

## Part I---Monette Ward

**Dr. Catherine Oglesby:** Well I think that is happening to all of us.

**Ms. Monette Taylor Ward:** I'm thankful that I am in as good of shape as I am. My health is real good. Doctor can't find nothing wrong with me; just my balance is off. And I reckon it's cause of my brain or something.

**CO:** Well I think you deserve to have a little off balance. I'm off balance and I don't have any excuse.

**MW:** I have to have a walker. I couldn't walk at all. I wouldn't take three steps without holding on to something.

**CO:** Well...

**MW:** It's that bad. And my mind; they can mention something and it won't come to me. And all of a sudden there it is. And sometimes it don't ever come.

**CO:** Well, let's...lemme just say that it is Sunday, February the...

**MW:** 5<sup>th</sup>.

**CO:** See there you knew that. You remembered that before I did!

**MW:** Oh I know that! I've already written it down a time or two!

**CO:** I have not written it down yet today so...Okay it is February 5<sup>th</sup>. We are at 3314 Bemiss Road. At Mrs. Monette Ward's home. She is gonna...Mrs. Monette Ward, otherwise known as Grannie. And she is going to tell me a few things about her rich life. And my first question for you is, anything that comes to mind, your first conscious memory as a child.

**MW:** Oh mercy. See I'll have to stop and think.

**CO:** That's okay.

**MW:** I think it was when...I mean I don't have any idea how old I was, but it's a long story.

**CO:** That's okay.

**MW:** Oh, I mean....a pretty long story. Kind of sad and glad too. My sister, younger than me, and we always had big dog, you know Sheppard dogs like, and they would dig a hole under the house and then they could go in there you know and cool off...because they couldn't go in the house. So me and my sister, Nettie Merl. We went and got in the dog hole. Well she had to go to the bathroom and I said, "Well I will stay here until you get back." Well I went to sleep and she didn't come back. And my parents couldn't find me. And they notified the whole neighborhood and all of them people came to our house, and it was little ponds around and they thought I'd drown in one of them ponds, and you know they just couldn't find me nowhere. And they all got in the living room, and they had given up on finding me and I woke up and went walking in the room where all of them people were sitting. That's the first, about the youngest thing, that I remember ever happening.

**CO:** You "arose from the dead" at what three or four years old?

**MW:** About...but anyway I know we were young.

**CO:** And you remember that.

**MW:** I can almost see that group of people. Sitting around, you know, in that room. And I went walking in. And I didn't know they was looking for me.

**CO:** How did they respond?

**MW:** I don't know. I don't know that, that's as far as I know.

**CO:** That's a great story. Does your sister remember that?

**MW:** I don't know...

**CO:** No? Is that sister living?

**MW:** No.

**CO:** No.

**MW:** Nettie Merl she was next to me. Younger than me.

**CO:** You must have had a good nap.

**MW:** I don't know nothing else about it. That's about all I know about it.

**CO:** Well that's a great memory.

**MW:** I think that's my youngest memory.

**CO:** Can you describe yourself as a child? What kind of child you were?

**MW:** I was real active. Active. And no matter how many children was around, I was always you know do more things than they do you know. And I'd just do almost anything. I mean I wasn't scared of nothing. I could just jump [inaudible 1:00:48].

**CO:** So you were fearless as a child. And let me take a look at the...you are the 3<sup>rd</sup> in the birth order. You are the third child. Okay. So that means...

**MW:** That mean between me and the one older than me was four years difference in our ages. And all the rest there was two years. But after my sister, my older sister, Clyde, my mother had what they call then pellagra. And then it took four years between me and the next one. Between Clyde and Nettie Merl. See instead of two years it was four years. I told Annette one day, I said, "Lord amercy if Mama hadn't gotten sick I would have been two years older." She says, "Yeah but it wouldn't have been you." So I'm younger. Two years younger. Because my mother was sick and...but all the rest of them is two years difference in ages.

**CO:** I think that pellagra was pretty common wasn't it?

**MW:** I don't know.

**CO:** I think it was. So you were an active child.

**MW:** Yeah I was real active.

**CO:** yeah. I am sure that says...that is a good place to go back to and we will but can you describe your parents, your mother and your father?

