

Albert Wharton
Interviewed July 14, 1980
Winston-Salem, N.C.
Reynolds House Oral History Project
Interviewed by Patty Dilley
Transcribed by Allison Blount DuBuisson
Begin Tape I, Side 1

Patty Dilley: What I want to start out with, Mr. Wharton, is to learn a little about you--where you were born, what your parents did for a living . . .

Albert Wharton: They were farmers. My Daddy worked on a farm. I was born right here in Forsyth County, down here on the Yadkin River. Lasater farm--Wharton owned it, Lasater bought it. Down in Clemmons.

PD: Did your father own the farm?

AW: No, just rent it. Worked for wages at first, then he rented it.

PD: So you were a farm boy then?

AW: I was a farm boy all my life.

PD: What kinds of things did you do when you were working with your father?

AW: Worked the horses--plow--get up hay, stuff like that. General farm work.

PD: What year were you born in?

AW: 1897. November the 27th.

PD: Did you have brothers and sisters?

AW: There were six boys and four girls.

PD: Where do you fit in?

AW: I'm the seventh child.

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PD: Who was the first one in your family to leave and go find work elsewhere?

AW: I reckon John, my brother John. He was the oldest, he was the first one.

PD: Where did he go to work?

AW: Well then he went to work on the farm of Lewis Fulcher.

PD: Did he always farm?

AW: All his life.

PD: How about some of your other brothers and sisters?

Mrs. Wharton: John farmed, but didn't he come up here to Reynolda?

AW: Oh yeah, he still did farmwork there. He came up here to Reynolda before I ever came there. And my brother Monroe. They were older than I was.

PD: Did they live out at Five Row?

AW: That's right.

PD: Did they work under Katharine Reynolds when she was still here?

AW: Yes, she was living then. That's when they first come up here. They worked under Clint Wharton, he was superintendent then.

PD: Did they bring their families up?

AW: That's right.

PD: Did the kids go to the school that they had at Reynolda?

AW: That's right.

Albert Wharton

PD: How long were they working out here before you came?

AW: Oh, I'd say about five years before I come up here.
I stayed down on the farm with my Daddy.

PD: What made you decide to leave home?

AW: Well, we bought a place of our own--my father did--
and I just stayed on with him.

PD: So he bought a place of his own?

AW: And we moved out down there. He was working up here
when he passed, he worked at Reynolda.

PD: Your Daddy worked here too?

AW: Yes'm. He went to work up there, and I went to work
up there, too, on the farm.

Mrs. W: Did you move out from Clemmons before your Daddy died?

AW: Yes.

PD: Do you remember what year this was?

AW: No I don't. It was in the twenties. What time was
Hoover president?

PD: In the late twenties I guess.

AW: Yeah, it was in the twenties. Roosevelt was elected
in '33--it was sometime in the twenties. Around '24,
I imagine.

PD: Was it before Katharine Reynolds--I guess she was
Mrs. Johnston then--before she died?

AW: He worked there about a year before she died, but
she done passed when I went out there.

PD: So your father worked at Reynolda and you worked on
your father's farm?

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AW: Then I quit and went to work up there, ^{[at Reynolda].} He passed---
that's when I quit down there. We divided the
place up, and then I went to work for wages.

PD: Did you sort of have to know somebody at Reynolda to
get a job there?

AW: I knowed my brothers.

PD: Was it considered a good place to work back then?

AW: Oh yeah, it was a good place. I drove a team a while,
then I took care of the cars for the house, then I
took care of the office.

Mrs. Wharton: Why don't you tell her you washed, for the
dairy?

AW: Yeah, I washed dairy clothes before I went up to
the house. Took care of the office. Then John Frazier,
he had a wreck and died and I went up to the house
in November of 1935, and I took care of the house
while they was in Connecticut, me and Flora Pledger.
We took care of the house, and they come down twice
a year.

PD: This was the Babcocks?

AW: The Babcocks, they owned it then.

PD: Do you remember how the farm was running when you came
there?

AW: They had a dairy, you know and just farming like
that. They run a big dairy.

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PD: Was the farm running pretty good then?

AW: Pretty good the first year or two, then they finally sold out the dairy.

PD: Mr. Hendrix was telling me that when he first came here, the farm had gone downhill a whole lot. Why was that?

AW: Well the trust company run it you know . . . [laughs]

PD: They didn't really care how it was run?

AW: I reckon not.

Mrs. W.: They didn't have no cows or nothing when he come there; we were living down on Five Row.

AW: That's right; when he come out here, they'd done sold the dairy out.

Mrs. W.: The trust company wouldn't farm it; the horses were gone from it . . .

AW: That's right. See when Miss Mary bought it . . . the farm business was bad . . . she give the golf grounds to the college. She built that golf ground and just sold the rest.

PD: So when you were coming, who was the superintendent of the farm, the manager of the farm?

AW: A.C. Wharton.

