

# **NOTICE**

**Materials in our digital Oral History collections are the products of research projects by several individuals. USF Libraries assume no responsibility for the views expressed by interviewers or interviewees. Some interviews include material that may be viewed as offensive or objectionable. Parents of minors are encouraged to supervise use of USF Libraries Oral Histories and Digital Collections. Additional oral histories may be available in Special Collections for use in the reading room. See individual collection descriptions for more information.**

**This oral history is provided for research and education within the bounds of U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.). Copyright over Oral Histories hosted by the USF Libraries rests with the interviewee unless transferred to the interviewer in the course of the project. Interviewee views and information may also be protected by privacy and publicity laws. All patrons making use of it and other library content are individually accountable for their responsible and legal use of copyrighted material.**

Carlton-Anthony Tampa Oral History Project  
Oral History Program  
Florida Studies Center  
University of South Florida, Tampa Library

Digital Object Identifier: U11-00059  
Interviewee: Bobby Snow (BS)  
Interviewer: Andy Huse (AH)  
Interview date: April 30, 2004  
Interview location: Interviewee's home  
Transcribed by: Lauren Dominguez  
Transcription date: December 29, 2004  
Audit Edit by: Mary Yeary  
Audit Edit date: February 10, 2005  
Final Edit by: Kimberly Nordon  
Final Edit date: November 23, 2009

[Transcriber's Note: There is an additional (unidentified) interviewer who asks questions during the interview.]

**Andy Huse:** Let's just back up just for a second then. If you were to tell a history of this area and how your family got to be here, where would you start? Would you start Ederington, then, or Mayo [Florida]?

**Bobby Snow:** I would start with William H. Mein. William H. Mein was here in the 1840s. He was in an Indian war, and the way I understand it, he learned the skills of their language and translated this language to our officers and officials that were trying to deal with them. William H. Mein's father was one of the founders of the University of Lafayette, the University of Penn [Pennsylvania]. He was a professor of languages at Penn and Lafayette. He started another college. Right now I can't recall the name of it. [It was] smaller, not popular. I have the articles that he has written to start the Presbyterian Church in America.

AH: Oh, wow.

BS: That was William H. Mein's father that did that. William H. Mein, in that family and the background of that family, each generation kept moving away from the parent because of religion.

AH: Is that right? Kind of a different generation gap.

BS: Yes. William H. Mein had a brother that was in the South, but he died from yellow fever in Mobile [Alabama]. They sent his artifacts to William H. Mein, but he died in 1814. He was pretty old. I had some of those. I don't know whether I can put my finger on any of that stuff. I know one day I could, probably. The problem I've had is that I've

been re-hiding everything, going through files and just re-hiding everything where I can start searching for them again, you know?

**Unidentified Interviewer:** Who died in 1814? William H. Mein or his brother?

BS: His brother, John.

AH: You said William H. Mein served in the Seminole wars down here?<sup>1</sup>

BS: Yes. He settled on the hill that's east of here called Mein Hill. It's not quite as high as this, but it had water on it just like this, had the springs running. He was in the tannery business, did tanning. He was a Justice of the Peace in the 1840s and 1850s. I have some of his old records of when he Justice of Peace, the way they handled things. He was the first, and then Mayo and Ederington came down here. Ederington went back. Mayo went back. It's in the diary there about him going back to Georgia and getting his slaves. You've heard about that, I suppose.

AH: Yes, I know a little bit. They came originally from South Carolina, right? They came down, and they said they had to go back to Georgia to pick up their slaves?

BS: Let's go back into that. Anderson Mayo had married a woman from Butts County. Apparently he had a farm or something in Butts County, because some of the other Mayos were there also.

AH: So this is in Georgia?

BS: In Georgia. He had family; his mother was back at Fairfield County in South Carolina. When his wife's father died, he went back to South Carolina where his mother was, and they had a farm up there. They came down here. While he was on his trip, he got a message that Mayfield's father—I may be getting words wrong, but this Mayfield woman's father was mistreating the slaves that were his slaves.