**MW:** They don't come no better.

**CO:** Okay.

**MW:** They raised us in church and we went to school and they didn't. . . It was just a family that got along good. I mean we weren't a fussing, or storming or fighting or nothing like that. Everything was just smooth. Just about all my life I don't remember my Daddy ever scolding none of the children. But my Mother. When we had to have a whipping she'd whip us.

**CO:** She did it. Right.

**MW:** So that was...there was one whipping that I got. But she was the one that took care of us over that you know that part. But my Daddy was easy going.

**CO:** And let's see, your father, what did he do? What did your father do?

**MW:** He was a farmer. Yeah. We worked in the fields ever time it come time to work.

**CO:** So the children worked on the farm?

**MW:** . . . had to have gathered always [????]

**CO:** What did he farm?

**MW:** Oh we had peanuts, and cotton, and watermelons and squash and all that. All that we sold to the market. We picked squash and sold it because there was a place in Graceville that would buy them and well there was mostly cotton and peanuts and watermelons and corn. Yeah.

**CO:** Did your father have to hire people to help or was...

**MW:** No. Yes, just us as children.

**CO:** So you really worked?

**MW:** Yeah. Mhmm. Worked all my life. In the farm til...

**CO:** And so did he enjoy farming. Did he do that...

**MW:** Yeah. Yeah. That just...everybody had a farm. That's all they could do.

**CO:** Okay.

**MW:** Weren't nothing else.

**CO:** Well and it sounds like your mother probably helped with the farm work as well.

**MW:** No. I don't remember Mama ever going and working on the farm. But she did all the cooking, the washing, and all that but we had to sweep the yards because we couldn't have no grass in your yard; you had to dig that grass up. And we had to sweep the yards and help scrub the floors, but Mama never worked in the field. But all along when we were working, and she'd take a biscuit and fill it full of some kind of meat or something and would carry it to the field. She would set down with us and we'd eat. But we had a good family.

**CO:** So that was...

**MW:** But we was raised in church. We never, never missed church. Ever.

**CO:** And what church is that?

**MW:** In New Hope...Assembly.

**CO:** Assembly of God?

**MW:** Yeah.

**CO:** Um. So your mother never worked outside of the home.

**MW:** No. Never.

**CO:** Um. What about the extended family. Your mother's family and your father's family beyond your nuclear family. How big was that family?

**MW:** I think ours was about the biggest one. I can't tell you nothing much about them.

**CO:** No that's okay, but did you visit?

**MW:** Yeah, yeah, we used to go out and spend the night with them, yeah.

**CO:** The whole family?

**MW:** Well there weren't that many of us then. When that was going on.

**CO:** So they lived close enough that you could do that?

**MW:** Yeah. Mhmm.

**CO:** Alright.

**MW:** One of them lived in...what's the name of it...South Port. Close to Panama City.

**CO:** Did you know your grandmothers?

**MW:** Yeah.

**CO:** You did.

**MW:** My father's parents, when he was just a child, I mean I don't know whether he was old enough to go to school or not---both of them died. I doubt if he remembers them. But he had three or four...he had one brother, and I think three sisters. And he just lived about with them.

**CO:** What about your mother's parents. Did you know them?

**MW:** Yeah. But all I remember about my grandma, about her [mother's] side. The first thing I remember about them was that they didn't live together. The grandpa and grandmother didn't live together. But they still lived in the same community, and all that stuff and he never did, I don't think, he ever married again but my grandmother, she married again. And she lived with him several years, and then uh grandpa died when I was real young, but I can't even remember him. But uh my grandmother on Mama's side, she married again and they lived together several years, and then he

died and then she lived with my mother, and one of my mother's sisters most of the time then...

**CO:** One thing that academics like to understand is the dynamics between mothers and daughters. So can you remember how your mother and her mother got along?

**MW:** Yeah yeah. They got along. The never had no trouble. Never.

**CO:** And what about you and your mother?

**MW:** We never never never had a quarrel that I ever remember.

**CO:** Okay what about you and Anne? Should we make her go in the other room?

**MW:** No! I have never. I've never fussed at Annette in her life. I bet she could tell you that. I have never gotten mad with her and said nothing to her because I was mad, nothing, never.

