

Michael Jepson: We will go ahead and begin. This is Michael Jepson with the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage. Today is January 27th, 1993. We are at the home of Mrs. Doris Green where we are conducting an oral history as part of the Vanishing Culture Project funded in part by the Florida Humanities Council. Doris, we usually start these interviews by having you give your full name and your address.

Doris Green: My full name is Doris M. Green. I was an Adams before I was married. I live at 12003 46th Avenue West Cortez.

MJ: What is your year of birth?

DG: 1915.

MJ: The date?

DG: May 28.

MJ: When were you married?

DG: In 1935, January 1935.

MJ: What was your husband's name?

DG: Woodrow Devio Green.

MJ: What were your parents' names?

DG: My father was Willis A. Adams. My mother was Dora Jane Fulford Adams.

MJ: So, her maiden name was Fulford?

DG: Fulford, right.

MJ: Your parents are deceased now?

DG: Yes.

MJ: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

DG: Yes. I have six brothers and sisters. We were ten. I'm sorry. There were nine of us on our family. Wait a sec.

MJ: That is okay.

DG: The two oldest brothers have passed on.

MJ: Can you tell me their names?

DG: Of the whole family, you mean?

MJ: Yes.

DG: The oldest one in our family was William H. Adams. The next was Leon H. Adams. The third was Pauline R. I was fourth, Doris M., and fifth was brother Howard, followed by Cleveland T., Clayton H., Clyde D., and the last was Mabel.

MJ: So, William, Leon, Pauline, Doris, Howard, Cleveland, Clayton, Clyde, and Mabel.

DG: Right, nine of us.

MJ: Nine. That is quite a family.

DG: I thought it was quite interesting when I started getting together the information on the families and the original families. Most of them had nine children. They cut it off at nine. Maybe the mother was too old for childbearing around that time.

MJ: Maybe that is a maximum number.

DG: But there were quite a few that had nine children in the family.

MJ: Well, let me go through your brothers and sisters and tell me whether they're living today and if they are, where they live. Now, William H, is he still alive?

DG: No. He and Leon, the two oldest, are deceased.

MJ: How old was William when he died?

DG: He was probably about eighty-years-old, I think. Leon was, I believe, was seventy-nine when he passed away.

MJ: Do you know what year was it that William passed away?

DG: No. I can't say positively, but it's probably about ten years ago now that he's been gone.

MJ: Leon?

DG: Leon died in 1985.

MJ: In eighty-five. How about Pauline?

DG: She's still living and she lives in Texas.

MJ: In Texas?

DG: In Freeport, Texas.

MJ: Freeport is another fishing community.

DG: Yes, it is. She married a fellow that was connected with the sea. He was captain of a boat for a while and he's a boat builder and he's always been connected something about fishing.

MJ: How about Howard?

DG: He lives over on the island at Holmes beach. He's a retired chief of police from Holmes Beach.

MJ: Cleveland?

DG: Cleve lives in Gardena, California, suburb of LA. He's retired from the Navy.

MJ: Clayton?

DG: He's retired. He's a retired fisherman and he fished his entire life. He lives in Bradenton with his family.

MJ: Clyde?

DG: Clyde is now retired. Clyde's son is Timmy Adams. Is he still president of OFF?

MJ: Yes, he is.

DG: Well, that's Tim's father, Clyde is.

MJ: Well, Tim told me that he had relatives over here and I did not know what their connection was.

DG: When we get through tape, I'll tell you a little story when he first came to see me the other day, what he said. [laughs]

MJ: Mabel?

DG: Mabel lives in Sarasota.

MJ: Let us see. Now, do you have any children?

DG: Yes.

MJ: What are their names?

DG: Woodrow and I had two sons, Malcolm and Marshall. Malcolm lives in Bristol, Tennessee and he's with the management of United Telephone Company. Marshall just retired in December after 30 years with the Delta Airlines. He lives in the Atlanta area.

MJ: He lives in Atlanta. Can you tell me a little bit about your father? What did he do?

DG: Well, he was connected with fishing in a pond. He fished for quite a few years, but mostly, he just, as we called it, ran a fish house. That was the word they always used.

MJ: This was in Cortez?

DG: Yes. He came from Northwest Georgia just as a young man and he's got my mother and married. He has lived out his entire life here in Cortez, but he was always connected with the fish industry.

MJ: Where was his fish house located?

DG: When the Fulford Fish Company first started, he worked there and he worked for many years with the Star Fish Company and he worked for Jess Williams. When he had a fish company, he just worked at various places. He did all the bookkeeping and the managing of them.

MJ: He also sort of has a reputation for shark fishing.

DG: No, not my father.

MJ: It was not your father?

DG: No. That's Woodrow, my husband, and his brother.

