

Viola Bego (daughter of **Ed Porter**, son of Levi, son of Andrew J. Porter)

March 29, 1980 Interview (Track 2)

JC: They were school teachers?

Viola: That's what they told me. She (grandma **Betty Lundy Porter**) showed me her dress that she had made you know.

Earsel: Could we see that picture?

Viola: It was awful pretty, and I tried one on. Me and **Bertha Porter**, my cousin (d/o **Byrd Porter**, s/o Levi Porter, s/o Andrew J. Porter). After I got it, it had hooks and eyes on it, I got it so tight, I thought I would smother to death before I could get it off.

JC: She was a skinny woman wasn't she?

Viola: Ya, poor old thing.

JC: She never did like kids?

Viola: No, she never did like kids, nobody's kids.

JC: I wonder how she got to be a school teacher if she didn't like kids?

Viola: I don't know. I guess she got _____ out there, maybe. (Laughing) (0:52) Now that's what they told me. That's all I know. That's what they said, they was school teachers.

JC: What is this about your grandpa (**Levi Porter**). He made **tables walk**?

Viola: Ya.

JC: What do you know about that?

Viola: I don't know if I care to think about that. (Laughing)

JC: How did he get involved in that?

Viola: I don't know, there was **Rupe Tipton?**, and **Mac Olfield?**, **Whit May?**, and somebody else was with him. They would go around places you know and raise the **knocking spirits** they called it, and make the table walk, ____ lost in all this that and the other. (1:27)

JC: You mean people would pay to see that?

Viola: No, they just went to see it for the fun of it, I reckon. I reckon they just went to see it for the fun of it. The last account I heard of him, having anything to do with that, that was after I was married the first time. There was Pentecost preaching going on at Pleasant Valley, and they was having a big time up

there, having a nice time. He wanted my brother **Will (Porter, s/o Ed)** to go with him up there. Uncle **Bird (Porter)** went. And somebody else, I don't know who else went. And they said that the preacher couldn't, he said if he was right, or anything like that, he couldn't do a thing on earth with them. And if they wasn't, there wouldn't be no church there that night. Well there wasn't no church that night. (Laughing)

JC: He hypnotized the preacher?

Viola: That's what they said. Some said, "Well the Devil's in the house." (Laughing) Oh Lord, Uncle **Bird (Porter)**, he come back just killing himself laughing, but **Will (Porter)** my brother, he wouldn't go. He said, Nah, he wasn't aimed to go. It was at **Pleasant Valley**. Or **Pleasant Hill** it was, not Pleasant Valley up there at that cemetery where they have a church house.

He seemed to be awful good. He was bad to drink. He used to drink a lot, but he always treated us good. And everybody else I ever heard talk about him, he always was good to them. That's about all I know about him. They did raise knocking spirits there. I know when I stayed with my grandma there, I was scared to death. **Harold Porter**, he stayed there.

JC: Who is **Harold Porter**?

Viola: **Uncle Arthur's** boy, the oldest one. They raised him. He stayed there part of the time. Grandma wanted something to eat; I believe it was, of the night. Me and him was sitting up there. Went in there to get it, and that kitchen door flew open, that latch... I was scared plum to death. We didn't take her nothing to eat. (Laughing)

JC: **Don Porter** (son of Bob, son of Levi) said something about that. He said every night at 8:00 the door would fly open.

Viola: They used to put those big logs that they had in the fire place. They would put that against the door and have the door buttoned and locked and all, and it would come open anytime. They slept upstairs. That door'd come right open every night. I was scared to death the whole time I was there.

JC: Did your grandpa talk about his old **Civil War** days?

Viola: Na, I never heard him talk about it. I just had his picture, and he said he was in the war. He talked about people going to people's houses, and taking what they had to eat, you know, bread. Said there was one man that killed another man over a loaf of bread.

JC: One of their friends?

Viola: One of the buddies that was with them there. Said they went in and was about to starve. A woman had a pan of bread baked, and he killed a man over that bread. That man did, his buddy with him. They had terrible times there.