**CO:** You never had an argument.

**MW:** Never! Never!

**CO:** Wow. You see, may I just tell you why that is important to me. Scholars maintain...some of them, that there is an inevitable conflict between mothers and daughters when daughters are getting ready to move off from home. It's to prepare them to move off. But when I talk to women from your generation, that's not their experience. They don't have that conflict.

**MW:** Yeah yeah, this generation. I mean nothing compared to my generation. Nothing.

**CO:** Right. That's right.

**MW:** So...

**CO:** Well it...

**MW:** But I mean I ain't never fussed with my young ones. Never.

**CO:** Well probably you didn't have to?

**MW:** I didn't have to.

**CO:** Yeah. That's um...

**MW:** They didn't never give us a bit of trouble, neither one of them. Their whole lives.

**CO:** That's why I'm telling you, you need to write a book.

**MW:** I wish I could! I have thought about you know, not to write a book but I got a lot of stuff!

**CO:** I know! I know, but if you could live in harmony in a family that is something that people would like to understand how you do that!

**MW:** I don't know!

**CO:** Well I bet if you sat down and really thought about it you might.

**MW:** Well I raised them like I was raised.

**CO:** Ok. So for you...

**MW:** They was raised in church all their born days.

**CO:** So for you, being in the church is a real real essential piece of that harmony. Okay alright. Um, this is...you don't have to answer this if you don't want to, but can you, now you recall that story about laying in the dog's bed at the house but can you recall another event from your childhood that was really, really significant for you? Just one event that, it doesn't *have* to be traumatic---it might be, but just something that was very significant?

**MW:** I don't know right now, I don't know nothing in particular, just regular things you know, all my life. I can't right now, I can't think of nothing.

**CO:** That's okay. Oftentimes if people lose a parent they consider that, or somebody else close to them. That can be a turning point. Do you...



**MW:** I'm sorry I just can't think right now.

**CO:** That's alright, something might come to you, and if it does you can bring it up. But when you were a child, you were obviously you were very busy working on the farm but did you have dreams of doing something, being something...

**MW:** No, no.

**CO:** No. Did you think about romance, about getting married, having children.

**MW:** No I married when I was still a young'un. And I mean it I was just a child. I was 16. I was 16 in September and my husband was 16 in November. And we had a good life. Fifty-two years and 2 days when he died.

**CO:** So and he farmed too didn't he?

**MW:** Huh?

**CO:** Did your husband farm? Am I reading this properly?

**MW:** Well he would farm with other people when we first married, and then he well anyway I don't know just how it all connects up together, but my mother died and it was three children at home. And my Daddy had this big farm and a big house and so he moved down to the next township in Florida and started to run a taxi. And we took the farm over and we finally bought the place, and so I don't know how long we lived there, but anyway, we owned that, and then after that, he put up a store in Graceville, a grocery store, Ward's Food Town, but we had a lot of thing besides groceries. And we had that store for 25 years. And his health got so bad we had to close the store and we moved down to Wewahitchka. Out from Panama. About 20 miles this side of Panama. And we rented rooms and he rented boats and motors, and I don't know. I don't know. I reckon it was just about, well about 7 years I think we did that. And his health just got worse and worse and worse. Annette got him a doctor over here and we would go and come 150 miles, and then we decide well what if his

health got worse? You know. So we just sold the place and moved over here, and we have been here ever since.

**CO:** And when did you move here? Do you remember...

**MW:** We moved here in December 1978.

**CO:** Okay.

**MW:** So I just call it '79. Because it was right at Christmas time. Been here ever since and he passed away in 1984. After we moved here. We did live in Bemiss, down here at Bemiss, but we lived in a 2 story house, and it got to where he couldn't go up the steps, and I've got. I found this place. And been here ever since 84.