MJ: It was your husband Woodrow that was a shark fisher?

DG: His brother. In fact, Woodrow worked with his brother. His brother's the one that really started the shark business.

MJ: You say your father moved here from Georgia?

DG: From Gainesville, Georgia.

MJ: From Gainesville, Georgia. Do you know why he came to Cortez?

DG: Yes, he had an older brother living here out on the 75th in Cortez Road where the golf course is. There was a large grove there called lime and green, orange grove, and they had a small house. It had a caretaker there. My uncle and his wife lived there and took care of the grove. Then they moved to Cortez and built Wayne's house and lived in it for a while. Mr.

Guthrie hired him to build that house and he lived in it for a while with his wife and two sons and they attended the old one room schoolhouse here. I have a picture when they were children, students there.

MJ: How did he meet your mother?

DG: Well, I supposed, he was fishing here just as an adult. I'm sure that's what he was doing because he stayed with his brother and his wife, and they were fishermen.

MJ: Do you know when they were married?

DG: Yes. June 6th, 1906.

MJ: 1906. Tell me a little bit about your mother. What type of a woman was she and what did she do? Was she ever employed at any time?

DG: No. Anyone that raises nine children, gives birth to nine children, they don't have time to work outside the home. She was a hard work and just a small kind of a very sensitive, nervous type person. But she just devoted all of her time to housekeeping that was the main thing in her life, and she did all the related jobs such as sewing and all that type of housework. She was just a little in size. She was a very tiny little lady. I don't know how she managed to raise so many children and keep the house and cook three meals a day for all of us. But I guess, they made them tougher back in those days than they did today.

MJ: Do you think it was hard for her to raise that many children?

DG. I'm sure it was. She had none of the modern conveniences that we think we can't live without today and everything was done the hard way. It was always three meals a day, always. I never remember just having a bowl of cereal for breakfast or something like that. Then at noon time, with dinner, always a meal, and then it's supper. Plus, after the brothers got older, oftentimes, she prepared something for them to take go fishing with them for another meal. So, I'm sure it was a hard, hard life.

MJ: Did you eat together as a family?

DG: Yes. I remember a long dining table and a bench on the side with the children, but there was always a tablecloth on the table. We never had any of the fine things of life, but we always had a big, nice meal always. I never remember being hungry, never.

MJ: What were mealtimes like? Were the children allowed to talk during meals or where you remained quiet?

DG: No, I think we just enjoyed the meals together. At some time, it was impossible for us all to be together at mealtime with the hours that they put in fishing. With my father, it wasn't certain that he had always be there at mealtime, but when it was possible, we always ate together.

MJ: So, your brothers growing up here in Cortez, they were all fishermen at one time or another?

DG: Well, yes, they fished some, but Clayton really was the only one that really devoted that, that was his work in his entire life until he retired. Most of them did other work. The oldest one fished quite a bit, but he went up, he got work on the Great Lakes on the ore carriers and that's where he retired from. But he would come back in sometime in the wintertime and he fished off and on, but that was not really his profession. Snooks did not devote all of his work to fishing, but they all fished off and on.

MJ: Now, you said Snooks.

DG: I'm sorry, Howard. The one that was a retired police chief. Everyone knows him as Snooks so they probably wouldn't know Howard.

MJ: Did your other brothers have nicknames also?

DG: Pardon me?

MJ: Did your other brothers have nicknames?

DG: Every one of them.

MJ: What was Williams'?

DG: Man.

MJ: Man?

DG: My father gave him so that way, "You're papa's little man." So, his Man always. Leon was Buddy all of his life. He was always called Buddy. I don't know anyone ever called him Leon. Then of course, my oldest sister did not.

MJ: Pauline, did not?

DG: But of course, I did.

MJ: Yours is Toodles, right?

DG: Yes, and Snooks. As I just said, Howard was Snooks and Cleve was always Cubi.

MJ: Cubi?

DG: During this First World War, my father moved his family to Tampa to work in the shipyard. Of course, in the neighborhood, we lived in there with a lot of Cubans. Cleve, he was born with dark hair and eyes and dad used to like to kid my mother telling he was Cuban. So, he said we

started calling him Cubi, and then Clayton was Jap. I don't suppose many people here know what his real name is, but he was Jap. Not from the Japanese race, but they used to be a character here, [unintelligible]. He was quite a character and for some reason, that name was attached to him. He was Jap, he still is.

MJ: Clyde?

DG: Dark.

MJ: Dark?

DG: That's Timmy's father, he's Dark. He got that nickname from carrying him, little black diaper bag. Well, that comes out dark red, so shortened to dark. My youngest sister does not have a nickname.

MJ: Well, how did you get the nickname Toodles?