AH: Back in South Carolina?

BS: In Georgia, in Butts County. His slaves were the domestic slaves. He had them out in the field, working them. They never worked in the field for the Mayos. That upset him because this particular one, he helped raised him himself, but when he went up there—

AH: The slave helped to raise Mayo or vice versa?

BS: I didn't catch that.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Seminole War is the second of the three Seminole Wars and lasted from 1835 to 1842. The First Seminole war lasted from 1817 to 1818 and the third from 1855 to 1858. The Seminole wars were a series of wars in which the United States battled for Florida from the Native Americans who inhabited the state.

AH: You said that somebody helped raise someone else. The slave helped to raise Mr. Mayo?

BS: Yes, he was in the home and probably helped raise Anderson and his sister and some of them. He went back up to Butts County and got with the legal authorities, a lawyer, and the justice department. The old man turned the lady over, but she had a little kid, and it was six years old. He hid it. It took two or three days before the old man brought him out of hiding and turned this kid over to her. They named that kid Brown Mayo. Brown Mayo came down, and his mother came down when they brought his family down.

AH: When was this about? What year?

BS: He went through the law deal in 1851. They brought them down in 1852 or 1853, whenever they came. Somewhere along the line he had married a McKeown, Ann McKeown. When they came the second time, he brought his immediate family and brought her family that wanted to come down. They wanted to come down because farming was not profitable any more. They were overtaxed. They were losing money, and they needed to move somewhere.

AH: Did the soil play a role? Did they burn out the soil with tobacco or anything out there in South Carolina?

BS: I don't know the crops, but cotton was the main one.

AH: Okay.

BS: Cotton was the money crop. There was four of her siblings came with him when they moved the family down here. One of them was married. Leroy McKeown, which was a second cousin of hers—that sister's name was Nancy—Leroy McKeown is right across the road here. He set the blacksmith shop up. He was a blacksmith. When the war came, he went to war, and he was captured and taken to Fredericksburg. Some of the writings in the diary were written by him, Leroy. Leroy and Nancy's son was Addison McKeown, which was my grandfather. Anderson Mayo's wife was Ann, and she was not the oldest. There was a brother, Christopher, who came down, and Christopher ran the plantation for Anderson Mayo. These people kind of worked for Anderson Mayo.

He took care of the gristmills. They put in a gristmill, a cotton gin, a cotton press, a tannery, a sawmill, [and] a sugar mill. Anderson had a store that was built right between here and that house there. That was the Mayo Store. When Addison was about twelve years old, he had [him] Addison running the store when he wasn't going to school. They had school here on the hill at that time. He ran the store until Anderson Mayo died and the store went over to Addison Mayo, and then he put in a post office. This particular thing, even back before Addison took it over, was the big metro of northern Hernando County.

AH: I was about to ask you because Brooksville [Florida] really doesn't date back as far as all the stuff you're talking about.

BS: These old records go back to where they had court in the store.

AH: Okay.

BS: They had church at the store. You name it. This was the center. Lake Lindsey was just a lake. They did have a church on the northeast side, an old Methodist church. They had a Baptist church built about where it is right now, close to it. We don't know how old the cemetery is, other than the Indian mound that's in it, because before this time, people buried people in a convenient place. The church being there, some could have been buried in the lost markers.

We don't know, but the oldest marked grave in that cemetery is Nancy Mayo. She was born in 1787 and died in 1855. Thereafter, there started to be more and more buried there. Francis Ederington, he was buried on Chinsegut Hill, him and his wife Precious. The Nevitts, who lived a little bit west of the cemetery, about three quarters of a mile, maybe a mile, Cornelius Quincy Nevitt and Anderson Mayo donated the land for the cemetery. The church was probably built on a property, and they said this belongs to the church. I do know that the cemetery was donated by those two people.

AH: Okay. What was the link between the Ederingtons and the Mayos? I know they traveled down here together. Were the families intermarried, or were they just good friends?

