Well, I might get to stop by and visit you.

Irene: I was hoping you would.

JC: Well I will write you a letter and ask for what I am after for that.

JC: (11:40) Do you know of any other stories off hand about the other old Porters?

Irene: They say that superstition is a sign of ignorance, but the old people were superstitious. I know my father (**James A. Porter**, s/o Levi, s/o AJP), had a younger brother, and he was dying. I thought it was in Kentucky, but it could have been elsewhere.

They were out in the yard, and there was a knocking sound. It seemed to go all the way, like a rainbow. When it stopped, **Levi (Porter)**, my grandfather, said to my Dad (**James A. Porter**), "He's dead." They went in the house, and he was dead.

JC: And that was one of your Uncles that had died?

Irene: Yes.

(**James A. Porter** died in 1940 and had 3 younger brothers. **AR Bob Porter** died in 1958. Elbert **Byrd Porter** died in 1931 in Floyd County, KY, and **Arthur Porter** died in 1914 at or next door to Levi's house. So this story has to be about Arthur Porter.)

JC: Did your dad ever tell you about your grandpa raising those knocking spirits or hypnotizing people?

Irene: No.

JC: He didn't tell you about that?

Irene: No.

JC: Some of the old Porters down there said that your grandpa used to do that now and then.

Irene: _____ (13:08) Edgar Cayce, if you know who he is. <http://www.edgarcayce.org/>

JC: No.

Irene: He was a sleeping prophet, from Hopkinsville, KY.

JC: He was what kind of prophet?

Irene: A sleeping prophet. He could go into a trance...

JC: Ya.

Irene: And he would diagnose what was wrong with you, but he didn't realize he was doing that. Originally he came from Hopkinsville. The day he died, there was a double rainbow over Hopkinsville, KY.

JC: I'll be darn.

Irene: Now there is in White Sulfur Springs, a foundation that perpetuates his life story. It is quite interesting. He would work with doctors, and speak in Latin, and only had a 6th grade education.

JC: I'll be darn.

Irene: He would go to the Drug store and tell the druggist (14:20) look at the top shelf, right hand side behind so and so, but he didn't realize he was saying it. He had a two sons. If you ever get a chance... I love to read. If you get a chance, look at that.

JC: Ya I will. You know about your Uncle that died, my grandpa (**Everett Porter**) was telling me that his dad was **Jasper Porter** that would be your dad's first cousin. And he was with your Uncle **Arthur Porter**, your dad's brother when he died, that was in 1914. They said he was in bed, and he was with him, and he was just going wild screaming, and he kept saying that he saw black winged demons at the end of the bed. That might be the same one you were talking about, that you've heard of.

Irene: Aw.

JC: Where did your dad get married at, do you know?

Irene: As far as I know, he married my mother in Olive Hill.

JC: Were you born down in Olive Hill?

Irene: No, I can't remember. It was a little town. Dad was superintendent of schools.

JC: Oh, over in West Virginia?

Irene: No, no, no, in Kentucky.

JC: Oh.

Irene: I was born there. We heard a knock, something go up and down the steps there. (16:04) ____ what my father told me. We didn't know about it you know. It's not a superstition. It's not a sign of ignorance. They say it is.

JC: No, it is real, I think. You say your dad was superintendent of the school?

Irene: Uh huh.

JC: What school was that?

Irene: Carter County Schools.

JC: Oh he was?

Irene: Uh huh.

JC: About what year would that have been? In the 20's?

Irene: It had to have been after the 20's.

JC: When did your dad die?

Irene: I can't remember. I think I have it in the Bible.

JC: Well, when I write you, maybe you could look that up for me if you would, because I'd like to get that information.

Irene: OK

JC: Well, I will just drop you a line and ask you anything else I need to know, if that would be OK.

Irene: I'm so glad you called.

JC: Well its nice talking to you.

Irene: James Christopher, huh?

JC: Ya. James Christopher.

Irene: Beautiful name.

JC: I don't know who I was named after. My mom just wanted to name me JC. She picked out some names I guess.

Irene: Well, you know my second son is not Roy Junior. He's just Roy J. My husband didn't want to name him. He said it was bad luck, (17:44) so he's just Roy J.

JC: Well it is always good talking to the new relatives that I've met. I'll write you a letter then, OK?

Irene: Alright, and you are always welcome.

JC: Well I might get a chance to stop by sometime.

Irene: Come anytime.

JC: You never know, I might just drop in.

Irene: Ok, you've got my number now?