JC: Did you ever hear about him being **Prisoner of War**?

Viola: No

JC: I guess he was captured.

Viola: Might have been, I don't know. I never heard nothing about that. I never visited over there at Uncle **Alick Porter's** (s/o Andrew J. Porter). I didn't really know them.

JC: Did you ever hear why they came to Kentucky, why they left?

Viola: No.

JC: You said they came to where your grandpa (**Levi Porter**) said he would live.

Viola: And he built him a house there. He had him a nice house built there.

JC: I heard your grandpa built chimneys.

Viola: He did, he made brick too.

JC: He made brick?

Viola: Ya, he made brick. My dad (**Ed Porter**) had a chimney built out of brick that he made. Red brick strapped with white. Grandpa had him a chimney, and a big nice milk house built out of bricks. It was pretty.

JC: Did your grandpa have a Ginseng garden also?

Viola: Ya, he had a big garden. Ginseng, and yellow root? too. He had a nice place when he was able to work. When I was growing up, he had a pretty place.

JC: Is his house still standing?

Viola: No, after he died, **Ed Osborn** got the place. (**2nd husband of Anne Leadingham Porter**) Uncle Arthur's widow. He tore the house down. He rented it, and he said it was haunted awful bad.

JC: Said it was what?

Viola: Said it was Haunted. (6:27)

JC: Oh haunted?

Viola: People didn't like to live there. **Ed Osborn** tore it down. (Laughing)

JC: Talking about it being haunted, someone told me they heard about a fireball rolling off the front porch.

Viola: I never heard nothing like that. (Laughing)

JC: You don't know how he got started into that hypnotism?

Viola: No I don't, He went with, **Wint Porter** (son of Alex, son of AJP) was with him a while. **Whitt May? Mac Alfield?** and **Root Kidley?** There was 4 or 5 of them. They would go places like that.

JC: Who were these guys? Were they his buddies?

Viola: Ya, they lived down there by him, and they were his buddies.

JC: How much land did your grandpa own down there?

Viola: Oh, he owned a great big, a whole lot of land. He sold Uncle **Arthur (Porter)** a whole lot of it. He had a big lot of land. He had a coal mine on it too.

JC: A coal mine?

Viola: Uh huh. He burnt coal all the time.

JC: Was it just for his own use?

Viola: Ya, it was just for his own use.

JC: He never sold it to anybody?

Viola: He never sold it to nobody. He just used it himself.

JC: Do you remember any stories about the guys in the picture, your great uncles?

Viola: No. I never heard nothing about em. Now Uncle **Steve (Porter, s/o AJP)**, I've seen him a few times. He lived in Wisconsin didn't he?

JC: Ya. He moved up there.

Viola: Me and **Andy Ann?** and one of my cousins went down to Uncle **Jim's (Porter, son of Levi)** when he lived at Olive Hill.

JC: Do you mean your Uncle **John (Porter)? Jim (Porter)** lived in Stark?

Viola: He lived in Olive Hill when we went and stayed all night with him. (8:27)

JC: He is the one they killed in 1906.

Viola: Uncle Jim?

JC: Ya. He is the one who lived in Stark and they killed him over school elections. You heard about that didn't you?

Viola: No, I never heard about that. Uncle Jim was a cripple man. He was a school teacher.

JC: Oh, I mean this Jim here; (In picture of 5 Porter brothers) that is your great uncle **Jim Porter**.

Viola: No.

JC: You are talking about your Uncle Jim.

Viola: No, I don't know him.

JC: He is the one who lived in Stark, your grandpa's brother Jim.

Viola: Ya. Ya (9:04) that picture is just exactly like the one I've got. Exactly, only he is younger. He's got that beard, just exactly like that. No, I don't know them. (looking at picture of 5 Porter brothers) I've seen Uncle **Steve (Porter)** several times, and Uncle **John (Porter)**.