**CO:** Oh my.

**MW:** I've been here 27 years by myself!

**CO:** Do you like living here?

**MW:** Yeah I wouldn't live no where else in this town. You see this was where people lived like me. These two offices, they haven't been there long. And so they came in here and I could have sold my place then. I mean for a good price so here me and Annette and Lynn we got out and rode this town over. I came home and I didn't find nothing nowhere. So Lynn said, "Let me go by myself." So he struck out by himself and ran around again and come back and he said, "You know, I believe I like your place. I wouldn't live nowhere else."

**CO:** Oh that's good...

**MW:** I mean I...I have been....I used to drive everywhere all the time. And I never never had seen a place yet that I like here that I like exactly as I do here. I mean it's so convenient, nothing to bother you, nothing to disturb you whatsoever. And them cars don't bother me and I stay on this side, I don't even know that side of the house exists. I don't mess with it. But um, I mean I really like it because I've got, well I don't know what you call them good neighbors or not because I don't know them. My backdoor neighbor

here, she's two years older than me. She was out working in the yards yesterday.

**CO:** Wow.

**MW:** But I'd rather it was people that lived on each side rather than offices but I mean they don't bother me, and they give me a telephone number and everything, "You know if you need us now, you call us and all that stuff."

**CO:** Oh that was sweet!

**MW:** Yeah I know it!

**CO:** Wow.

**MW:** yeah they...

**CO:** They're probably glad to have a resident here instead of another business. Do you remember when you were a child, did you have heroes? Did you have people that you really looked up to?

**MW:** Lord, I don't know. I can't think...

**CO:** And do you remember...

**MW:** I hadn't thought about that!

**CO:** Well if you think about it...

**MW:** I think that who my buddies were...of course we had a lot of cousins but uh...I don't know a special one.

**CO:** Well you talk about...

**MW:** Well we were together a lot.

**CO:** You talk about your parents like they were really special. Like you really looked up to them.

**MW:** Yeah, yeah. We respected them. We tried not to give them no trouble. I don't think we give them any trouble. Wasn't nothing to do to get in trouble.

**CO:** Well you were working all the time!

**MW:** Yeah!

**CO:** Maybe that's the key!

**MW:** We always had plenty to eat for sure!

**CO:** And do you remember becoming a teenager. Was that anything special for you? Was it different in any way?

**MW:** Oh I mean, I reckon my young days as short, getting married at 16.

**CO:** Right but did your parents, were they concerned about you becoming a teenager?

**MW:** No.

**CO:** No? They didn't really have time...?

**MW:** They didn't show it to us if they did.

**CO:** Okay. And you don't recall disagreeing? It sounds like you and your mother didn't argue about anything....

**MW:** No I don't remember ever arguing. I don't remember ever having arguing. Never!

**CO:** Well um, you see that...

**MW:** She fed us and took care of us and give us medicine, and I'd just go through the back door spit it out and she wouldn't ever know it...

**CO:** And you lived to tell about it!

**MW:** Oh mercy, I reckon I did pretty good out there in the yard. Oh Lordy she didn't ever know it though.

**CO:** Do you remember when you were living at home---it sounds like you all worked a lot. I mean running...

**MW:** Well yeah we worked in the field you know and...that's what we worked in. But we had to pick them squash every morning, and they were on the ground. But we didn't do that too long.

**CO:** Do you remember, did your family ever talk about things going on in the world, or in the county or in the state.

**MW:** I don't remember about that part at all. I don't remember.

**CO:** Was there, in your family...let's see, how many brothers did you have? 1, 2...

**MW:** 3.

**CO:** 3 brothers. Did they get treated any differently from how the girls were treated?

**MW:** No.

**CO:** No? No. Seriously?

**MW:** No.

**CO:** Come on? Your parents? They didn't have special treatment because they were boys?

**MW:** Not that I know of? I don't remember too much about it! I don't remember too much about that time or age.

**CO:** So your brothers didn't get advantages? The boys didn't get advantages. Okay Alright.

**MW:** See one of them was, the first child was a boy. And then the last was, there was, two boys. There's one, the baby was a girl. Then a boy, next to her. I reckon there was a boy next to him.

**CO:** Now how many of your siblings are living?

**MW:** Just me and...

**CO:** Now well that's okay!

**MW:** Where's the other one!

Lynn: Adolphus!