PD: So he was a continuation from under Katharine Reynolds?

AW: That's right.

PD: What was he like to work for?

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AW: He was good. I was born on his place.

PD: Oh, he was the place you worked for back then.

AW: Back yonder. See they owned the farm where my father was at; we was tenants.

PD: How old were you when you first came to work at Reynolda?

AW: Oh, I was in my twenties--about twenty-one or -two.

PD: Were you married then?

AW: No ma'am.

PD: How did you meet your wife?

AW: She was working right up the road there from me for Miss Bailey. I met her right up there, right up the road from where we lived.

Mrs. W.: Albert, you didn't know me before that?

AW: Oh, I might have known you, but that was about all I'd hear talk of, you (laughing). I knowed her, you know, just hadn't seen much of her.

PD: Did you first see her before you moved to Winston?

AW: I'd been up at her home to church up there. Didn't attend church but I was up there.

PD: Did people who worked at the different houses around Reynolda have occasions where they got together?

AW: Oh yes. When Mrs. Johnston was still living, she built a school, and they had church in it. And she paid to have a preacher come on Sunday and have church. Flora Pledger might have told you that.

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PD: I wasn't the one who talked to Flora.

AW: She'd know more about that, 'cause she was living up there then. I wasn't living there then. We had school, church, everything, right there on Five Row.

Mrs. W.: You never did see down there where they had Five Row?

PD: No.

AW: We had a road that run down from Wake Forest--you know how that road runs there?--that's where the building was. Right down at that creek there. It don't look like there's ever been a house in there. Had a garden and everything down through there.

PD: Was that a real nice place to live?

AW: Oh yeah, that was a good place.

PD: So your two brothers were living there with their families?

AW: That's right.

Mrs. W.: Three brothers.

AW: That's right. George worked for Mr. Johnston--he was a chauffeur. Then Mr. Johnston went up to Washington, and he didn't like it up there, and he went up there, and came back and worked in the garage as a mechanic. And then he went to work for Mr. Dick Reynolds. That's the last place he worked.

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PD: Up at Devotion?

AW: Yeah, there, and down in Georgia, and everywhere.
You know, just followed him around.

PD: What did he do for Dick?

AW: Chauffeur.

PD: What did your other brothers do?

AW: They worked on the farm. Drove teams.

PD: How did your one brother happen to become the
chauffeur?

AW: He always had.

PD: That's what he was hired to do?

AW: Yes'm. And he was a good mechanic too. He drove a
bus -- they used to run a bus from Reynolda to Winston.

PD: Was that how you got into downtown Winston when you
wanted to go?

AW: That's right. ^{You could.} If you didn't have no car. That was to
help folks ^{that} didn't have no way to go. Like if men's
wives were working, they wanted to go to town to do
some shopping, the bus run every hour, and they'd
go and catch a bus and ride back. That may have
been done taped. I don't know what Flora told you. She would
know more
^{about} that than I would know.

PD: It's always good to hear two people tell the same
story. Did your wife work when you first started
meeting her?

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AW: She worked for Ira Bailey, banker.

PD: What did you do for him?

Mrs. W: Oh, housekeeping--cooking and washing, tending to the boys. Cleaning around. We'd play ball.

PD: Did she live at Five Row?

AW: Yes.

PD: Were there people at Five Row that didn't work at Reynolda?

AW: No. All but the women, they could work out. But the menfolks worked there. My wife, she could work somewhere else. Nothing said about that. But the menfolks, they worked on the place.

PD: Tell me what your house was like that you lived in.

AW: It was right nice, but it didn't have no bathroom, no lights--there wasn't no lights down through there. We finally did have a telephone.

PD: How many rooms did they have?

AW: Four. There was one house down there built as an apartment, and it had six rooms. Everything else had four rooms.

PD: Was one of the rooms like a kitchen?

AW: That's right.

PD: And then two rooms were bedrooms, and one room was a living foom?

Mrs. W.: That's right. You could fix them any way you wanted.

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(Mrs. W.) We didn't have no running water, but had spigots outside. We had nice little outhouses, but didn't have no bathrooms.

PD: No place to wash up or anything?

AW: In the country, you had a wash tub. Tin bathtub. That's what I was raised with. The water come from an Artesian well that they built. I wished I had that water here.

PD: Was it good water?

AW: Yes, it was good spring water. They got it in the
 yet, out at Reynolda.
house ^ You tried it out at Reynolda? That's
well water, that's good pure water. You can tell the difference

PD: When you were living there, did you have a place for a garden?

AW: Yeah. You could raise chickens, anything you want to there.

PD: How much did they provide you with? Did they provide you with seeds or anything like that?

AW: Sometimes they would. Sometimes they'd give you plants to set out, but on the average you bought your own seeds.

PD: I know that you raised a lot of vegetables and other crops at the farm. Can you name off the things you raised there?

AW: At one time they raised most everything.

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PD: Was this when you first went there?

They had different divisions.