JC: Did you ever hear Steve or John preach?

Viola: No, I never heard either one.

JC: And you don't remember anything about your great uncle **Alick (Porter)**?

Viola: No. I don't know nothing about him. Never did visit none hardly.

JC: Did you ever hear any stories about where your grandpa (**Levi Porter**) lived in Virginia?

Viola: No. All I know'd was he said he was from Virginia. He told where grandma was from, but I forgot where he said she was from.

JC: She wasn't from the same place that he was?

Viola: No. She wasn't from the same place.

JC: She was from a different county?

Viola: Ya. I don't know, I forgot where he said. I can't hardly remember nothing at all. It's been so long since I've seen any of them.

JC: You never heard anything about your grandma being married before him.

Viola: No, if she was I never heard that. If she was or not, I don't know, I never did heard nobody say.

JC: They were from **Grayson County, Virginia**. That is where they moved from. Have you heard of that?

Viola: Ya, I've heard of that place.

JC: And Wythe County, have you heard of **Wythe County (Virginia)**?

Viola: No.

JC: Some of them were from there before that. So where did your dad (**Ed Porter**) live?

Viola: He got his place off of grandpa too.

JC: Oh he did?

Viola: Uh huh.

JC: And he lived down there all of his life.

Viola: Ya, all of his life, He raised all of his kids there, fixed a home place there.

JC: But now your Uncle **Bob (Porter)**, he moved to Wisconsin?

Viola: Uh Huh.

JC: Who all went to Wisconsin the same time he did?

Viola: Well just him I reckon. Aunt **Lula (Roberts)** was already out there.

JC: Oh she went before him?

Viola: She was married, and she went before him. He used to have a store over there by **Wint Porter's** (s/o Alex, s/o AJP). He sold out and went to Wisconsin, Uncle Bob did, later on.

JC: What about your Uncle **Cal (Porter)**. When did he go to West Virginia?

Viola: He had several kids before he ever went there.

JC: Oh he was married before he left?

Viola: Ya, he was married before he left and went up there.

JC: And he took his whole family with him?

Viola: Ya.

JC: What was your dad's middle name?

Viola: Just Ed, is all....

JC: You don't know his middle name?

Viola: No. _____ (12:41)

JC: I'll ask you some questions about all of your dad's (**Ed Porter's children**) kids, OK?

Viola: I'll find enough to answer. (Laughing)

JC: **Clyda**, (your sister) did she die as a baby?

Viola: No, she was grown and married when she died. She had three children when.

JC: You didn't have a brother named **Clyde** did you?

Viola: No.

JC: That's what **Don Porter** said, but he was talking about **Clyda**.

Viola: She (**Clyda**) was not the oldest girl.

JC: **Albert (Porter)** was the oldest wasn't he?

Viola: Albert was the oldest, then **Charlie**, and **Martha**, then **Clydie** after Martha.

JC: Was **Will** before Clyda?

Viola: No. He is after her. **Clyda** is older than **Will**.

JC: And who is after **Will**?

Viola: Me, then **Grace**, then **Myrtle**. She is dead.

JC: Then who was after **Myrtle**?

Viola: **Earl**, then **George**, then **Roy**. **Noyce** is the baby boy.

JC: Who is the baby?

Viola: **Noyce** is the baby boy. She had seven boys and seven girls.

JC: NOYCE? Is that how they spell it?

Viola: Yes, NOYCE.

JC: Who is after **Roy**? There is **Betty**, **Minnie** and then **Noyce**?

Viola: Ya. **Betty** and **George**

JC: You said **George** was before **Roy**.

Viola: Ya, I reckon **George** is older than **Roy**. Now he might not be, I don't know. I swear, I can't remember.

JC: Then **Betty** is next?

Viola: Ya.

JC: Then **Minnie**?

Viola: Ya then **Minnie**, then **Noyce**. **Minnie** is the baby girl, and **Noyce** is the baby boy.

JC: You referred me to James Basker?