DG: A cousin of my mother's, John Fulford named me that right shortly after birth, I guess.

MJ: Tell me about the first house that you remember most in Cortez where you lived as a family.

DG: I was born in a house that's no longer here. For Trigger Liz, Trigger was living in the house when it burned, Trigger Murrell, just a frame house. That's where I was born. But the first house I really remember, other than when we lived in Tampa, it was the old one room schoolhouse. Of course, it had been divided into rooms like it is today, but we lived there until we bought the house where Paul Taylor lives now down on end of the street.

MJ: How many rooms were in the old schoolhouse when you lived there?

DG: I think it was divided into five small rooms. Just of course, they were very, very small. I think about three little bedrooms because it had to be very small.

MJ: Even more so with nine children.

DG: Well, there were nine children living in there at that time, but it was crowded.

MJ: You said that your father spent a lot of time at the fish house.

DG: Yes, because of the hours that fishermen put in and that he had to always be there when they'd come in with their loads. So, it was not certain just what time he would be home. But it was always night work, too, especially during mackerel season and work at that time, fishing at that time.

MJ: When you were growing up, would you spend time at the fish house with him? Would you go down?

DG: Yes, but the children, the boys did more than the girls, I guess, but we just ran over the whole village. There was nothing dangerous about it. There was nothing to be afraid of it. We just roamed all over the whole village everywhere we could.

MJ: Were there a lot of children in Cortez then when you were growing up?

DG: Yes, more than there are now, especially when the brick school was built. By that time, it was well 1912. There were quite a few children here in the village and the enrollment was quite large. With all these families who have nine children, they just about filled up.

MJ: What do you remember some of the more fun things that you would do as children in Cortez? Can you tell me a little bit about that?

DG: The waterfront. That was a great drawing card. We just love the waterfront, the bay. It was not sea-walled and you could just play anywhere you wanted in the water and swim. Every time the tide came in, well, the bay was full of kids. [laughter] Then the sea grape trees that grew lushly all around the waterfront, that was a great source of playing in those trees and they can see great building and playhouses everywhere and just things that children used to do that they wouldn't care a thing that we'll do in the day. We had to make our own entertainment. We had no way to go, other places, unless until the movies came in and the great thing was to go to town on Saturday to see a movie. But other than that, our entertainment was right here in the village.

MJ: How would you get to town to see movies then?

DG: Well, by the time that I was up in a few years, well people began to get cars and neighbors would be kind enough to take other children in just any way we could go.

MJ: So, a group of children would go together to see movies?

DG: Then the mail carrier, Henry Norman, had sort of a little bus that he would carry passengers in. I remember that from about five-years-old riding next to the bus with the mail carrier.

MJ: Where would he pick people up to take them into town?

DG: Well, maybe at the post office and sometimes after the hours that he had to bring mail, he would just use it to carry passengers. Then I think at one time, he had a car that he just used sort of as a taxi to carry people who did not have transportation. A lot of people use boats to go in. I've never remembered riding in a boat to town as far as that goes or even a horse wagon or buggy that was a little bit before my time.

MJ: You said earlier that you did not have some of the finer things in life growing up, but you always had plenty of food. Were there people in Cortez when you were growing up that did have some of the finest things or was everyone about the same level of socioeconomic?

DG: Just about the same level. Although, we had very, very few things, but some, even had less.



It seemed like it's always been that way. Back to the food, I said I had never been hungry. But I can remember during the Depression, one family, they had quite a few children and I have seen that she often would make a big pot of coffee and make great big huge pan of biscuits and that was it. Coffee and biscuits, that's all they had to eat. Another family, it was this fish and biscuits every day, every day. Sometimes they had syrup to go on their biscuits, but I never remember having to eat that same food over and over again. My mother was a wonderful cook and somehow, she managed to vary the menu with a bunch of children.

MJ: What are some of the meals that you remember most that your mother would cook, something that you enjoyed? Some of the foods that she would prepare.

DG: Well, she was always noted for the bread and we call them light rolls or yeast rolls and biscuits. I don't think anybody could bake better than she. She could just make delicious pies and cakes, and of course, on Sunday, that was the big meal for everybody. She seems like, somehow, she could manage to have a big beef roast on Sunday. My oldest brother used to say she didn't know how to cook it. It was too dry. [laughter] But anyway, it probably was the cut of beef, but we had bacon and ham and eggs. If she'd fix oatmeal, I remember, she'd make it seem more attractive and more tasty. She would sometimes put chocolate in it. We'd got a chocolate oatmeal with our meals and we love that. She was just really a good cook.

MJ: You said Sunday meals were an affair. Can you tell us a little bit about what Sundays were like when you were growing up? Would you attend church in the morning?