AW: Yes'm. [^]Mr. Clint Wharton, he did the heavy farming, like wheat and grain stuff. The man who took over the greenhouse, he was the vegetable man--Irving Disher. They had a little vegetable farm where they raised most everything at one time. Before Wake Forest was built there.

PD: What did they do with the crops that they raised?

AW: They used to sell them. Of course, what the farm raised they used for the cows and the horses, they didn't sell nothing.

PD: Where did they take the vegetables to sell them?

AW: City market.

PD: Did any of the people like you who were working on the farm get to buy any of the vegetables?

AW: If you wanted to. But you raised them yourself, there wasn't much you had to buy. They had a poultry yard there, raised hogs . . .

Mrs. W.: We'd go up there and buy fresh meat.

AW: Yeah, they took care of thirty or forty hogs a year. Of course, they'd sell the meat. And we could raise them ourselves.

PD: Did they have a place where everybody at Five Row kept their livestock together?

AW: You'd have a pen for your hogs. Everybody's was separate.

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Mrs. W.: The people who lived there--you couldn't have no horse or no mule or nothing. You could have a car and raise chickens. But you couldn't have that other kind of stuff. Raise pigs.

PD: Did you raise hogs?

Mrs. W.: I raised two hogs one year, and both of them weighed around twelve hundred pounds. One of them had his tail cut off. One had a long tail and one was bobbed. And I used to play with those pigs all the time but they got too big.

PD: When you raised livestock like that, did people in

Five Row help you slaughter them?

AW: If you wanted.

Mrs. W.: You'd go in together and have a pig slaughter. Or you can get some of your own people to come in. Get your children to help you.

PD: And then you'd share a little of the meat with

them for helping you fix them?

AW: If you wanted. You usually had meat yourself.

Mrs. W.: Most everybody had a hog. And most of them got somebody to come and fix them up, because them what had the hogs didn't know nothing about fixing them. I always got my people, from my home, and some of my friends would always come. So we could fix up everything. So we'd make sausage and pudding, fix up the meat.

PD: Sounds like some good eating.

Mrs. W.: Yeah it was. Honey, you ought to have been coming up then.

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AW: I can't eat none of it much now but I sure enough would love to have some good fresh meat like that.

PD: You're on a low-salt diet or something?

AW: High blood. I ain't eat no pork in about thirty-five years. I'll sneak a piece every once in a while. If she ever have any, I'll steal some sometime. I have to have a bite every once in a while. But I can't eat it.

PD: You started out driving a team on the farm?

AW: No, when I first went there, I worked mowing around the fences and all stuff such as that. They had somebody to go around and mow, clip hedges. There was a hedge all up and down the road, from up there where that water tank is now, on down. And we had to keep that clipped.

PD: What did you do next?

AW: I finally drove a team. Then I commenced to take care of the cars for the house. Then you might say I got off the farm--Dick, you know, he had an office--then I went on up to the house. I went to get the mail twice a day. I was down there taking care of the cars, getting the mail, taking care of the office, washed dairy clothes. I was just what you'd call a flunky man.

PD: Did you like that better than working out on the

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(PD) farm?

AW: Well, I did in a way. I liked working out. It was a little rougher work on the farm, but I liked it. That flunky job was a mess.

PD: Why was it a mess?

AW: Well I'd work up here and they'd want me to do something, then somebody down there would want me to do something else, all like that. I didn't have no trouble with them, but it was just worrisome.

PD: You had too many bosses?

AW: That's right, too many bosses. I didn't fall out with none of them, but still it was a worrisome job. Certain hours go into town, get the mail.

PD: Why did they put you from working on the farm to doing that?

AW: I was about the only man that could do it then, the only suitable person. You know, not anybody could go in there and clean up, wash windows and that kind of thing. They try to do it too fast, and half do it. But if it took me thirty minutes to wash that window, I'd wash it clean; they liked that. Told me to take all the time I wanted. Like waxing the floor in the office--take all the time I wanted. A whole lot of men just go in and rush through it, half do it.

PD: You did a real thorough job then?

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AW: They liked my work.

PD: How long was Mr. Wharton manager of the place?

AW: You're asking me something that I don't know. He went there before I ever went there, he was there a long time. I don't know.

PD: Who was the man that came after him?

AW: John Click.

Mrs. W.: Well what was Steve Warrenkin?

AW: He didn't have nothing to do with the farm when we set up the office.

Mrs. W.: Well he was the head man.

AW: She's talking about superintendent of the farm. Clint Wharton wasn't head man, he was superintendent of the farm.

PD: He was under Mr. Warrenkin?

AW: That's right. He was the outside head man. Steve Warrenkin was the big boss.

PD: Did you ever have any dealings with him?

AW: Oh yeah, I took care of the office, he was a good guy to work for. Other folks didn't like him, but I got along with him all right.

PD: What did they not like about him?