Viola: **James Bosker**, ya that is Betty's husband.

JC: Ok. Is **Betty** not living?

Viola: Yes, she is living.

JC: Ya, you said Mrs. OK. And **Lester Porter** is **George's** boy?

Viola: Ya

JC: And where does **George** live?

Viola: He lives in Warren (Ohio).

Doris Tackett: I know where he lives. He is a neighbor. He works with my husband (**Royce Tackett**). We went over there one time, he was there. We were talking about Aunt **Arabelle Walker** (d/o Alex Porter, s/o AJP). That's the one I remember the most.

JC: (To Viola) Do you remember her?

Viola: Ya, I remember seeing her. It has been a long time ago though.

Doris: She just died a few years ago.

Viola: Ya, I seen her before I was ever married the first time. I used to go to **Fairview** church out there. I'd see her and Uncle **Boone (Walker)** with her.

JC: Is **Grace** still living?

Viola: Ya, She lives in Arizona.

JC: What town?

Viola: She lives in Arizona. I don't know, Phoenix. Phoenix, Arizona is where she lives.

JC: What is her married name?

Viola: **Barker**

JC: **Earl (Porter)**, he is your brother who just died.

Viola: Ya.

JC: Is **Roy** living?

Viola: Ya, he is living.

JC: Does he live in Soldier (KY)?

Viola: Ya, he lives in Soldier.

JC: **Noyce**, is Noyce living?

Viola: He lives in North Jackson, Ohio. **Betty** lives in Youngstown. **Myrtle** is dead. **Minnie** is dead too. **Martha** and **Will** and **Charlie** and **Albert** are dead also.

JC: You wouldn't know all of your dad's children and grandchildren and all of that would you?

Viola: No, I wouldn't know em all.

JC: Too many of them.

Viola: Too many, so many of them (18:05)

JC: I'd like to get a list of all of your kids and grandkids if that's OK? (**Viola's children and grandchildren**)

Viola: That's OK. There's so many (laughing)

JC: Who was your first husband?

Viola: **George Epperhart**.

JC: And your 2nd husband was?

Viola: **Nelson Bego**. (Timer 18:31)

Doris: Now is he passed away?

Viola: Uh huh.

JC: Then **Earsel** is your first son?

Viola: Ya. Then **Jackie Epperhart** is next.

JC: Is **Earsel** married?

Viola: Ya, he is married.

JC: Who did he marry?

Viola: He married **Emma Cross**, from Olive Hill.

JC: Emma?

Viola: Uh huh.

JC: Emma what?

Viola: Cross.

JC: And they have...

Viola: He's got **Geraldine**, and **Gene**. The next boy is Gene.

JC: **Geraldine** is the oldest?

Viola: Ya. **Geraldine** is the oldest. Then **Gene**, he lives above Enterprise (KY) there. _____ (19:24)

JC: Is **Gene** married?

Viola: Ya. He is married.

JC: Who did he marry? Do you know?

Viola: He married, Earsel, "Who did Gene marry?"

Earsel: Who?

Viola: Who was Gene's wife?

Earsel: **Conn**.

JC: What was her first name?

Viola: **Geraldine**.

Earsel: **Luther Conn's** girl.

Doris: From Dry Branch?

Earsel: Ya.

Doris: **Luther Conn**, I know him.

Earsel: Now wait a minute Mom. It wasn't Luther's boy, or girl.

Viola: Harve

Earsel: Nah, now wait a minute. That boy that killed himself, **Russell Conn**. Russell, he killed himself out there in that barn. That was his wife's mother and dad.

Viola: I didn't know that.

Earsel: **Russell Conn**.

Doris: Ya, I know them. You know all of them Arney, **Harve Cline's** family.

JC: Then does **Gene** have any kids?

Viola: He's got a little girl, **Jeannie**. **Earsel**, "What is **Gene's** little boy's name?"

Earsel: His boy or her boy?

Viola: His boy.