DG: Yes. Some of the food was prepared the day before, like cakes or pies or desserts or something like that. But most of the meals were cooked before we went to church or just something that wouldn't take too long to prepare so you could eat at 1:00 p.m., 1:30 p.m. My brothers were forever and eternally bringing people home, boys with them. But there was always room for one more at the big dining table. On Sundays, that always had a white tablecloth.

MJ: Did you and your sister help your mother prepare the meals?

DG: Yes. By the time we got old enough, that was expected that the girls in the family would help do all the housework, laundry, cooking. Well, we never did much cooking. Mom always did that unless she were sick. The girls in every family were expected to take over as soon as they were old enough.

MJ: They did help then with household chores?

DG: Yes.

MJ: How about the males in the families, did they ever do any of the household chores?

DG: My oldest brother did. The one we call Man. He could work as good as the girl in the house.

MJ: Really?

DG: It didn't seem like as if he resented it. It seemed like he knew that it was that mother who needed help. He was always willing to help and help take care of the children, the younger children.

MJ: He did. Did he ever take any ribbing from the other boys for that?

DG: I don't think so. I don't recall it. He was a hardworking person. He started working when he was just a youngster. Even before probably, he was old enough to fish, but he worked and had a little income aside from helping with the housework and taking care of the children. But with Buddy, that was a different story. He wanted no part of it. We lived in Tampa. He would get on the streetcar. Early in the morning, he had a friend that was a conductor and he'd be going all day. He'd ride all day long on the streetcar so he didn't have to do anything at home.

MJ: Well, going back to what you were saying about the Depression in Cortez and you said that there were some families who had a hard time, did people in Cortez help each other during that hard time?

DG: I think so. Of course, we did not have much to spare, as far as food was concerned, but we've always been helpful to each other once people needed help. But I told in my book that story that I did not think it's true about Cortez was the only village or tag in the whole country that did not receive welfare. I think that's just a good story somebody made up, but we were not flushed with anything. I'll tell you, it was hard, hard times. We just patched clothes and put paper in our shoes. It was not an easy time.

MJ: You would put paper in your shoes for what purpose?

DG: The soles were thin if you got a hole in it. Well, you certainly didn't discard those shoes and you had no money to go get them half-sole. So, you just probably put paper or cardboard and warm right on. That was another one of those good old days I'm talking about.

MJ: What type of person was your father? Was he strict growing when you were growing up?

DG: Yes, he was strict. He was very high strung. His friends and associates, they just delighted and doing anything that would set him afire. But I guess, I find that, that was just his nature, something he could not help. But he was a kind, loving father. He loved babies. He just loved children and he would defend us right and left. But his biggest fault was he was so high strung and hyper.

MJ: Well, you say, would they pull pranks on him?

DG: Yes. They delight in that. I guess, if any of them were still around, I could remember, they could tell you a lot of things that they did just to set him in orbit.

MJ: You do not remember any that they might have pulled on him?

DG: No, not really. I've just heard a lot of different things, but there was a man that used to come. I believe he delivered the gasoline for the boats. He just happened to come on down on the fish dock one day. My father saw one of my little brothers fall overboard. My dad reached in his pocket and he snatched out his school watch and he threw it down on the dock, jumped overboard, and he got that little fella by the nape of his neck, got him up on the dock, and he gave him a good spank. He says, "Now, you go home. I told you not to come down on this dock anymore. You're too small." [laughter] But he told me that after my old niece was drowned. At that time, this is the same man that had driven the gas truck who was an undertaker. He had a funeral home in Bradenton, and he recalled that, and I remember him telling me that incident about my father jumping over and grabbing that little boy and spanking him and sending him home. [laughter]

MJ: So, then they did sort of try to restrict young children from coming down to the docks in those days?

DG: At one time, I think it's cruel. But the older fishermen, they thought it was a great thing for children that couldn't swim to throw overboard, teaching to swim. Of course, they were there in case they got in trouble, but that often happens. They just pick them up, "Listen, now you're old enough to know how to swim," and just toss them over.

MJ: So, a sink or swim?

DG: Yes, the sink or swim. It has happened lots of times.

MJ: Do you remember how you learned how to swim?

DG: I don't paddle ever since I can remember. [laughter] I guess, we just got out in the shallow water as I touched bottom and just started dog paddling until we got brave enough to jump off the fish docks.

MJ: Well, as you grew older, do you have any other memories of Cortez like when you were a teenager? What was it like then?