AW: He was just strict. You didn't do nothing right, he'd tell you. I didn't do right, he'd tell me. A whole lot of folks don't like that. I'd rather have a

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(AW) person do that--if you don't like something, come tell me.

PD: What was Mr. C lick like to work for?

AW: I never did work for him. I was the flunky man then. I think he was all right though, but I never did work for him.

PD: Do you know why Mr. Wharton left?

AW: They closed the farm up.

PD: In talking to Mr. Hendrix . . . he came after the farm had already gone downhill. It seems like it was a real good farm when you came, but then it stopped making money. Do you know why that happened?

AW: He was running that, and I don't know what happened. If Miss Mary didn't want to furnish the money or what, I don't know.
Mrs. W.: You'd have to talk to the Disher boys about that.

AW: Yeah, the Disher boys took care of the greenhouse; they'd know more about that than we would.

PD: Do you think they're still around?

AW: I don't know whether they're dead, I don't know where they're at. Mr. Hendrix, he might know where they is. He owned a house up there ^{in Old Town;} then he was talking about moving to the mountains; I don't know what part of the mountains it was in. I don't know whether he's up there near Roaring Gap or Sour Mountain, or where he's at. He got him a mountain home somewhere up there.

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PD: When you were working at the dairy, did you ever notice that . . . did you ever work with the milking machines?

AW: I washed their clothes, but I wasn't involved in the milking.

PD: Mr. Hendrix said that for a while the cows were prize-winning cows, but that they would milk them by machine and sometimes not strip them.

AW: Yeah, you'd have to go around and re-strip them.

PD: He said that after a while they stopped doing the stripping and the cows dried up. Did you hear that?

AW: Yes'm.

PD: Why did they not go back and do it the way they were supposed to?

AW: Cut down on the labor. They didn't want to hire folks or something. I don't know whether it was Mr. Babcock's fault--whether they wouldn't furnish the money--I couldn't say.

PD: How long did you live out at Five Row?

AW: I reckon I was there about twenty years.

PD: Did you have to pay rent while you were there?

AW: That's right.

PD: How much was it?

AW: Dollar and a half a week.

PD: Was that considered real reasonable back then?

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AW: Yes'm, real reasonable. House rents here wasn't much higher than that, though.

PD: House rents out away from Reynolda?

AW: That's right. They were a little bit higher; we got it a little bit cheaper.

PD: Were there any other advantages to living at Reynolda?

AW: Well, transportation. They had the bus, and of course they had cars. ^{That's all the advantage there was, that} you could walk to work.

PD: When you took the bus into town, did you have to pay for that?

AW: Twenty-five cents round-trip.

PD: What kinds of things would the community get together and do? Did you have things you'd do at church?

Mrs. W.: Oh yeah. In the summertime we'd have what you'd call Bible meetings, service, anything like that we wanted to have.

PD: Did you have social affairs, people getting together?

AW: You all had some sort of club, didn't you, Carrie?

Mrs. W.: Yeah, we had a club. It was a 4-H Club.

AW: Course I wasn't in with the women folks.

PD: What would the men get together and do?

AW: Nothing.

Mrs. W.: Albert didn't get off work until about eight or nine o'clock. And when they was down here ^[at the house] it'd be

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(Mrs. W.) anywhere from twelve to two before he'd come home. And the other men who worked on the farm, they was tired when they got home. They'd go out to church and other meetings . . . other churches.

PD: Did you ever go on trips to visit?

Mrs. W.: No. We'd go to the country to go home. My home was in we'd go home and go to church up there. Everybody else was country people--they'd go home. Lot of them from Brookstown out there--they'd go on home and have meetings and things, in our community.

PD: It sounds like people outside the Reynolda community would come to church there at Reynolda.

Mrs. W.: Yeah, people from a lot of places come on Sunday. We had what you call Bible meetings--run all week, and have people come from other churches.

PD: So you weren't really isolated out here?

Mrs. W.: No! You could go and come when you got ready.

AW: Back then living at Five Row was like living in the country--no lights or nothing. But it was a pretty place to live, just like living out in the country before they ever put the electric wire in.

PD: Did other houses in town at this time have electricity?

AW: Oh yes ma'am. Most of them had it.

PD: Did you all ever ask to get electricity put out there?

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Mrs. W.: Now one particular man--you know, who you'd buy things from--he was talking to me about it, and he said if we wanted it--'course he was teasing me about it--he would have to go and talk to Mr. Warrenkin about it, see Mrs. Babcock and all, to see did they want it in. And then it wasn't but a year or two that it ^{would} be torn down.

PD: So they just never did put it in. Was this man at a local store?

Mrs. Yeah, it was here in town. You could buy furniture from him. ^{Furniture store.} We bought our range stove there. He was talking about it could be done. We had telephones out there.

PD: Did they put the telephones in after people asked for them?

AW: That's right.

PD: Who would be the one that would go and ask for something like that?

AW: I don't know who did that. Somebody over there.