**MW:** Adolphus! Yeah he lives in Houston, Texas. His name is Adolphus Taylor. His last name is Taylor. And he was one of the youngest ones, and I am one of the oldest ones. And we are the only two of us living.

**CO:** So some of your family is in Texas?

**MW:** That's him, Houston, Texas.

**CO:** But...how long since you've seen him?

**MW:** Huh?

**CO:** How long since you've seen him? Anne says June?

Lynn: Ward reunion!

Woman Voice: Ward Reunion in Graceville.

**MW:** What did you say?

**CO:** The reunion, the Ward reunion?

**MW:** Then a year then. That was in June. June.

**CO:** How long since...

**MW:** June of last year now.

**CO:** Yeah.

**MW:** At Ward's reunion in Graceville.

**CO:** Yeah. Have you traveled to Texas much yourself?

**MW:** Well these boys used to live there.

**CO:** Oh, okay so obviously...

**MW:** And my husband, boy did he believe in seeing them children, and I mean he would put in to go often, and I'd wasn't even fussing or nothing I'd just ease around, and not let him know you know. Put it off a little bit longer.

**CO:** It's a long trip.

**MW:** But I have drove from here to Houston, and I think it took something like 15 hours. And he'd have to go often, and he couldn't drive, and I have drove without even stopping to spend the night.

**CO:** Houston goes on forever doesn't it? It seems like it takes two days to get across Houston.

**MW:** But I don't know how many times we went you know. And now my brother's been there for several years, two brothers, both of my younger brothers live there! One of them died there. The other still lives there. Still lives in...

**CO:** What made them move to Texas?

**MW:** Well, that was, I think during the war. Both my brothers had to go to the...

**CO:** World War II?

**MW:** Yeah where the war was. And my youngest brother, he fought in the war. But my brother he worked loading and unloading ships. They came back without a scratch on them. And my brother I mean he was in the battle, and he'd come home without a scratch on him...

**CO:** That's the one that's alive?

**MW:** He's still living.

**CO:** I bet he has stories to tell. So the military is really what took them to Texas.

**MW:** Yeah, yeah.

**CO:** Okay. Alright.

**MW:** So when he came home there was nothing to do. I mean he couldn't get a job nowhere. And they, we had some people that lived there, and my brother lived there and all, so they went over....one of my youngest brother and his friend, as close as his brother, they went over there and they all got them a job! And they moved over there. They lived there ever since.

**CO:** Yeah, a lot of people have serious doubts about Texas. Obviously your family did not. I'm teasing you. I've spent some time in Texas recently and uh...

**MW:** I don't know Texas...

**CO:** It's hot! It's really hot. I didn't think any place was hotter than Valdosta, until I spent some time in Texas and it's just...

**MW:** Lord I wish I knew how many times we went. But he had to see them young'uns. He believed in them...

**CO:** And you wouldn't fly?

**MW:** I mean yeah we did. We flew to Annette and Jimmy's house when they lived in a new...

**Annette:** California.

**MW:** And what was that?

**Annette:** California.

**MW:** Huh?

**Annette:** California, ya'll always flew.

**MW:** California. We'd go. He had to go see them. I mean he's going.

Lynn: but mother...

**MW:** If he'd of had to walk I reckon he'd have started.



**Lynn** [MW's son]: When I was little you and Aunt Nettie Merl got me and my other cousins in the car and drove to Houston to see Adolphus when we were children, on highway 90. Before there were freeways. You drove.

**MW:** See there is 17 years between their age. And I don't know which one is the oldest and which one is the youngest.

**CO:** Well it's not whether...

**MW:** You can't tell if Lynn's the youngest or the oldest at all.

**CO:** I bet they could tell. We won't. That's okay. That's alright.

**MW:** They've never had a cross word [referring to her children, Annette and Lynn, who were there for the interview].

**CO:** That is just so amazing. It really is. Yeah. And do you know how old Anne is.

**MW:** How what?

**CO:** How old Anne is?

**MW:** I haven't...

**CO:** Have to get out the calculator?

Annette (Anne?): 76 so I'll be 77.

