

June 2, 1979 Jim Porter (son of John C. Porter, s/o Andrew J. Porter)
Everett Porter (s/o Jasper Porter, s/o Alex Porter, s/o Andrew J. Porter)

Track 2 (1st 14 of 34 minutes)

Alice: Are you out of High School?

JC: Ya, I've been out a year now. Working full time for a year.

JC: You say Alick (Alex Porter, s/o AJP) didn't joke around either?

Jim: No.

JC to Everett: I wonder where your dad (Jasper Porter, s/o Alex, s/o AJP) got all of his joking around then?

Everett: He was bad.

Jim: He liked to joke around.

Grace to Alice: (About JC) He'll be 20 in December.

Alice: He's your daughter's son.

Grace: No, he's our son's son.

Jim: My mother was over at Uncle Alick's. Coming back across the hill, there was a big apple tree there. Back then, there was apples just laying, going to waste. Anybody could pick them up, whoever wanted them. Your dad (Jasper) and some of them pulled a joke on my mother. He (Jasper) stuck a note on the tree, that said something like, "Thou Shall not steal."

Everett: Boy he was just all the time, just anything to have a big laugh.

Jim: He caught my dad and mother out at Fairview church one Sunday, and he (Jasper) said, "There comes Adam and Eve." He said, "Eve got the forbidden fruit, and Adam helped eat it too." He had a big lot of fun out of it. Nobody cared about that. We'd go up there, and those apples would be just laying there going to waste.

Jim: Now we can't raise apples. We can't raise them here.

Everett: They get killed every year.

Jim: Back in the 20's, I had several big apple trees right down there. They were just full. but then in the 30's, 9 times out of 10, the freeze would get them. Just once in a while,

Everett: You don't have very many apples this time do you?

Jim: No. I couldn't set out no fruit trees on that account. It would freeze.

Everett: The last few years, if you set out a little tree, it would kill em.

JC: What do you know about Levi (Porter, son of Andrew J. Porter) and his hypnotism? Did you ever see any of that?

Jim: He said he could do it.

JC: Did you ever see him do it?

Jim: No.

Alice: Who was that Jim that you said he could do it?

Jim: Uncle Levi. He had a book that he read up on, and he quit it because he said you could harm some people with it.

Everett: It's evil spirits is what it is.

Jim: It ain't a thing, but the Devil. I could tell you, we had a little homemade stand table, I guess I better change that. You know, just four legs, homemade. My brother (Will Porter?) and Wint (s/o Alex, s/o AJP), I believe it was there at our place, and they had that table, I can remember well, if I would get up on this side of it, you know and set there, it would raise up and stand on the other two legs back here, and it did. I can remember, I got on it and it just raised me up, and it stood right there on two legs and nobody touching it. Me a sitt'in on it, I was just a boy.

JC: So you were on there. They did it for you huh?

Jim: They asked it to knock a lick, and it would raise right up and knock a lick. They would ask it

with this boy on it.

JC: What were some of the questions they would ask it?

Jim: It was all sorts of foolish questions. If you started anything about the Bible, it wouldn't work. It would quit.

JC: It would go away then huh?

Jim: It'd go away.

Jim: Now my brother, he didn't like Elijah Purnell. You've heard of Elijah Purnell?

Everett: Ya, I've heard of him.

Jim: My brother didn't like him.

JC: Who's that?

Jim: Elijah Purnell. My oldest brother, Will, didn't like Elijah Purnell. My brother said to it (the table), or Wint, I forget just which one, "Is Elijah Purnell a thief?" Or something like that. "Knock a lick if he is." Well it knocked a lick.

Everett: It did? (laughing)

Jim: Ya. And then they said, "Would he (Elisha) steal sheep?" It knocked a lick. (laughing) And they said, "How many sheep did he ever steal?" That thing just went to pecking up and down, and up and down, and up and down as fast as it could go.

JC: The table knocked up and down?

Everett: Ain't Elisha Purnell the feller that went way off some where and had a big...

Jim: He went to New Castle, Indiana.

Everett: Well didn't he have some kind of church or something that had a big following of some kind? They called him Father Purnell.

Jim: He was a preacher of some kind.

Everett: The people just run in there and thought he was a God.

Jim: Chalmer tells me that he went plum off. Went wild before he died.

Everett: Now was Leslie Purnell his boy? I know'd Leslie.

Jim: That's his boy. He's got grandchildren over here now.

JC: You could see that table jumping up and down.

Jim: It would raise right up and just peck the floor.

Everett: I've heard Dad, Dad told us, he was staying with Wint. Wint was married.

Jim: I think Wint was into that too. He was there that night, I'm pretty sure.

Everett: Dad was the one doing most of it. He was just boarding with Wint. Wint lived down there on Clark Hill. Dad was boarding there with him. He wasn't married, Dad wasn't.

Jim: That hypnotism can be worked.

Everett: Evil spriits.

Jim: Uncle Levi, they said there was some feller aimed to preach over there, and he didn't like this preacher.

Everett: Jess Collins, I've heard.