PD: Somebody living at Five Row?

AW: Oh yes.

Mrs. W.: I think that it was Walt Simpson's sister was the first one put in, 'cause her and my girl what was here a while ago, ^{with those} two little girls, they was talking about it. Somebody told them they

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(Mrs. W.) couldn't put none out there 'cause they didn't have no electricity. And they was talking about one friend girl--I forget her name now--lived over here on the edge of town, and didn't have electricity, but she did have a telephone. And so I think some white man went up and said something to them, to Mr. Warrenkin or someone about it. And they put a telephone in.

PD: So some white ^{that worked here [at Reynolda]} man went up and said something to Mr. Warrenkin?

Mrs. W.: I don't think it was a white man ^{that worked there,} just someone _^ from the telephone company.

BEGIN TAPE I, Side 2

PD: When you first came to Five Row, you lived with your brother?

AW: That's right.

PD: How many people were living in the house?

AW: Just me and him, and he had three boys, and his wife.

PD: Did you get your own house when you got married, or before you got married?

AW: Before we got married. I rented a house when I was a bachelor. Lived by myself.

PD: So they let you do that.

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- AW: Oh yeah. They knew if they didn't, I'd ^{get me} / ^{to work.} somewheres else, I wanted to live by myself (laughing).
- PD: You say your wife was working down the street?
- MRS. W.: Up the street, the other side of Western Electric.
- PD: Did you live there at the house?
- Mrs. W.: Yeah, I lived there.
- PD: And you met her through church?
- Mrs. W.: No, it was a party or something.
- AW: I don't remember what it was.
- Mrs. W.: Wasn't it up to our school?
- PD: You would have get-togethers at the school?
- Mrs. W.: Yes. And been married all my life.
- AW: That was a long time ago. We've been living here for twenty-seven years.
- PD: How young were you when you got married?
- Mrs. W.: Oh me, Albert, how old was I? Twenty-eight?
- AW: Something like that.
- PD: That's not too young. That's a good age to get married.
- Mrs. W.: Are you married?
- PD: No.
- Mrs. W.: How old are you?
- PD: Twenty-three.
- Mrs. W.: You got about three more years.
- PD: I reckon I'll wait until I'm about thirty.
- AW: That's a good age, then you kind of know what you want to do--what you're looking for anyway, whether you get it or not.

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PD: How long did you all court before you got married?

AW: Three or four years, wasn't it, when we was going together?

Mrs. W.: It was about seven years.

PD: Did you get married there at Reynolda?

AW: No, we got married in town. At the magistrate's.
We didn't have no wedding, we just got married.

PD: How come you didn't have a wedding?

AW: We just didn't want it. We were both working, and we
just didn't have a wedding.

PD: Did you take any time off after you got married, or
did you go back to work the next day?

AW: Went back and went to work.

PD: Did she move in with you at Five Row right away?

AW: Yes'm.

PD: Did you continue to work out where you were working?

Mrs. W.: Yeah.

PD: How many children did you have?

AW: She's got two, but I haven't got any.

Mrs. W.: He didn't have any.

PD: When you were working there doing your "flunky-man"
job, doing all kinds of little things, you got the
chance to go up to the house then, right?

AW: Yes'm. John Frazier and Curly Walker, they took
care of the house. They worked with Dick Reynolds, he
was living there then. Every summer they'd move to

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- (AW) Devotion--he'd go up there and spend so many months. He was down here on his vacation, he was carrying some food or something . . . anyway, when he went back--his day off instead of vacation--he had a wreck, and of course he died from it, up here near Boone.
- PD: Who was this?
- AW: John Frazier. He had a wreck. That's when I went up there, November of '35. And I worked up there at the house until '65.
- PD: When you first came up to the house, who was the head person working up there? a white lady.
- AW: Nobody. Oh, Blanche Gunn, she was the head, ^h She was the--what you say--housekeeper.
- PD: I haven't heard anybody talk about her. What was she like?
- AW: She was good to work under. She'd never been married. She was a nice lady to work for.
- PD: She was the housekeeper?
- AW: She worked in the office, and then they put her up there to take care of the house. She was getting a little age on her and everything. They took her up there.
- PD: Would she mainly do paper work, or would she do other things there?
- AW: No, she just set around. She didn't do nothing. Supervise. If a phone message come, take that. She*didn't have a secretary_h--all that was done in the office on the farm, or in town.

*Mrs. Mary Babcock

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PD: So when you first went up there, it was when John Frazier had died.

AW: 'Course I was working down to the place when I went up to the house.

PD: What did they put you to doing first?

AW: I just took care of the house. There wasn't nobody there then. They come around Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter--about three times a year. In the meantime, me and Flora Pledger would take care of the house--wash the windows and take care of the house.

PD: Can you describe what a typical day would be?

Like what would you do when you got up first thing in the morning?