BS: Ederington has a further history back in Fairfield County [South Carolina] than the Mayos did. I'm sure there's cross kin between the Ederingtons, the Mayos, the McKeowns, and the Lykes because they all came from the same area there. I know that the Mayos and the Lykes have kin, and there's also one McKeown buried in the Lykes cemetery, so I figure there's some kin there, too. These people were well-to-do. In today's time it's hard to visualize just how well it was, but they motivated people to do their work, and they handled the finances of it. Somewhere here I have the Anderson Mayo list of agents he has. There's quite a number of them, and this book is from the 1850s.

AH: Okay.

BS: Coming down, they looked at hammock land in Florida after they got off the boat at Palatka. They ended up liking this. They both went into cedar. There were cedar trees well over a hundred feet high back in that day, virgin cedar, all through the hammock and along the coast. I do know that they had a lot of oxen that they dealt with the cedar because they could go in the swampland and pull the cedars out. They would pull them to a creek or river that they could float them down and get them on a boat to go up north, whether it be up the Mississippi River or whether it went around and came up the other side or got them over to Palatka somewhere and went up to New York or whatever. Cedar and white oak were the two big things. These hammocks were full of white oak. White

oak was the most precious building board that ever was. I don't know whether you've ever been up in the hammock country along the coast in South Carolina.

AH: No, I haven't.

BS: You need to go some time.

AH: Are you talking about the lowlands there?

BS: The costal highway that goes through there. The reason I'm saying that is you can learn about white oak. I didn't know because it was all gone when I was raised here. They had displays out there along the highway of what they did to white oak. This white oak, they could take it and just split this thing out right there and make a little strap that wide and this thick. They could make baskets. They could do anything, but flooring was a big thing in houses.

Most of the houses up north were built with white oak floors. Old houses here were built with white oak floors. Every seventy-five years, they would take these floorboards up and turn them over. They'd use both sides. I learned that when I was up north. Our kitchen had white oak boards in it about this wide. They had a crack between them. Old kitchens were separated from the homes, and they had cracks between the boards. That let the air come up through and carry the heat out from the old iron wood stoves. It was unlivable unless you had it built that way.

There was a lot of settlers down here that worked for Francis Ederington and Anderson Mayo. We don't have any records of either one of them actually ever having a field slave or a timber slave.

AH: It was all domestic.

BS: There was a fellow named Russell that had a compound northwest of here of slaves. I'm sure whenever they got ready to go cut this acre of land, I'm sure he'd say we need about thirty people. When they went there to work, they would be there. They would pay Russell for that. I'm sure that's the way it was. I don't have records of that, but I'm sure that's the way it was.

AH: I have a question though. What's the logic of if you have slaves just to keep them domestic in the house? Wouldn't you want them doing the harder work?

BS: The Mayo mansion up here is as big as the Chinsegut Mansion.<sup>2</sup>

AH: Okay, so it was a lot of work?

---

<sup>2</sup> A historic manor house built in Brooksville, Florida in the 1840s, currently owned by the University of South Florida

BS: Basically there were two or three families living in that house. Right here where this house is, is where the Leroy McKeown home was. It was a moderate home. When Addison built the house next door, it was a pretty good size house. It had two stories with a big porch upstairs and downstairs on it. We had as many as maybe twelve people living in the home at that time. We did have people come in and wash our clothes once a week. Some of the family had people that came almost every day and made breakfast. If the parents were working a lot, they would come in and do that for them. The domestic slave was part of the family. They raised the children. The children loved them just as much as they did the parents almost. They always had a close relationship in our family and the old slave families here. They were really close.

AH: It was mentioned that the Ederingtons had good relations with the slaves. The Snow family had very good relations. Later, Robins had good race relations. That probably explains it. Rather than working out in the field and being kind of brutalized, they were inside; they were part of the family.

BS: They were a big part of that home family there. They didn't live around the timbering slaves or the field slaves that much. They were what you'd call sheltered from that from living in that environment.