**MW:** How old?

**CO:** She's 76.

**MW:** 6?

**CO:** She'll be 76. Yeah. She'll be 77 next month.

**MW:** March. 10<sup>th</sup> of March. Great great great grand baby is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March. They come in...Grandpapa never did get to see the baby. They live in Texas. And they are supposed to come in March sometime.

**Annette:** They're not going to get to come until June.

**MW:** Oh Mercy.

**CO:** Do you wanna. I would like to ask you some questions about marriage and childhood and motherhood. Would you like to stop and move to your chair?

**MW:** No I'm fine.

**CO:** You sure?

**MW:** I'm fine. I can hear you good from here.

**CO:** Well I can sit right beside you if you....

**MW:** No no I'd rather be right here.

**CO:** Okay. I asked you already so you don't have to tell me anymore but, you didn't have any particular images as a young girl about romance and dating and that sort of thing?

**MW:** No. no.

**CO:** Well can you tell me how you met your husband?

**MW:** Yeah. They lived in Alabama. And they were farmers. And they moved to Graceville from Alabama to a big farm. I don't know how long they lived there, but KV was just little...small. And then they moved from that place to close to the New Hope Church where we always went, the church in our community. And they started going to our church.

**CO:** Oh. You met him at church. Okay. It was really not uncommon for teenagers to marry then, was it?

**MW:** No, yeah Lord they was marrying, and that was all they could do.

**CO:** Yeah well...

**MW:** One couple got married and they didn't have no money and they went down to church, and they wanted to get married, and so we was having church one night and they went around asking people for a nickel or dime or whatever you know, and so I think we give them a dime, and that was a

lot of money then, but when it got out to the judge to be married they had \$4.95. And then they got married!

**CO:** Just by going around the church! Wait that's a "loaves and fishes" story isn't it [thinking she said \$400 plus]?

**MW:**...They didn't have quite \$5?

**CO:** Well when you were...did you want children as a young girl?

**MW:** I didn't think about children. I mean I didn't...

**CO:** So how old were you when Annette was born?

**MW:** 3 years older.

**CO:** Oh okay.

**MW:** I think it was 3 years older.

**CO:** So you were married 3 years before you...

**MW:** I think so. Let's see so we married in 32 I believe and Annette was born in '35.

**CO:** Okay.

**MW:** That would make it what 3 years? Maybe that's I think...32 I think.

**CO:** You were married in 33, and you were born in 35?

**MW:** yeah.

**CO:** That's a pretty good memory. Um okay, so you didn't think you wanted three or four or five children?

**MW:** No I didn't think nothing.

**CO:** Did you work outside of the home after the children were born?

**MW:** I worked in that store 25 years.

**CO:** Okay that counts. Did you have any help at home?

**MW:** No. Yeah yeah. Let's see when did I get help? Was it when you was born Lynn? Yeah.

Man's voice: Yeah.

**MW:** But uh, up until Lynn was born, well ugh, I didn't have any help until he was born, and then they would come in in the morning, and they would do the washing and they would cook dinner. You know and keep the house and all of that stuff.

**CO:** And keep him? Did he...

**MW:** No, I don't know what we done with him. I don't know. All I know is when I went back to the store for a time.

**CO:** Well was it hard before you had help before you had Anne, and you had to take care of home and take care of...

**MW:** I don't remember there being...

**CO:** You don't remember it being hard? Wow. It was just a part of life that was like...

**MW:** I didn't stop. All my life I've been enjoying life. I still enjoy life. I mean...I don't set here and don't worry about nothing. I don't know how to worry. Now that I don't know how that sounds but I don't know how to worry.

**CO:** Well can I come over and just stay over until...

**MW:** How would I, what would I worry about?

**CO:** You know I could write a book about how to worry, and you could write a book about how not to.

**MW:** I am happy every day! I mean I just...I don't worry about it.

**CO:** So what do you attribute that to because most people are not like you. Most people worry a lot.

**MW:** I don't know why I don't worry. I never worried in my life.

**CO:** That's amazing. Never. So when people around you worry, do you try and...

**MW:** I don't reckon I am around people that are worriers. I don't know...you know what I do. I don't care who it is calls on that telephone, I don't care who I'm with, they gonna smile before they get away from me.