Earsel: Well his boy, his oldest boy is named **Jeff**. (20:37)

JC: He just has **Jeannie** and **Jeff**?

Viola: No, another one. I forget her name.

Earsel: **Jeannie**.

Viola: The big baby, what's its name? They call her **Missy**. I don't know what her name is.

Earsel: I don't either.

Viola: They just call her **Missy**. His wife had two children.

Earsel: Put down **Missy**. I don't know what it is. Everybody calls her that. It's a nickname though, that is.

JC: OK. So your two kids are **Geraldine** and **Gene**?

Viola: And Junior.

JC: Who did Junior marry?

Viola: He married a Tackett.

Earsel: Jim Tackett's girl.

Doris: **Jim Tackett**?

Earsel: Uh huh.

Doris: Keep on and we are going to have some relatives here. I married a Tackett.

Earsel: You're a Tackett?

Doris: Uh huh.

Earsel: Which one are you?

Doris: Uh. Well see, I am **Everett Porter's** girl, but I married **Everett Tackett's** boy.

JC: What is her first name?

Viola: Earsel, "What is Gene's wife's name?" (21:46) June to me. What's her name?

Earsel: Aline. **Aline Tackett**.

JC: OK. Do they have any kids?

Viola: They've got one girl.

JC: What's her name?

Earsel: **Janna Jo.**

JC: OK. And you just have three kids?

Viola: He's just got one kid, **June** has. **Earsel's** got another girl, **Lorene.**

Earsel: You mean me? You talking about me?

JC: Ya.

Earsel: My name is **Earsel**, and that boy's name is **Earsel Junior.**

JC: OK. I thought his real name was Junior. It is **Earsel Junior.**

Earsel: I've got six kids.

JC: OK.

Earsel: One dead. Seven.

JC: And **Lorene** is your 4th one?

Viola: Then **Virgil.**

JC: Who did **Lorene** marry?

Earsel: **Calvin Waddell.**

JC: And do they have any kids?

Earsel: No

JC: And who is next, the 5th child?

Viola: **Virgil.**

JC: Is he married?

Earsel: The youngest one is that girl. Lorene is the youngest one. The last one.

Doris: Just change the numbers around.

Earsel: **Gene, Virgil, Joe Ed.**

JC: **Gene** is the oldest?

Earsel: **Gene** is the oldest. **Virgil** is the next. **Joe Ed** is the next. **Virgil** is the last. 4 boys and 2 girls.

JC: And the girls are all after the boys.

Earsel: Ya. Now wait. Let's see. **Geraldine** is between there. Between **June** and **Joe Ed**, ain't it?

Viola: No, **Gene** is the oldest, then **Gerald**, then **Junior**. Then **Joe Ed** goes in there.

Earsel: I can't think of nothing.

Viola: I can't either. I lay down something and can't find it at all. It is a week before I can find it.

Doris: How old are you though?

Viola: 81

Doris: You look awful good for 81. I hope I look as good as you if I live to be 81. Cause you sure look awful good.

Viola: I put my house rent money in my pocket and took it over there, and she wasn't there. Come back and I laid it down. It was 2 or 3 days before I even found it. Found it over there a layin.

Doris: You are lucky to be getting around good and everything at 81.

Viola: I don't sleep none at night. My feet hurt. I've got those hardening of the arteries. I have to go to the doctor every two weeks and have my toenails cut, ingrown toe nails. My legs hurt so bad I can't hardly walk. And these two gets numb. They draw down and you can't straighten them. (24:57) I made me some medicine the other day. It is helping it a whole lot. It's awful scented?

Doris: Made your own brand?

Viola: Ya, I made my own brand. Doctor wasn't doing no good, and I made my own brand. Take alcohol and 15 cloves of garlic. Slash it, peel that garlic and put it in that alcohol. It stays 15 days, and then you bath in it. That thing hurt so bad I can't bend it. I rubbed that on it. It don't smell too bad. (Laughing)

Doris: I heard that garlic is good for everything. Help you grow hair if you go bald, it is supposed to help you grow hair.