AH: What more can you tell me about the Ederington family? I know he had a large family, something like ten children.

BS: Ederington had money. Anderson Mayo handled the estate after his death. I have records of that and who got what out of that and what they did with the remainder of it. It didn't go into numbers and figures on the bank stocks and bonds. From what I understand, it was way up there. When he died, Charlotte was the oldest, which is my great grandmother.

AH: When did he die?

BS: What?

AH: When did Ederington die?

BS: Eighteen sixty-nine.

AH: Oh, okay.

BS: She took care of the younger ones. I think one of them may have already gotten married, but they were still living there. Charlotte married Joseph Russell Snow on April 4, 1871.

AH: Okay, I always thought it was earlier.

BS: In some old records it was thought that it was in 1866, but I have the marriage record. It's April 4, 1871. When they got married, he moved into the big house there. He was a dentist, and he had his dentistry on the west room of it. He also had a brother and a sister that came there. I know that to be a fact. Brother Paul Aurlles Snow and sister, the one that is buried beside Paul. Anyway, the two of them, and she never got married— Betty and I found out a lot of things about this. In the old history here at Fort Dade, they had a raging thing down there. The county couldn't settle it. Paul Snow's name was on the list when they submitted to the governor of Florida that they needed some help on this thing.

AH: What was the conflict? You said there's some kind of raging. What was the—?

BS: I think it was over alcohol, brutality, and fighting. There might have been somebody murdered. I have that whole thing somewhere.

AH: What more can you tell us about Joseph Russell Snow? I know he volunteered to be in the Civil War. Aside from that—

BS: He was a dentist.

AH: Where did he come from? Where did he live?

BS: His father-in-law came from right close to Georgetown, South Carolina. They were doctors. Nathaniel Snow, the one that first came and settled, he was a doctor. His wife's last name was Chicken, first name I believe was [Frances] Ann, but last name was Chicken. She was a daughter of old captain.

AH: Is that spelled like the fowl?

BS: Yes. She was a daughter of old Captain Chicken who was on a boat of some sort. He was well to do. His sons and grandsons, doctors have been mostly what they were, medical doctors and dentists. If they weren't a doctor, someone had written an article that if they weren't a rich doctor, they were a poor preacher. Some of them were preachers. There's one of them that founded a big church in South Carolina. That was the background on that. Joseph being a dentist here, he was in public affairs, and he served one term as County Commissioner. Other than that, I don't see where he did a lot of other things.

AH: You mean Joseph Russell Snow.

BS: Yes.

AH: I've never seen his face before. He's quite striking.

BS: There's a better picture of the two of them somewhere.



AH: When we left off, we were talking about J.R. Snow. You mentioned he was county commissioner for a while, didn't really do much aside from there. How do we continue this history then? He married into the Ederington family. I wanted to ask you about a rumor that I heard that he bought out each one of the Ederingtons separately for a certain amount of money for each person. Tell us about that.

BS: I've got the document here somewhere. Joseph Snow and Charlotte bought the Hill property with the house. They gave the children a hundred dollars apiece for that. Then they gave the children all of the holdings, but that's all the Snows got out of it, the house and the property. Each one of the children divided up the stocks, bonds, the holdings they had, the cash money, the gold's, and all that stuff. Gold and silver were very precious back in that day. They actually had the gold and silver. It was analyzed later that what they got per each was a lot more than what Joseph and Charlotte got just for the piece of land.

AH: So these children were not cheated out of the property?

BS: They were not cheated.

AH: They got more liquid assets.

BS: He had holdings; railroads and shipping companies were two of the big ones. How much, I don't know, because I don't have the documentation on that. Those two were very large. You kind of see that wealth. From what I understand, the Ederington girls had more than the people that they married into.

AH: Oh, okay. So whoever married an Ederington girl married well.

BS: One of them married a Hale, two of them married Hancocks. Another married Billingsley, I think. Another married a McKeown.