DG: Well, they really hadn't changed a whole lot. I guess, it really changed for me when we started to high school and going into Bradenton and we thought we're different from all the Cortez kids. But we found out, children are all alike and I became close friends with a lot of them. Of course, there were always a few that would tease us and taunt us about smelling like fish and all that sort of thing. But some of them, by that time, the kids here had some kind of old jalopy they could drive. Then many of the children who lived in town had to walk a long, long way to get out to the high school. They didn't have bikes. They just had to walk, and of course, we were bused in. The city kids, they were a little bit different from the Cortez kids.

MJ: Well, you said that at first you thought that you were different than the Bradenton kids.

DG: I know personally, I just felt like I just had an inferiority complex. I felt it's because I live

in town and they were just a little bit more higher level than kids out here.

MJ: Would you think the older people in Cortez felt that way, too?

DG: I'm sure they did. But it probably was just an idea because they were friends that enjoyed visiting out here just as much as we did with the friends at Bradenton.

MJ: What sort of recreational activities did you have as a teenager and in high school in the village?

DG: Just our local parties and boat rides and activities on the beach getting together and having a picnic at the beach or go swimming. After the bath houses were built over there or bath house on Bradenton beach, we just thought that was the greatest thing to go over for ten cents, ran a booth and change our clothes there and not have to worry you will walk over across the bridge with your swimsuit and be able to change your clothes there and go swim. So, that was a whole maybe Sunday afternoon. For ten cents, you could enjoy that activity and with be with a lot of your friends to from Bradenton.

MJ: You showed us a picture of Sailors' Haven and you said that you spent some time there. Could you tell us a little bit about that place?

DG: Well, at the beginning it was just a real nice place. There was no gambling or anything of that sort or of course, even beer was illegal in those days. It was just a nice gathering place. Really, the only gathering place. But I think when it changed hands, that's when they started getting beer and all that. Though, I don't know that they ever did have a liquor license. They're probably just beer. Then you had the usual number of free falls and then gambling started in, which was illegal, but they'd always find a little place in the back. They could sit and play poker or gamble. But at the beginning, it was just a nice place together for the youngsters.

MJ: What was the draw there? Why would you go there?

DG: Well, they had a jukebox. They had a little sundry store. Really, there was no entertainment as such. We just made it just to gather there to talk. They had sold soft drinks and sundry items and that sort of thing. Just sort of a nucleus for a soul together.

MJ: Who owned it at that time?

DG: The Williams had it built. Mr. and Mrs. Williams with the grandparents of Lois Fulford Ralph's wife. After Mr. Williams died, Mrs. Williams and her eldest son operated it until they sold it quite a few years later.

MJ: You said you saw a change when it changed hands?

DG: Yes.

MJ: Who took it over then? Do you remember?

DG: There was Mrs. Williams' son in law, Jack Falls. I think at one time, he used part of it for a barber shop. He was a local barber here. I understand he's the one that put in the gambling room. He didn't operate himself, but he hired somebody to run poker games there. Of course, it was sort of a little secluded area because it was illegal. From there after, they began to sell beer. It's just mostly men that gathered there.

MJ: The kids did not hang out there then?

DG: No, not a whole lot. Some did just to play pool, at a pool table there. But in my book, the story I've told, that was true. I did not have any names, but I know who they were. I was closely associated with a boy that got beat up there, and he was beaten severely. He was the man who Jack Falls was arrested for doing this. He claimed he was cheating playing cards or something. But it finally just got to that sort of place. Then when the Chambers, Jack Chambers, the Englishman that I showed you the picture, when he bought it, they tried to have a pretty decent voice there, but they couldn't. After they began to sell drinks, they couldn't control all the fights that went on there.

MJ: Were there are a lot of fishermen that would frequent that place?

DG: Yes. I think Saturday nights, they would go there to dance and drink, just the older crowd.

MJ: Did they have a band?

DG: Now, I think they use the jukebox.

MJ: Before I go on, I did want to ask you about church. What church did your parents and you attended when you were growing up?

DG: The Church of Christ.

MJ: The Church of Christ.

DG: To begin with, it was just a community building and any denomination could use it. From the early notes that I have seen, they just called it that. They start in the one room school and they were going to have Sunday school. That was the church. I remember Julian, one of the old timers, telling me that when they were children, they're in school. The teacher would say, "Now, take your books home because we're going to have church here." But it was a Sunday school. They did not have higher preacher, just probably different ones would come in and speak to them. I don't remember this at all, but probably just the ladies would conduct the Bible class for the children because they called it Sunday school. Then they built the community church and it was for any denomination that wanted to use it until it's finally the Church of Christ. After the hurricane and the building was damaged, they raised money to restore the building. Then another, the Church of God, decided they wanted their own building because it was kind of difficult for the two denominations to use. One would use it on Sunday morning, the other Sunday night. So, they got their own after the twenty-one hurricane incident and the Church of

Christ just took it over and bought the property and they own it today.

MJ: So, then did the Church of God start approximately about the same time?