AW: Open the house up. Then we'd start cleaning up, clean up the whole house. If we started on the bathrooms, finish that, finish the vacuuming, sweep the porches . .

PD: Did you have a written schedule?

AW: No, all that was in our head. If it was vacuuming and dusting, we'd go ahead 'til we get through. If it was washing windows, we'd just go ahead and wash windows--'course it would take us six to eight weeks to wash the windows. That was a long time ago. Course we wouldn't wash windows all those eight weeks. We arranged our work just like we wanted. She didn't bother us about that. Miss Gunn, she didn't bother us about that. She didn't know what we was doing.

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PD: You and Flora did the same sort of things?

AW: Yes'm. I done the heavy work, and Flora done the woman's work. She'd keep all the mirrors clean and do the bathtubs, and I'd do all the heavy work.

PD: Harvey wasn't there, he was up North?

AW: He was out on the farm, playing around. He wasn't up there then.

PD: When the family members would come in for the holidays, how would that change your schedule?

AW: I took care of the house, and helped serve, and all like that. It didn't change it too much. They'd do the butler work and all that. Course I'd help them if they had a crowd.

PD: Would they hire people to do the butler work?

AW: Yes, if they needed extra. John, and after they hired Harvey they had two. And they had a night man to stay there at night.

PD: How many years had you been working up at the house before the Babcocks moved in full-time?

AW: About four or five years, I guess. It was '40, because they finished the house up in '39, I think. They moved all the furniture out of the house and remodeled.

PD: So while you were working here, they were remodeling the house?

AW: I stayed up there just messing around them.

PD: How did your job compare to other jobs you could have

Albert Wharton

(PD) gotten in town?

AW: I didn't try; I liked that job. I didn't even try to get nothing else. I was doing about as good as I could do. I guess I could have went to the factory and done better.

Mrs. W.: No you could not, Albert, right along then. Because you got your clothes, board . . .

PD: This was while you were working up at the house?

AW: Yeah, they furnished your clothes, shoes, everything. Done the laundry, everything. Food, pretty good wages.

PD: Would this be enough to take back home, to feed your wife and your kids?

AW: Yes'm.

PD: Was this while the Babcocks were up there?

AW: This was while they were there; when they were gone, I had to board myself.

PD: What was the food like that you ate?

AW: We ate what they did. They cooked three hots a day. Sometimes some of the vegetables . . . it got so I'd eat anything. Some of the vegetables I didn't care much about.

PD: They were sort of different?

AW: Yes, different. Besides that, I liked the food all right. I got so I liked everything we ate. But when they had parties, they had some food I didn't care

Albert Wharton

(AW) much about. I'd taste of it.

Mrs. W.: Have you talked with Jim Lash?

PD: No.

AW: He worked on the farm. He worked there longer than I've been there. Did Harvey mention Ed Lash? Ed Lash is Jim Lash's son--he works for Mrs. Babcock now. He's in California.

PD: Jim Lash is still around town?

AW: Yes. I can't remember the name of that street he lives on. Near a church on Haywood Street.

PD: But he worked on the farm?

AW: He did, yes ma'am. He worked on the farm until he retired. What did Jim do?

Mrs. W.: He quit when he got hurt. He was on the truck, and they run into them bushes, and put his eyes out.

AW: Put one eye out, and he quit. But he worked on a farm all his life. He drove a team.

PD: He put his eye out when he was driving a truck?

AW: No, he was riding in a truck. He drove a team. Luther Stimpson, he ^{also} worked on the farm, in the gardens.

PD: I'm trying to get your jobs straight. You first started out doing housekeeping when you went up to the house. What was your next job?

AW: I was extra man when the butler was off. Besides that, I was just a house boy.

Albert Wharton

PD: Did you ever work under John Carter?

AW: That's right.

PD: What was he like to work under?

AW: He could be pretty bossy. You had to let him know who
Had to tell him what's what
he was. He'd pull one on you if he could.

PD: What do you mean pull one on you?

AW: Boss you around.

MRS. W.: John Carter was with Mrs. Reynolds. He was raised
up with the children. So he thought he could boss
you, tell you what to do. People up there didn't
like him,

PD: Did you have to listen to him?

AW: Yeah, he was supposed to be the boss. Harvey could
have told you that--he know more about John than I
do.

Mrs. W.: Him and Flora was living up in New York with him.

AW: Did he say anything about him?

PD: Yeah, he talked about John.

AW: The only time I worked under John was when they
I'd kind of listen to what he said then. Besides that
come down. / didn't bother me.

PD: Did they ever bring any help down from up North?

AW: Whoever worked with them. He always had some maids,
and John and Margie. A new maid every once in a while,
because nobody would stay with them there.

PD: Were their people a little bit different from you all?

Albert Wharton

AW: A little bit. But still, they was nice. There were at least two girls come down, I can't think of their names. One of them was half Indian. Two extra girls. They didn't stay with them long--when they'd come down again, they'd have another.

PD: These women who came down--they worked for the Babcocks?