AH: As they married out, they obviously all moved out of the house.

BS: They all had a piece of the Ederington deal. I don't know that, that's just the understanding I get about it.

AH: Okay.

BS: I don't know how people felt later. Maybe they felt like they didn't get a proper amount, but I don't know that. They don't either, probably. Nobody knows. I'd rather have a piece of paper worth one million dollars than I would a piece of land worth one hundred thousand dollars. I don't know, but anyway. They all ended up wealthy from it. Joseph had a large family himself. Mallory was the oldest one, Ernest Joseph Snow, which was the youngest one. One of the girls married a Hancock. There were two or three other ones.

The Snow family are buried in the cemetery now that they are connected to the Ederington ones. There's only one Ederington girl and Charlotte are the only two that are buried in Lake Lindsey cemetery. Ederington's wife was the sister of Cornelius Quincy Nevitt. The Nevitts came down when they came down, and they purchased the land west over there, Chinsegut Hill northwest on the Nevitt Hill. It's where the Alvin Masaryk live today. I know that during the Civil War, it was said that she organized some of the ladies at the old Baptist church, which was less than a mile from her house, and they made confederate uniforms for them. She donated them; it's a part of her life, doing that. I don't know a lot about the native family after that. The children all moved to Brooksville. Some moved to Atlanta from what I understand.

AH: How long did Joseph practice dentistry? Do you know?

BS: Until he died.

AH: Oh, really? He was probably one of the few in the area, right?

BS: What did it take to be a doctor and a dentist back then?

AH: A pair of pliers?

BS: I keep hearing him say he was the only one, and I keep hearing of another one being the only one at the same time. Anybody that had an education could do whatever needed to be done. I'll leave it at that.

AH: Understood.

BS: So I don't know. I don't know that.

AH: Did he ever practice any agriculture then, or he just depended completely on dentistry?

BS: I don't know that Joseph did any agriculture. Ederington did, but Joseph, I don't have any records that he ever did any agriculture. His older son Mallory, he wasn't all that big into agriculture. When he got old enough to get married, he married a Hedick. My grandfather, the two brothers married two sisters. Two Snows married two Hedicks. Mallory and wife moved to Brooksville, and he was in the court house area in different positions as long as I can remember back then. That's all he ever did. Tax collecting, tax assessor.

AH: I see.

BS: County commissioner—the second one, Ernest Snow, his brother, my grandfather, now he farmed. When I was getting where I could remember things, he was older. He was a foreman for citrus exchange. He was an overseer or whatever. As far as having a hole in his hand, I don't ever remember. His children were not much farmers. They were

mechanical minded. That come down through the McKeowns. The McKeown family is mechanical minded, Hedick was mechanical minded. You have to remember that the industry is at that point of mechanics. Automobiles are coming out, tractors coming out, pumps, you name it. That was their interest more than the farming was.

AH: I see. We had talked about the big storm that came along and blew that house off its foundation. Do you know if that was a hurricane? Was it a tornado?

BS: It was a hurricane, but a hurricane never does any damage except for rain, except for the tornadoes in a hurricane.

AH: Okay.

BS: Apparently a tornado in that hurricane is what shifted that.

AH: And this is around 1890?

BS: Eighteen ninety-seven, I believe it was.

AH: Oh, that late? Okay. At that point, the Snows relocated.

Unidentified Interviewer: They sold the house in 1910, right? The property?

BS: Yes, they sold their property up there. I don't know. They had another house up there. It might have been where Paul had lived. I don't know that. They moved in this other house at that time. Of course their family was married off or getting their own homes. The family at home was shrinking at that time. There weren't many of them that went back to that. Joseph didn't live too long after that. I think he died in 1905. It wasn't too many years after that he died. Mallory was the oldest, and he was the executor of the estate. At this time, Mallory was having a large family, and Ernest was starting to have family. They were all moving away from there. I know that Mallory purchased a large two-story house that Allman had built near Mein Hill. He bought that and give it to Ernest for his portion. Ernest named that house Hunger Bin. It was a really nice home. They farmed that area. With the house, I think he got 80 or 160 acres. He got a lot of land with that purchase. That was my grandfather's portion out of that.