DG: I think so, just about the same time. I can remember when both used it. As I said, some would meet on Sunday in the morning and some later on in the day. They both used it.

MJ: Cortez is rather small to have two churches. It seems rather unique to me. Was there a philosophical difference between the two churches?

DG: Yes, very much. I don't know if you're familiar with the concept or idea of a Pentecostal, but they really express their emotions and feelings and shouting. They believe in the Holy Ghost descends on them. They have to show all the emotions and how they feel, but the church of Christ is nothing like that. So, they were just so different, but we were all friends. There was no friction as far as not being friends, but the two churches were just entirely different. They cannot lead together because in the Church of Christ, we have communion every Sunday and they don't, things like that. There's just so many things. I can remember, there's a really small child when the whole in this group was meeting out there. I remember one Sunday I looked at, of course, we live right across the street there. They were all marching around and around the church building with Palmetto fronds and I never did understand. They were singing some songs, I guess. Maybe it was Palm Sunday or something that they were using these fronds, but I don't know. I asked an older person later, I said, "Did you ever remember that?" They said, yes, they remember seeing that, but I was probably only about five years old. I couldn't understand what they were doing.

MJ: Do you want to stop a minute? I forgot to mention, Wayne Nield is also here as a photographer and Wayne has some questions that he would like to ask you.

Wayne Nield: You are the village historian for Cortez?

DG: Well, I did not name myself that. Like Toppsy, I think it just grew. But a person would come once a month from outside who want some information. Whoever they approached say, "Well, go see Toodles," she'll say. So, that's the word.

WN: In Africa, the griot is a very important person in the village. The griot keeps the village history and passes it on to the next.

DG: Would you learn that from roots? [laughter]

WN: It is true. Alex Haley talks about griots. You are the griot of Cortez. You have just done your book and I am wondering if you would tell us how it came about that you decided to do the book and how long you have been working on it and so forth?

DG: Well, I guess, I really got the idea to try to, as I said, write it down. After Ben's book came out, so many were disappointed that he did not tell much of the history of the village. But Ben did not know even Ben's fourth generation. I knew the first settlers here from childhood and I

remember stories that were told to me. I just felt like that there was just so much missing in his book then these things are so important. I felt like they needed to be preserved and written because I have talked with people here that could not even tell you their grandfather's name. To me, that's a sad thing. One person didn't even know his mother's maiden name. I felt like with what I knew and had found out about the families that these things should be written, especially you could refer back to them if you did not know too much about the first settlers here.

WN: You collected a lot of stories. You also collected a lot of photographs. When did you start collecting the photographs?

DG: Well, really, I did not get into the collection of the photographs until I started working with the Manatee County Historical Society. They did not have much, if any, pictures of the village and the people here. That's when I really got interested. Of course, I had some pictures of families. But I did not attach that much importance to it until I began working with the Manatee County Historical Society and realize how important it is to preserve all of these pictures and places. I guess that's when I really began to really get interested in it, although I've always been interested in the history. I can recall bits of conversation and things that were told to me about some of the original first settlers here in the village and my grandparents and others.

WN: So, thanks to your work, we have stories and we have photographs and also notice, I am looking around your house, there are a lot of artifacts that you have collected too. What are some of the things that we are looking at on the wall over here?

DG: Well, these are what we call mending needles. Today, they don't repair nets. They're all synthetic. I don't repair them. In fact, I doubt if many of them would even know how to use a mending needle. But the fishermen back in my days, they just spent hours and hours every day repairing and mending the nets. Even when they were out on the waters fishing if they had broken the nets and were waiting for the tide for some reason, they would spend that time repairing nets or making mending needles. I think one of these up here, Woodrow told me that one man had just cut a limb off of a tree and just sat there and carved the needle while fishing. That was not an uncommon thing.

WN: Back to your book for a minute and I want to ask you, would you read the dedication and the introduction to us, please?

DG: It's in memory of grandma, who is grandma Fulford and grandpa Captain Billy Fulford and my parents, mama and papa, and for Woodrow who loved Cortez.

WN: Yes. Would you please read the introduction?