**CO:** I can see why.

**MW:** I'm going to make them laugh if I have to dig out an old funny thing out of my purse and read it to them. I'm going to get a...and if a stranger calls me on that telephone, before they hang up, they are going to laugh. I mean I don't care who I'm with, strangers, I don't care who it is. And when I go to the grocery store I give them a check I say, "Now if that isn't any good, I will give you another one just like it." And that'll bring a smile.

**CO:** I'm sure it does.

**MW:** That's the way...and I've got about 5 or six in my purse I wish you could read them. There it is, one of those things.

**CO:** Stories?

**MW:** No just little sentences. Crazy sentences. Make you laugh. I get in a group, I dig them things out and make them all laugh.

**CO:** And it works?

**MW:** Works.

**CO:** So one way not to worry for you is just to laugh. That's right. Okay.

**MW:** I'm going to make you smile. I don't care if it's somebody on the telephone or a stranger, if it's a man I don't care who it is, I'm gonna say something crazy...

**CO:** Well that's a good philosophy. You don't have a problem doing that; you manage to laugh...

**MW:** It's just natural.

**CO:** Okay. You've already told me so there's no need to ask it again, about your relationship with your children. It was good.

**MW:** yeah. No trouble whatsoever.

**CO:** And do you think that's because....did you all laugh a lot?

**MW:** I don't know, we was always too busy. They was in school you know and 27:14 inaudible 27:13 and then they went to college, and I was working in the store, but that was after they got grown. I was keeping house...we built a place. We live out there on the farm and then we had to come and feed those chickens and pick up eggs and feed cows, and hogs, and...so we got tired and rented the farm out and so KV built a two bedroom and a kitchen on the back of the store. We moved there and so then here come Lynn. And I said, we couldn't put a baby bed in there. Nothing. But I mean he weren't born then but we couldn't figure out, so we built another one, a three bedroom, and here come that little ole baby. And I said, what in the world are we going to do with that baby! I don't know what to do with him! 17 years and here's a little baby in there, in our home and me working every day in the store. But everything just worked out perfect.

**CO:** And so did Anne help take care of him?

**MW:** I don't know where Annette was, she might have been off...

Annie: I was a Senior in high school and left for college...

**MW:** And he grow up in the store. He hated it.

**CO:** Was it any different having, I know there's a big age difference so this is really hard to tell but, was it different having a boy from having a girl?

**MW:** No I don't remember.

**CO:** No, no no. So you lived, before we had our eyes open about gender, so it didn't exist if we didn't have a name for it. So you didn't have different rules for him as a boy than you had for Annie.

**MW:** He raised himself that's about it. But I mean he wasn't no trouble. He wasn't stubborn or mean or nothing like that. And uh...

Lynn: The roles did change based on their religious beliefs though. Anne was raised very very strict. Before they got more liberal, I could be in the band, I could go to ball games, and Annette couldn't do that. It was a change but not because of gender [rather, he suggests, because of a change in religious beliefs]. She might address that.

**MW:** I don't know what he said.

**CO:** Well I'll tell you. Do you mind if we talk about religion a little bit? Can we talk about that? Okay, we'll shift because you don't, you have such happy things about home life, and I think that your beliefs and your core values are probably at the heart of that. And my first question is not really, directly related to religion, I mean you wouldn't necessarily have to have a religious background to answer this but, has there been one core value, one belief that has shaped your life that has lasted throughout your life. A core value that has influenced how you are in this world?

**MW:** Mercy! I don't know how to say. Well see that's just been my life. My whole life yeah. My whole life has just been in church. And but I know some things that scared the daylights out of me and cause me to get saved when I was just a child. And I've been saved ever since.

**CO:** Okay.

**MW:** And they preached, every time they preached and said the Lord's coming you know, well I was scared to death. Because I was afraid I wasn't going to be ready, but that worried the daylights out of me. And then they would bring up the "mark of the beast." And I tried to find in my mind a place to hide, so I wouldn't have to take the mark you know. That was awful preaching. That was all... them preachers would preach. And there are children sitting there hearing that, and it scared the daylights out of me and every time there was an altar call, I was in the altar, crying, begging. You know because I meant I wanted to be ready. And I didn't want the Lord to come and me not be ready. I mean I prayed and I done everything and I've been saved ever since.