Jim: Was it, I forget the name. He said I just took a notion to go down there and keep him from preaching tonight.

JC: So what did he do?

Jim: He won, he said. The old man got up and started to preach, and finally he just...

Everett: He said, "The Devil's in the house."

Jim: The preacher said he can't preach tonight, and he sat down and quit.

Everett: The next night they said he came out and said, "Is that old man Porter here?"

JC: They said the old man with the beard, wasn't it? Did Levi have a long beard?

Jim: Ya, he had some beard. He used to come to our house, and he would set up there and talk all night.

Everett: They said Uncle Steve (s/o Andrew J. Porter) was preaching somewhere, and Levi got up

there and tried to charm him you know. He was preaching, and Uncle Steve, he could feel it you know. He was preaching and Uncle Levi was sitting there looking right at him, trying to charm him. He said, "Levi, if you don't quit fooling with that Devil spirit, the Devil's gonna get you." Boy, they said he just poured it on him. (laughing) Levi said, "Now, it won't work on Steve." They said his charm wouldn't work on Steve.

Jim: It was kind of on people that was easily pulled over.

JC: Wonder how he got started into that?

Everett: Books I guess.

Jim: Well sir, I don't know. Ofcourse he went through that civil war. He got mean, that's all there was to it.

Everett: The Devil's in him.

Jim: He didn't care much what he done. I know he come back from the civil war they said. He hadn't been back long. Some of the neighbor's hogs had been getting out, his father (Andrew J. Porter) told him. They were getting out in his corn field. So he (Levi) didn't know his father's hogs from anyone else's hogs. He goes out and shoots three of his father's hogs first thing. He thought he had killed his neighbor's hogs. Just killed three of em. (laughing)

JC: What did his father do?

Jim: Well, he just put up with it. He (Levi) had went to the war, and saved him (Andrew) a goin you know. He didn't mean to kill his father's hogs. But he just thought it was his neighbor's hogs, you see.

JC: Have you ever heard anything about when they came across the river, that Levi swam across to get the ferry to bring it back so they could get across on it, when they were coming from Virginia?

Jim: No, No I never heard of that.

JC: Somebody told me that.

Jim: They was supposed to have come through the Cumberland Gap across those mountains where there ain't no river.

JC: They came through the Cumberland Gap?

Jim: That was my understanding. All of them you see. That was the road through there.

Everett: Wouldn't have been no river to cross.

Jim: Wouldn't have been no river to cross. And they come down Little Sandy, wasn't much of a river in that country.

JC: You mean they came on a boat down the Little Sandy?

Jim: No, they come in wagons.

JC: they came along the river then?

Jim: My mother's people did, the Catrons. The Catrons and the Kegleys. They come in wagons.

Alice: Who was it that Mae Porter said was trying to get something on that? She said someone was over at her house.

Grace: Maybe it was JC?

Alice: Ya, it might have been the boy.

JC: About a year ago?

Alice: Ya.

Jim: It was you I guess. They said, some of Jas's (Jasper's) people.

Everett: That was him. You were down here about a year ago weren't you?

JC: Ya, about this time last year.

Everett: Him and Ed's boy with plum up to Grayson county, Old Virginia.

Jim: That's a poor county in there, that Old Virginia.

JC: Oh, it's beautiful. It's real nice farm land. Just rolling hills at a high altitude.

Jim: I thought they said it was kindly high.

JC: That county (Grayson county) has the highest place in Virginia.

Jim: Is it?

Everett: They said they (Scott and JC) couldn't see what made them leave a place like that and come down here. Looks like they would have stayed up there. Prettiest county up there.

Jim: I guess it was awful bad at the time of that civil war.

Everett: I guess it was. It's improved a lot since then.

Jim: People you know was going hungry. I know my mother said, my grandmother said that lots of soldiers come in starving to death and they eat so much after they come home that it killed em. They were just starving. She said that.

Everett: Pitiful wasn't it.

JC: Your mom's grandmother said that?

Jim: Uh huh. After they got out that away, that was the trouble with Uncle Levi, he laid out that away and got so he didn't care for nothing much. He was a great fella over there, he raised fruit and everything.

Everett: He had a big seng (ginseng) garden over there.

Jim: Grapes and fruit of all kinds. Apples, pears, he had it.

JC: Where did he have that at?

Jim: There at home, over there where he lived.

JC: Over here?

Jim: Ya, over here.

Everett: Ya he had all kinds of trees, big orchards back then. I don't guess there is a tree in that country anymore.

Jim: I don't imagine.

Everett: I ain't been back in that country for years.

Jim: Well I never was.

Everett: I used to go there and stay all night with them. Different times. He had a big seng garden, I know that. He sold seng. He would dig it up and sell the roots.

JC: You don't have a picture of your dad do you?

Jim: I think I do have upstairs.

JC: Would it be hard to find?

Jim: It is in that old trunk ain't it?

Alice: Uh huh.

Jim: I suppose I have a picture of him when he was a little boy.

JC: Is that right?