AW: That's right, they were maids. They took care of her.*

PD: Where would they live?

AW: They'd rent a place in town, one of them stayed with John. She'd rent them a place to live.

PD: Mrs. Babcock would?

AW: Mm-hm.

PD: When the Babcocks moved down for good, in 1940 or around there . . .

AW: Harvey should know, because he was working for them. I don't know what year it was. I believe it was '40.

PD: What did you start doing then, when they moved here?

AW: Same thing. I'd help serve, but that was my job, main housekeeper.

PD: What was your uniform like?

AW: Dark pants, white shirt, black shoes. White coat.

PD: Did you have to wear a tie?

AW: Oh yes'm. She furnished all that.

PD: Did you like your uniform?

*Mrs. Mary Babcock.

Albert Wharton

AW: Oh yes. If the uniform got worn or something. she'd say, "Oh, you need some more pants. Go and fix yourself up. Shirts getting raggedy, or the collar--Go on and get you such-and-such." She was good about that.

PD: Where would you go to get your uniforms?

AW: We usually went to Frank A. Stith's.

PD: Where was that?

AW: Right here in town. On Fourth Street.

PD: Was it a big store?

AW: Yes ma'am, oh, it was a big ^{clothing} store.

PD: Expensive?

AW: Yes'm.

PD: Would they tailor-make your stuff?

AW: Yes ma'am.

PD: You would charge it on Mrs. Babcock's account?

AW: That's right. Just sign your name to it. Make a ticket out and that's all.

PD: Was it a specialized men's store?

AW: Mostly. Like Norman Stockton. They carried anything you want.

PD: Were you always the head housekeeper there, until you retired? Did you do anything else?

AW: No.

PD: I guess for a long time after the Babcocks left,

Albert Wharton

- (PD) there wasn't anybody that came to live there.
- AW: That's right. After they left, Charles, he stayed there for a while. I done retired then.
- Mrs. W.: You were still there when Mr . Babcock got ^{re-} married?
- AW: Oh yeah, I stayed there until they moved up to Westview. Then I drove for Charles ^[Jr.] until they broke up, along about twelve months or more. He's up there now, he's living in the Westview house.
- PD: So you went up after they moved up there, and worked . . .
- AW: No. They were living up there then; he lived at Reynolda. Then he lived in the hotel a while, and I was driving him. Got tired of driving--my vision was bad, and I couldn't drive at night. He wanted me to keep on.
- PD: You were about sixty-seven then.
- AW: That's right. Getting too old to drive. I told him I'd kill myself and him too. He said I ain't had no wreck, I said I didn't want to either. Most of the driving would be at night. We'd leave here about six o'clock in the evening, go to Durham, Raleigh, and come back that night about twelve, one o'clock.
- PD: Where would he be going?
- AW: Just running around. Some hotel somewhere. I'd sit out there waiting on him.
- PD: What did you like best out of all those different jobs

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(PD) at Reynolda?

AW: When they were gone. I could take care of the house myself (laughing). Nobody out there but me and Flora. Didn't have no body bothering us. We could just clean. Pledger. Just to tell the truth about it--when they were all gone.

PD: What were the Babcocks like to work for?

AW: Good.

PD: Would they do special things for their help?

AW: Sometimes.

PD: What kinds of things would they do?

AW: Sometimes you'd get a good tip.

PD: Did you all get Christmas bonuses?

AW: Yes. She was nice. The other woman was nice, but she wasn't in the driver's seat like the madam was, she put out when she wanted.

PD: If you were working and you had a complaint, who would you take it to?

AW: Mrs. Babcock. If we had any trouble, that's the one we carried it to.

PD: Did you ever go to her to talk about something?

AW: No, I always got along with the help pretty good. We had our arguments, but nothing to carry to her. But if I had anything to say, I'd carry it to the big boss. That second-hand stuff don't work too good (laughing).

PD: Second-hand would have been going to who?

Albert Wharton

- AW: Some of the rest of them around there. Like John Carter. You couldn't carry anything to Harvey, because he wasn't no boss around there, not like that.
- PD: Would the help ever get together to have a pig-picking or a party of some kind?
- AW: I think they did when Mrs. R.J. Reynolds was living there, but not when I was there. The old help did, I think. I hear talk of them.
- See, they used to live in that house sitting right down on the corner. That was the help's quarters, as you come down . . .
- PD: Where the Babcock Foundation is.
- AW: That's right. Then down there in front of Mr. Hendrix, that's where the chauffeur lived. Right above him. Cleve Williams. I don't know whether anybody lives in that house or not, on the corner there, but that was the help's quarters.
- PD: What had people told you about Katharine Reynolds?
- AW: They said she was nice to work for.
- PD: Did they ever say anything about her in connection with the farm?
- AW: Oh, she run it good. She's the one that started it up there--she had show cattle and everything. That's why the dairy is like it is. She had that "jelly" stock--she used to carry them around to all these big fairs.