AH: Okay. Why do you think they didn't put the house back on the foundation? Were there just not enough people living there anymore and it didn't seem worth it?

BS: I would say because the family was splitting up, and their interest wasn't in that because Mallory had moved to Brooksville. Ernest said go ahead and do that over there and not spend the money on it. At that particular time it might have been the thing a lot of us would have done.

AH: They were all starting their own families so they didn't want to live together in the same house any more.

BS: Joseph died a few years later. He was old, but he wasn't all that old.

AH: What kind of work did they do on the house when the Snows took over? By then, was the third floor already there?

BS: Oh, yes.

AH: Okay, it was.

BS: The only thing I think that Joseph did was attach the kitchen, the domestic slave quarters to the house.

AH: You do think the slaves lived in that east wing then?

BS: Yes, I think so.

AH: Kind of a segue into the Robins—I read a little article, and I was wondering if you thought it might be true or if you heard anything about it. It sounds apocryphal to me, but you might know better than I. There was a story that I read in the *Detroit News* or some newspaper up north, and they were writing about Raymond Robins as a little boy. Of course, he lived nearby.

BS: He came and stayed with the Snows some when he was young. I don't have much details other than hearsay about that, but it was brought down through our family that he lived with them for a while there.

AH: Yeah.

BS: Then he'd go back north. Then he'd come back.

AH: So he just occasionally stayed over there? What drew him?

BS: I don't know. I don't have any idea.

AH: Just one of those mysterious things. The story goes that Joseph Russell had invited a bunch of kids from the area to eat Christmas dinner at his house. All these kids were outside playing, and they rang the bell for dinner, and all the kids came running. One of them, Raymond, slipped in mud, fell, and got mud on his clothes. Then he went to come inside to eat dinner, and the Snows stopped him, and said, "You're all filthy, son; you can't come in here." I'm sure they had all the fine linen and everything. "You can't have dinner because you're all messed up." Supposedly that's when—Raymond Robins was just a boy at the time. At that point is when he made the vow to own the hill, but I don't know, it sounds kind of fake to me.

BS: I'll get him. One of these days I'm going to own this hill.

AH: Yeah. Then I can have Christmas dinner any time I want.

Unidentified Interviewer: Who actually built Chinsegut Hill? I mean, the house on it.

AH: As far as I can tell, the east wing was built by Colonel Byrd Pearson.

BS: Byrd Pearson's house was just a little moderate house there. It wasn't a mansion at all. That was built by Ederington.

AH: I'm talking about just that east wing. Supposedly he built that because his family was small, and that was all that was there.

BS: I don't even think it had a second floor on it.

AH: Okay, so the second floor was probably added later.

Unidentified Interviewer: So Byrd Pearson had a house up there, and then they built onto that house.

AH: Yes, I even read somewhere—

BS: There wasn't anybody down there. Why would anybody have such a big place that early?

AH: Not just that, but I guess when he first built something, it was more of a bunker than a house. It was just a little place to hunker down in because the Indians were still— According to you, the second floor was put on, and then the main part of the house was put on by Ederington. Really, it sounds like most of the mansion was in place by the time Snow took over the estate.

BS: I don't know that. I really don't know that. It could have. I don't know that.

AH: I know there were a lot of little changes over time, but—

BS: It could have very well been. I don't know. Snow was married in 1871. He probably didn't get started taking over until 1872.

AH: That's interesting because that changes my dates, the way I had it in my mind because I thought he came right after the Civil War in 1865 or 1866, but I guess it was later.

BS: He had a brother over at Sumterville. It was a doctor over there. When he first came down he was there, he easily thought that he could have an office at Istachatta that Joseph could have. That might be where Ms. Charlotte and him got together because that was a big trading post.

AH: I see.