Alice: I'll go get it. (14:02)

Track 2 – Jim Porter (s/o John C., s/o AJP)

JC: (24:00) Where is that one of your dad. I'll make a copy of that too. You don't mind do you?

Jim: No, no. Go ahead. I never was much for pictures myself. They would take my picture once in a while, but seemed like I...

Everett: They would get that little picture lady to take your picture, about like that a little small picture. That is a nice little picture. Ya, you can get a copy of that.

JC: Ya someday if I ever write a book, this picture might be in there.

Jim: Ya. He could really talk, Dad could at a funeral and stuff like that. I don't know why...

Everett: I never did forget, he preached one of them Broomfield's funerals down there, we lived down there, below us we lived on Leatherwood there. I forget which one it was now. He preached there and I thought he done the best preaching that I ever heard.

Jim: People liked him. They just really liked him. He just plum ruint himself. That's all there was too it. Old Marshall Adkins wasn't a mean man. I know'd him well.

Everett: But he would kill him. He tried to kill him 2 or 3 times.

Jim: Ya, he shot him.

Everett: He shot him down there in town when he lived down there.

Jim: Shot at him they said.

Everett: Shot at him, don't think it hit him then.

Jim: Shot at him. I don't think he tried to hit him.

Everett: He hit him down here though didn't he one time?

Jim: He hit him up here. Back over here, he moved that old woman in up here in that little old house.

JC: How old is your dad in that picture?

Everett: Oh you mean that picture right there?

JC: Ya, about 30?

Everett: Probably older than that I guess.

Jim: That was took before we come to Hogtown.

Everett: He may not have been. They let their beard grow out then.

Jim: He had that beard all of his life, as long as I remember. He must have been up in his 30's, maybe 40.

JC: Ya.

Jim: But a man that could preach like he could, and then go off that way...

Everett: A shame.

Jim: Yes it was.

JC: Who was that woman that he went off with?

Jim: Martha Jane Adkins they called her. They are buried right out yonder.

JC: Martha Jane Adkins?

Jim: Martha Jane Adkins, ya. (26:44)

Everett: Who is this that lives right out here in the next house?

Jim: That would be Trent.

Everett: Trent?

Jim: Ya, Trent. John Harvey's boy.

Everett: Oh, John Harvey.

Jim: John Harvey's boy. He built that. Norman Royce? lived there a long time.

Everett: John Harvey Trent. I used to know him.

Jim: Trent is from back up on the ridge. John Harvey lived up on top the Hill up here. He is dead though.

Everett: Ya, I know that.

Jim: (27:22) No Marshall Adkins wasn't a mean man at all. Me and him plowed this hill side right over here once. My dad rented it from him when I was a boy after we moved to Hogtown. See my dad always kept me a job a working. Now Will, he would talk himself out of work, if there was any way at all. It wouldn't work if he couldn't get nobody else to do it. He'd talk another feller into it if he could. He would get out of it. I ain't that a way. I was just that way. My dad always kept me a job and work.

Everett: A feller that will work, they will get you a job.

Jim: I worked, Somehow or another, I can't sit too long here in the house. I've got to get out. I've got to get out and gin around do something. It don't amount to nothing a lot of times.

Everett: As long as a feller lives, I guess when he is used to working.

Jim: I don't do nothing. I'm watching pasture land back there. My son in law mows it off for pasture. He's got seven head of horses.

JC: (28:30) That Marshall was this lady's husband?

Jim: Ya. Marshall Adkins. Jim Adkins. I know'd them pretty well. They were not mean people.

JC: Marshall Adkins was his name?

Jim: Ya.

JC: She ran off from her husband then?

Jim: She just run off. That is all there was to it. Ah they didn't get along to well you know. They fit and fussed all their life I guess. They just fit and fussed and raised a big family too. I know'd all their children. I worked with him right over here in this field. We plowed all that corn and everything. He treated me good. Ya, he was good to me. He wasn't mean, of course he had people that put him up to what he done a whole lot, in my opinion. And he was....

Everett: ? (29:29)

Jim: Ya. She made him mad. She went off and went up there. He know'd she was up there. Little old house over on the other side of Hogtown. My dad owned it.

Everett: Ya I guess he know'd that's about where she was.

Jim: Ya, he know'd where she was at. He went ahead and married I think four times after

Everett: He did?

Jim: Ya. I think it was four times.

JC: Who married four times?

Jim: Marshall Adkins. He married Pritch Partner's? Woman. Did you know him?

Everett: Pritch Partner?

Jim: Lived over on Greenbriar. Married her. Lived with her two days.

Everett: Wonder what kind of road they've got up Swetnam Branch and over to Greenbriar now? Have you been over that way?

Jim: Not for a year I ain't.

Everett: Pretty rough through there. The mine down there...

Jim: It was a gravel road. Me and my boy went over that way...

Everett: When I worked up there at the mine, sometime I would go over that a way, when I was a working.

Jim: It was a fairly good road, gravel right smart. It has been over a year since I have been that a way.
(30:50)