Viola: Well now that hit my hand, there was a colored woman that told that over about Warren somewhere or another, Youngstown or somewheres. I said, "Lord I've got the alcohol, I'll try it right now. Let it sit there 15 days, I tried it and that helped me too. It helps my feet. I have to hit the floor every little bit, my feet and legs cramps so bad. I put that on my feet before I go to bed and it's alright till morning. And my fingers will draw down. My whole arm, shoulders and all gets numb as they can be at times. (26:10) I've been here all the time except _____ off and on about 2 months.

JC: She just died a few months ago, didn't she?

Viola: First day of December she died. (Viola's son **Earsel Porter's** wife **Emma Cross Porter** died 1 Dec. 1979)

Doris: That's what I heard and I thought it was him. My mom sent me a thing out of the paper, it was Mrs. Earsel. I thought it was your boy after **Erma (Lewis)** told me, we saw that in the paper.

JC: Ya, I wondered who that was.

Viola: ...after we come back from Kentucky, we went down there... (26:41)

Doris: Well her telephone number has been changed. I had a hard time getting hold of her today. I called **Curt**'s house and his mother in law answered and she found the new number and gave it to me. We are going to **Erma**'s tomorrow.

Viola: **Erma** is an awful good woman. She come up and stays a couple of nights with me. She come and stayed all night with me the night before we went down there.

Doris: I remember her from down home.

Viola: Ya, and Lord she can get around and work, it's a sight. She come down stairs, she had made her bed. I said I've got to go up there and make the bed, but I went up there and she done had it made. Wash the dishes and help cook. She'd come down here, all the time here she was awful good. Can't keep her still.

Doris: She always had to work so hard_____

Viola: That was awful wasn't it?

Doris: Ya, all them years.

Viola: The worst crippled boy, the second worst that ever I saw. There is one down there in Kentucky now. He is 14 years old, he is as bad as...

Doris: Who's got him?

Viola: A Cline woman. **Dorothy Cline**.

Doris: That **Woody** (son of **Erma Lewis**, d/o Wint Porter, s/o Alex, s/o Andrew J. Porter) was just about my age. Maybe just a little bit older or something. When I was just a kid they had him in the baby stroller. He was beginning to get older but couldn't get out of that baby stroller. He had to go...

Viola: That baby can't walk, can't move, and can't speak and can't hear. And it is blind.

Doris: At least he could do all of that. He was smart, wasn't he?

Viola: Yes he was. That little kid, somebody said they was going to cut their pension out on the. She wasn't getting but \$125.00 and she went and took it in. Just somebody that knows him. Took it in to Ashland and they told them they would never cut that child's pension, but they would raise it. He is 16 years old. His fingers are about that big. Not much bigger than a match stick. Can't move and can't

Speak and has got the prettiest eyes and prettiest hair you ever seen. Every time I go down there I go up there and see him. Well his grandma is taking care of him.

JC: Let me ask you some more questions here. (29:08)

Viola: (Laughing) You folks want some coffee? I'll make some more coffee.

JC: No, I don't want any.

Doris: No, I am fine.

JC: Let's see, **Virgil**, who did Virgil marry?

Viola: He married a **Jones**.

JC: Do you know her name?

Viola: I know her name, but I can't speak it. Hey Earsel, "What is Virgil's wife's name?"

Earsel: **Jamma Ray**

JC: Jamma Ray. How do you spell that?

Earsel: I don't know. Jamma Ray is her name.

JC: Do they have any kids.

Earsel: One

JC: What's his name?

Earsel: **Josh**

Viola: Josh

JC: And he's just a little boy?

Earsel: Now wait a minute. Josh something or other.

JC: Well that's OK.

Viola: Well just Josh is enough. That's what they call him.

JC: Then **Joe Ed**, is he married?

Earsel: Joshua I guess.

END OF TAPE (30:11)