BS: That's where the train came in and the boats came in from Port English.

AH: I know we talked about Robins back in November, but let's just cover a little bit of that material one more time. I'm more interested in getting information about the old stuff that we've been talking about, but just give me some of your impressions. I know that you said he really stood apart from the community because he had money. He was a northerner. He had different ideas about things. Tell me a little bit about that.

BS: I don't think that him having money or him being a northerner, I don't think that amounted to a hill of beans as far as people are concerned. I think his political viewpoints made more of an impression on the people around than anything else.

AH: Probably a negative impression, too, right? I guess he was in the progressive party. Obviously his wife was an activist in women's suffrage.

BS: That was kind of above most people around here.

AH: It seems like he really took the racial thing too far for some people, making Fielder Harris the foreman and bossing around white people.

BS: I don't think so. I don't think people would give a second thought to that.

AH: Oh, no?

BS: That was done by a lot of the old families.

AH: Okay.

BS: I don't think so.

AH: So it was mainly just a political thing. He was just far too liberal compared to a lot of people in the area.

BS: People around didn't care for the socialists. He had a lot of them that came and visited him there.

AH: He did.

BS: A lot of people knew a lot about him. I was too young. I wouldn't have known that, but they talk about Henry Wallace used to fly a plane and land up there.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Henry A. Wallace was Vice President of the United States during Franklin D. Roosevelt's second term. He was also Secretary of Agriculture during Roosevelt's first term as President, and Secretary of Commerce for his third term as president, and the first term of the subsequent Truman Administration.

AH: Wow.

BS: Nobody really knew how much or how bad that was. One thing about Robins, he separated that from the local people that worked for him. He had one relationship with them, but the people just didn't know where he was coming from.

AH: Yes, didn't know quite how involved he was with all that socialist stuff.

BS: No, and he was never at a social event unless he spoke.

AH: He always wanted to be kind of the center of attention.

BS: Yes, of course they'd have to ask him to speak. He would speak at different things. He liked doing that.

AH: I hear he was good at it.

BS: Yes, he liked doing that. That was his relationship with the local people around, his speaking. That's about it.

AH: What do you think? Sometimes people felt like maybe he was condescending? Maybe he looked down his nose at other people?

BS: No, I don't think he'd do that. I think that he was above that.

AH: Oh, I see.

BS: I think he accepted people at the level they were. I don't think he'd look down his nose at anybody. He just had, you might say, a schizophrenic life.

AH: It sounds like it.

BS: He was with this group or he was with you, but not between.

AH: Not at the same time.

BS: Not at the same time.

AH: I know he even had a Soviet ambassador visit him. That must have made people wonder.

BS: The most alarming time was during the Second World War that I know of. People were really concerned. We had a fellow that was raised in Lake Lindsey down there. He was a tail gunner in an airplane. He was shot down. He was in prison in Germany. They asked him if he knew Colonel Robins.

AH: You mean the Germans did?

BS: Yes.

AH: Wow.

BS: That didn't go over very well. We didn't know about it until after the war, though, after he was released.

AH: Why would you suppose they'd ask him that? Why do you suppose the Germans would ask him that?

BS: They knew where he came from. They knew how close he was living to him.

AH: It's interesting that they considered Robins an important enough person to even ask this guy about it. Wow.

BS: That was Lesley Lewis.

AH: That's interesting. I know there was an uproar in the early sixties [1960s], too, about that Lenin Oak, the plaque.

BS: I wasn't here at the time, and I heard about it. I praised it.

AH: It was the height of the Cold War.

BS: I think it was the thing to do.

AH: To get rid of the plaque.

BS: I really do. I still would. I think we're getting too far away from what our country was founded on and for. It's just gone too far.

AH: It would be like having an Osama bin Laden plaque today.<sup>4</sup>

BS: Our country didn't allow any Middle East immigration until Kennedy was president. He opened up immigration to the Middle East.

AH: I see.