DG: The introduction of the Fog's Comin' In, "Fog. The fog comes on little cat feet. It sits looking over harbor and city on silent haunches and then moves on." This was written by Carl Sandburg. "When I see the sea fog rolling in from the Gulf and over the bay and completely covering the village and silently blocking all the waterfront from you, I know that in a short time it will disappear. I am reminded that the fog of time is moving again for me, but sadly, it will not disappear completely. At times, it lists more than others and I can see and think of past events

not blotted out, but not as completely clear today as they were only a few short years ago. My deepest regret is not asking questions and learning more about how my family and the early Cortez or (Hunters Point?) [unintelligible] lived when they first came to Florida. I recall only bits of stories and conversations from older family members and friends who were the first generation to live in the village. When the events were still fresh in their minds, I was too busy with all the happy and carefree childhood days to be concerned with old people and the hardships they endured and starting new lives and a narrow wilderness. There are both so many sad and happy events in my lifetime. In the lives of those who lived only a few years before me that I feel my children, grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephew and cousins by the dozen, and friends who came after me should be told so that the memories and events might be preserved. Newcomers here have expressed interest in their early life in the village. All who have roots here and, in our county, have a rich heritage from having lived or grown up here or having parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and even great, great grandparents who did. I hope in some way my contribution will help preserve and account of their life and are part of the county and all those who made it happen. We have learned a lot from old photographs obtained from families and friends in the community and many who no longer live here. But when I became sincerely interested in early days, all of the first generation had passed on. I had to depend on my parents' generation to help me sort out my memories of the first ones who lived here. Now, there are only a few of that generation left. I am third generation and many of us still live here. They have been most helpful and willing to answer questions and share their memories with me. To all of them, I am most grateful. My story is not intended to be a history as such, but only of the beginning of the village and those who lived here and the hardships in raising large families and their hopes and dreams of a better life than the one left behind before settling here. Native villagers may find some inaccuracies in some of the stories, but I have tried as much as possible to present them as facts in the way told to me."

MJ: Thank you. I have another tape. So, I was thinking we could go on if you would like.

WN: Well, let us keep going.

MJ: So, I guess, I will just kind of continue. Doris, I wanted to ask you how you met your husband. Could you tell us a little bit about that, those early years with your husband?

DG: Woodrow was four years old when his family moved here from where they were living in DeSoto County. He was born there. His father was suffering from what was called rheumatism. I guess, we call it arthritis today. The doctor recommended that he get near the saltwater so he would get much relief. So, I guess, I've known him just about I had known him all my life and I don't really recall the first time, but just in school.

MJ: Again, when were you married?

DG: In 1935.

MJ: Where?

DG: At the Manatee County Courthouse. Those were hard times. We didn't have fancy



marriage just back in Depression days.

MJ: What was his occupation then?

DG: He worked with his father, had worked with his father. He was deceased about a year at that time. But he was still trying to operate the Manatee River Fish Company when it was about to go under. The times were so hard, the economy was. But he worked there until he started commercial fishing.

MJ: Where was the Manatee?

DG: It's down where the Coast Guard is. There was a dock. We would call a Braden's dock and there was a fish house out there. At one time, it was, as we jokingly call, the Cortez shopping center. His father had a fish house there.

MJ: Why was it called the Cortez shopping center?

DG: Well, there were two or three little businesses there at one time. I'm sure the post office was located there at one time and there was a machine shop and there was, what they call, the drugstore then a soda fountain, I think, and the fish house. The steamer landed there because of the deep water. So, that was why it was dubbed the shopping center.

WN: Do you remember the steamer?

DG: Now, at the time that I remember being a passenger on one, as I told the story in my book, it did not come into Cortez then. It stopped at the Corwin pier in Bradenton. We took the mail bus out to Cortez. My grandmother took me on a trip with her, but I remember when the steamers came in.

MJ: You would watch them land regularly at the docks there?

DG: Yes. Now, they didn't come every day, of course, bringing the passengers and supplies. I think it was about three times a week that they would come in.

MJ: Do you remember any of the names of the boats?

DG: I would have to look that up. I was so young. I have listed several that did come in here.

MJ: Let me go back to Woodrow who was running the manatee Fish Company at that time. Then he went into commercial fishing. What type of fishing did he do then?

DG: It was mostly gillnets and blue fish. He had his own motorboat. He was partners with another fisherman here, Jean Fulford. They had their own skiffs and nets. After he quit that, he went and had a boat built for shrimp fishing like the little baby shrimp boats. They're still here. He fished that until he retired. He retired at about age sixty-three, I think.

MJ: Did you ever fish with him?

DG: Yes. I went shrimp fishing with him several times. He would not stay out too long. He thought I'd get to go. It's tiring for me. It gets pretty chilly out on the water at night. Then I remember going blue fishing with him. That was an experience. They would let the net out and I didn't know that they would take their long poles and pound on the sides of the boats to scare the fish into the nets. That was quite an experience for me. But I used to love to go seine fishing and that was always not with Woodrow, but there'd always be another girl or two along with us. We'd go seine fishing and help pull in the same nets out on the gulf side and they'd strike.

MJ: Could you tell us a little bit about that? What was involved in the seine fishing and how you would take part?