JC: Ya. 608 Nelson Street.

Irene: Right. I've been here 35 years. I got a letter just addressed to Irene, Newport, one time. They know me ____ (18:41)

JC: Well ya, after 35 years, they would know you. You will probably be hearing from me. Thank You for your time and everything.

Irene: Thank you for calling. You get lower rates on Sunday don't you?

JC: Ya it's the cheapest rate now, so it won't cost very much.

Irene: I don't want to hold you up, but I sure would like to meet you.

JC: Well, you gonna buy one of my books someday if I get it done?

Irene: I certainly will.

JC: Well OK. I'd be glad to sell you one.

Irene: You'd have to autograph it though.

JC: Ok

Irene: I got a book from Jeff Stearn. You know who he is don't you?

JC: Who?

Irene: Jeff Stearn.

JC: No, sounds familiar.

Irene: He is a famous writer from Russell, KY.

JC: Oh he is?

Irene: He had a stroke. I don't know if he is still living or not. He wrote, Return to the Farm. I've got an autographed book from him. I loaned it to somebody, one of my _____, she never brought it back of course. (24:18)

JC: Have you ever seen any old pictures of your grandpa (**Levi**) Porter?

Irene: No. I'd never seen him till the one you sent me.

JC: Was that the first one you had seen of him?

Irene: Yes

JC: Ya, that was some more of a picture, wasn't it?

Irene: It really was. I have some pictures, they're in my cedar chest, and I can't open it because there's a TV setting on top of it. (24:18) A combination of, it looks like an oil painting, I think it's a _____. It's not a tin type. I don't know how to describe it to you.

JC: Who is it of?

Irene: My father.

JC: Oh, of your father. Did you get that Carter County book that they wrote?

Irene: No.

JC: Your dad's picture is in it.

Irene: Oh?

JC: They have all of the Olive Hill lawyers in 1920. There is about 8 or 9 of them, and he is in it.

Irene: That recalls an incident, I was in a judge's office. My dad was sitting here, and he said, "Don't do anything." You know how you are when you are about 9 or 10. You are in to everything. I pulled the drawer out. I couldn't get it back. There was a gun in it.

JC: A gun?

Irene: Everybody carried a gun in those days. I never will forget that. It was **Judge Counts**, "C"O"U"N"T'S". I never will forget it because I thought I would get killed.

JC: Well, I'll write you a letter, OK?

Irene: OK

JC: And it is sure good talking to you.

Irene: May I call you Jim, or JC?

JC: Well I go by JC usually.

Irene: JC

JC: Ya.

Irene: You don't know how happy I am to hear from you.

JC: Well I'll tell all my relatives down there that I talked to you, my grandpa and all of them. You probably don't know them do you?

Irene: No. My Uncle John, I know I met him. He was a famous violinist.

JC: Are you sure that is on your dad's side, or was that your mom's brother?

Irene: Oh no, no, no. John Porter. He had all kinds of violins in black cases, and he was going to pass them on to his children.

JC: I've never heard of him. That's why I wondered.

Irene: He lived in Ohio.

JC: In Ohio?

Irene: Uh huh. And he said, One day he was walking down the street in London, and someone said, "Hi John." My father told me that he played all around for the heads of Europe.

JC: Where did he live in Ohio? Do you remember?

Irene: Just across from Ashland, KY.

JC: Just across from Ashland? Could he have been your dad's cousin?

Irene: No, he was my Uncle John. (Could this Uncle John be a husband of one of **Bettie Porter Lundy's** sisters?)

JC: Your Uncle John? Well I will have to check into that. I've never heard anything about him. How about Calhoun, your Uncle **Calhoun (Porter)**? (**Cal Porter**)

Irene: No, I've never heard of him.

JC: Never heard of him.

Irene: I know my father had other brothers, but I've never heard of any sisters.

JC: Ya, neither has anyone else.

Irene: How about that.

JC: Well, you will be hearing from me, and it is awful good meeting with you and talking with you.

Irene: Next best to seeing you is talking with you on the phone.

JC: Ya that what they say.

Irene: You are only 20 huh?

JC: Ya only 20. I will send you some more information too. I'll see what I can find on your grandpas family.

Irene: Alright. Thanks a lot. We won't say good bye. We'll just say so long.

JC: Ok. I will be seeing you then.

Irene: Ok. God Bless you.

JC: God bless you too.

Irene: Thank You. So Long.

JC: Bye bye.

End of tape (24:18)