BS: Nobody noticed it for a long time, but now we kind of don't know where we stand. My doctor is from over there and all that. I've had about three doctors, and I think they're great people. Little things that happen like in Spring Hill [Florida] and University of

---

<sup>4</sup> Osama bin Laden is the founder of the al-Qaeda terrorist network and an Islamic fundamentalist. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States.



South Florida with these people—they seem great to everybody and then all of a sudden you find out—

AH: [You find out] what they've been up to.

BS: It's sort of like Colonel Robbins.

AH: Two lives. What about Lisa von Borowski? Did you know her at all?

BS: I knew her growing up. She was always dressed like a man.

AH: Is that right? I saw a picture of her. She was dressed like a man.

BS: She wore khaki clothes with lace up boots and a turtle-shell hat. As a kid, she was just peculiar because nobody else was quite like that around. To know her, I didn't know her, but I think what she did was a great thing.

AH: What's that?

BS: Her conservation.

AH: Oh yeah.

BS: I think that was great. There wasn't any conservation except for Lisa von Borowski —

AH: That's right.

BS: —of wildlife and stuff. It may be the reason we have wildlife today. She might have had a lot to do with that.

AH: That's a good point.

BS: Back then, a lot of people lived off the land. Some people got more food than they could eat. It became a habit more than it did a demand. If you kill four deer, you kill them, you know?

AH: Exactly.

BS: She lived in her shell life and probably enjoyed every bit of it except for the outside people that tried to intervene with her. When I think about it, I don't know anybody she ever bothered, other than maybe turning in somebody that was hunting on certain property.

AH: I know when she lived with the Robins, she bothered them because she'd leave the windows open and invite all the birds to come in.

BS: I can't say that she was a bad person at all.

AH: Oh, sure.

BS: I can't say that he was either.

AH: Yes, just different.

BS: They were different.

AH: What about Margaret? Any impressions from the family?

BS: I didn't know Margaret that well. I never heard her speak. I've seen her maybe three times in my life. She was on the road again. She was always on the road again, going from textile mills with the unions and so forth, not just here, but in Europe also.

AH: Oh, yeah. Definitely. Geneva.

BS: She was big in that, a lot bigger than she'll ever get credit for.

AH: This is true.

BS: She started the women's unions in those textile mills.

AH: It was a big deal.

BS: In Europe and here.

AH: All over. It's a wonder they got to spend any time together as much as they travel all the time.

BS: I don't know if they spent that much time together as it was. They just had their own lives they lived.

AH: Sure. It was that schizophrenic thing once again.

BS: They were very independent. They liked each other. They liked the way they lived, and they liked the things they were doing. Nothing wrong with that.

AH: Sure. What else? Have we missed anything? Obviously I don't want this to be the last time that we talk about things.

BS: Anything I find on it. One of these days I'll get everything over to where I'm not looking for something all the time, and then I can get something done. I'll get a lot more of this stuff together.

AH: All right, well I guess this is a good start. I definitely want to pick your brain about these things. Chinsegut and Hernando County in general has kind of bitten me.

BS: Two other people would be of interest to you. One of them is Anderson Mayo. One of these days we'll get through a lot of that kind of stuff. The other one is Cyprin T. Jenkins.

AH: I don't know him.

BS: Nobody knows him. He didn't have a family much. Cyprin T. was down here in the 1840s. He served in the county offices. In the Civil War, when they captured the capitol, he was in the house up there and was captured in the capitol building.

AH: In Tallahassee, you mean?

BS: Yes. He came down early and he possessed a lot of land to be land granted.

AH: Okay.

BS: I don't know what you would call him. The government had people that they'd give this land to and let them land grant it.

AH: Oh, okay. A broker, maybe? I don't know what you call that.

BS: All this land within three or four miles was Cyprin T. Jenkins's land almost. I have all the documents that leans towards that. Pearson was the same type of person and some of these others. They never land granted any of the land until they had a fort within a certain distance. When they built a fort—

[Transcriber's Note: The interview ends abruptly.]

*end of interview*