DG: Well, you get burned almost to death. We didn't have sense enough to cover. We would probably wear a bathing suit, which we're not skimpy in those days. But we did not even wear a shirt and we'd come in with horrible sunburns. But we would just get on one end of the net when they would run it out around a school fish out in the gulf and we thought we were doing a big part helping to pull the nets in. I never remember thrilling unloading the boats and throwing fish up on the dock or anything like that. But my older sister, during mackerel season, that was one way that the older girls earn money. They would go in and go down when they bring the mackerel in and cut mackerel. They get so much a pound, a hundred pounds for that.

MJ: So, they were they were taking part in the processing of the fish regularly in the fish house?

DG: They thought it was a great thing. I wasn't allowed. I wasn't quite old enough. But she was probably thirteen, fourteen-years-old. She and other girls, they would get up in the loft of the fish house and they'd sleep there, stay there probably, just cut up corrals around until the boats came. When they throw them up on the fish docks, they would get the mackerel.

MJ: Were there any superstitions to women fishing or anything like that, that you remember growing up here?

DG: No. If they were, they were entirely ignored. I think they had superstitions about animals or things more than for the women because as you've probably heard, there were women that just fish regularly as either hook in line. Even Maida had her own boat. I don't know whether she ever had a net or not, mostly trout fishing.

MJ: Maida Culbreath?

DG: Yes. She was a very unusual person.

MJ: Do you remember Maida?

DG: Yes. We were good friends, Maida and I. She's made some of those needles up there. I think her name is on that last one to the right. We were good friends. We were different entirely, but we were good friends. For some reason, she really liked me.

MJ: How are you different? Can you tell us a little bit about her?

DG: Well, we did not always like the same thing. Maida was just down to earth person and just a good friend if she liked you. If she didn't like you, your name was not in her book. [laughter] She was very kind to me. She would let me go take the scallop and she'd helped me in and out of the boat and just things like that. She'd love to go bottle hunting and I would go with her. One day, we were out over in the area where the mum farm is, and it was thick, like room with palmettos. I was scared to death of rattlesnakes. She said, "No, don't be afraid. I'll walk ahead of you." She had a long stick, and she says, "I'll just pull the stick to and pro and if there's any snakes, they'll go." But she wasn't afraid of anything. She was really an outdoor person.

MJ: Do you want to ask something?

WN: You have told a couple of stories about rattlesnakes here, particularly when Woodrow and his brother had to take care of?

DG: Just Woodrow.

WN: Yes. Would you tell us that story again?

DG: Yes. There were two store rattlesnakes really, but the one that I remember, it was so terrible. It could have been a tragic thing. His mother lived with us and her eyesight was very poor. Right in the middle of the day in the summer when the sun was so bright, she went outside to get some clothes off of the clothesline. I heard her screaming, just screaming, and I ran out to see what was the matter. Here was this huge rattlesnake just coiled up and striking. Of course, she was just terrified of any kind of a snake. So, I went out and took her by the arm and led her around to the front door so she could come in. She was about to pass out, which is understandable. By the time I got her in and went back, the rattlesnake had crawled under the house. Under her bedroom back there, you could hear the rattle, just like a dry rattle. I got Woodrow up, he had been fishing. He was tripping at night. That thing just stayed under there just rattling and rattling. So, there was no way he could get to the snake without seeing it. I think he went to see if he could get somebody to help him. But anyway, we couldn't hear it anymore. So, we just figured it had crawled off from under the house. He went down to the fire station and borrowed a big heavy light that would light up a hole under the house, and he thought he would light up so he could see if the snake was still there. He crawled under the edge of this house so he just could get under it. It's so close to the ground. When he got his head under the edge of the house, there was a snake. It crawled away there on the other side of the house and was all coiled up almost in his face. The neighbor, Albert [unintelligible] had come over with his gun and shotgun. Woodrow backed out real hurling, dropped the light and backed out, and he yelled at Albert to shoot. Albert says, "If I do, I'll ruin the light." He says, "I don't care what you do to the light, just kill that thing." [laughter] In one shot, he got it and he pulled it out. I don't know how long it was. I just can't tell you exactly, but it was a huge snake with a lot of rattles. Albert took Woodrow's pocketknife and cut the rattlesnake off. Woodrow says, "I'll never use that knife again." [laughter] But he caught one, once in trip down in the bay. That's a common thing. I mean, not common, but not unusual for snakes to be into swim.

WN: Did people ran into rattlesnakes around Cortez often?

DG: Yes. It's been quite a long time. The last one, I really heard was possibly 10 years ago right down where [unintelligible] fish houses. Woodrow's nephew was having Thanksgiving dinner with us and after dinner he walked down to the fish house and he killed a rattlesnake down there, not a large one.

MJ: Let us stop. The tape is about to end here.

[end of transcript]