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(AW) Had 'em carried around, you know.

Mrs. W.: I wasn't living down there then, but I heard talk of her. She was a--you know, business woman.

AW: Sure was.

PD: I guess that was real unusual for a woman back in those days.

AW: That's right.

PD: Did people think that was unusual?

AW: I would think so, yes ma'am. She was a regular business woman.

PD: When you were working on the farm, what was your opinion of how the farm was run?

AW: I thought it was done good, myself.

PD: You thought they were turning a profit?

AW: That's right. They claim they didn't, but I don't see why they didn't.

PD: Who claimed that?

AW: The trust company in Baltimore. That's what Steve War nkin was--he was sent down from Baltimore. He was the head man.

PD: And they claimed they weren't making any money?

AW: That's what I heard. Things run good two or three years, after she died--that's when it commenced running down. But it run good while she was living; after she passed, the trust company run it. Far as I know--see I couldn't just say--the children didn't take no interest in it. That's the way I feel. 'Course I

Albert Wharton

(AW) couldn't say that.

PD: When you were younger, did you ever go to the Forsyth
C ounty fair?

AW: No, I didn't. My father did, but I didn't.

Mrs. W.: You didn't ever go to the fair?

AW: No, not with them cows. My father went around with 'em
when they was shown.

PD: I guess your father didn't live a lot longer after you . . .

AW: No, he didn't.

PD: A year after you moved to Winston, or bought the
new farm?

AW: Mm-hm.

Mrs. W.: You wasn't working up there when your Pa was working?

AW: I was up there. Like he run from the garage . . . I
was down in the basement, hollering at him. I said,
Hey, and he said, Hey, and about ten minutes later
somebody come around and told me my Daddy was up there
sick. He had a stroke.

PD: Where did you take him when he got sick?

AW: We picked him up and carried him to the garage and
called the hospital, and got a doctor.

PD: Was this a doctor that was on the place?

AW: They usually had a doctor around there.

PD: And he came down there to the garage?

AW: Mm-hm.

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PD: In your life here in Winston-Salem, have you ever participated in the NAACP?

AW: No.

PD: Do you take out insurance at the Mutual Insurance Company?

AW: No ma'am.

PD: Did you ever go to the local county fairs?

AW: Once in a while. I never did care much about the fair. When I was young, I'd go around. I loved to see the cows and the hogs, things like that. But just to tend it every year, no, I never did.

Mrs. W.: He did when he was young, but after we got married we didn't.

PD: Did you like going to the fair?

Mrs. W.: Oh yeah, I'd go every day. See I was working for a lady had two little boys. So I'd go ^{and it didn't cost me} / every day, me ^{nothing} and the little boys.

PD: How long did you work doing that?

Mrs. W.: I ain't worked since I moved here.

PD: Did you work the whole time you were out there at Reynolda?

Mrs. W.: Yeah.

PD: For the same family?

Mrs. W.: No, I worked two families. I worked for the Baileys and I worked for the . . . I've darn forgot the name,

Albert Wharton

(Mrs. W.) and they used to live in Buena Vista.

AW: Creech?

PD: In all your years at Reynolda, were your friends in Winston-Salem envious of your job?

AW: Yes'm, they thought it was a pretty good job.

Mrs. W.: We didn't have no friends in Winston, We always stayed in the country. Our friends were country folks. They lived there where he was born, and in Clemmons, and in Brookstown--that's where we would go, like on Sunday evenings ride out somewhere, to my home, to Tobaccoville.

PD: Was that the way most of the people were that lived out in Five Row?

AW: Most of them. Most of them were what you might say country folks.

PD: I looked through the school records at Reynolda, and had seen an Albert Wharton. Did Clint Wharton have a son named Albert Wharton?

AW: That's right.

PD: Were you all named after each other?

AW: I reckon so.

PD: Do you think your father named you after his son?

AW: He could have.

Mrs. W.: Clint Wharton's wife's name and my name were the same.

AW: Clint was Albert Wharton's father. And Clint's father

Albert Wharton

(AW) was Albert Wharton. So my folks may have named me after him

PD: So they might have named you after Albert's grandfather.

AW: Yes'm, they might have done that.

PD: What was your father's name?

AW: John.

PD: Did Mr. Wharton sell his farm when he came to work for Reynolda?

AW: His father, his mother, ^{after} she passed, and the children
just sold it. Sold it to Mr. Lasater, Ed Lasater.

Mrs. W.: He's dead, ain't he?

AW: Oh yeah, all of them. All them old Whartons are dead.

Mrs. W.: But his children. He just had three.

AW: John's in California. Carolina, she's here in North Carolina somewhere.

PD: Did Clint Wharton still rent his farm when he came here to work and live at Reynolda?

AW: We tended it for his mother about two years when he come up here to work. 'Course my brothers come up here when he come up here, the two of them did.

END OF INTERVIEW