**CO:** So to start with it was about fear?

**MW:** Fear! Lord yeah they had me scared to death.

**CO:** Okay alright now what did that...Now you're not scared now, you are very happy...

**MW:** No, Lord I ain't scared now! If he's ready to come I'm ready to go.

**CO:** So when did that change?

**MW:** I don't know.

**CO:** When did you...You stopped being afraid and motivated by fear?

**MW:** It might have been changing pastors or something.

**CO:** Okay so you don't remember.

**MW:** No...

**CO:** ...when that was...Lynn and Anne think it happened between the time that Anne was growing up and the time Lynn was born.

**MW:** Well that was a long time.

Lynn: When I was growing up you let me go to ball games and start doing things Anne couldn't do.

**MW:** Anne couldn't do nothing.

Lynn: Why was it ya'll changed?

**MW:** We had a pastor, he was there about 7 or 8 years and I mean anything he preached, KV believed it. And he thought he had to do just what that preacher said. And Annette didn't ever give us no trouble about it. He didn't want her to go to a Halloween Carnival, and um...what are all them things Lynn, no movie...no movies, couldn't cut her hair, couldn't put her hair up in a permanent, and uh...

Annie: That preacher was responsible...

**MW:** And KV believed everything the preacher said. And I did everything behind KV's [back] and he didn't ever know that I did it. And I cut her hair, I



put the permanents in myself, because we didn't have nobody to put them in then...

**CO:** Did you feel bad about that?

**MW:** It nearly drove me crazy, I wanted to let her do it, and he didn't want her to do it. And everything that she did I had to do it with him not knowing it.

**CO:** Did you feel guilty...

**MW:** no I didn't feel guilty, I just wanted to do a little more. Yeah. And one time they said bring you a can of food now, when you come back to the school, and you can go to the movie or something, and well Annie carried her food and KV give her the understand that she wasn't going to that movie, or that theater, and she had to sit in that room by herself when the rest of them going. But I mean I didn't bless him out for that. Because it was just a continual thing.

**CO:** But it sounds like he was the one who was afraid. It sounds like you grew out of that fear.

\*\*\*\*\*19:32\*\*\*\*\*

**MW:** Well my mother weren't like that. All the neighborhood children, girls, had to have long hair. They couldn't cut their hair. My mother cut our hair, see, and they couldn't wear you know short sleeve dresses, or sleeveless dresses, and my mother she just did all that for us.

**CO:** Now what made her different?

**MW:** I don't know. I don't know.

**CO:** But she clearly was. And did she, was she...

**MW:** And some of them said, "I wish your mother was my mother, so I could cut my hair," and all that stuff. But uh, we made it, we made it.

**CO:** So did your mother go to the same church that those other mothers went to?

**MW:** Yeah.

**CO:** But she interpreted things differently.

**MW:** Yeah.

**CO:** And she was not...

**MW:** No she wasn't ever like the others about her children. They got to do a lot of things. But my husband he pretty well what he is, he believed that preacher said and he was, you know back then they called them clothes preachers.

**CO:** Closed preachers?

**MW:** Clothesline...you wear this and you wear that and don't you cut your hair and don't you paint your face. And all. Don't go to a theater don't you go to a Halloween Carnival nothing! Nothing!

**CO:** So was the next preacher...

**MW:** No that was the only one that I remember.

**CO:** So when did you get...how long was he there you said a minute ago...

**MW:** About 7 or 8 years.

**CO:** Yeah so was the next one...

**MW:** And KV in his best years was growing up. I don't know what years that was.

**CO:** Well that's okay, but was it after you all were married or was it...

**MW:** Yeah yeah, we was married. They spent the night with us. They lived in Slocomb, and that's not very far but they had a car. But they wouldn't go and come on Saturday night because we had church on Saturday night. And they spent the night with us. Nobody had no car in the country. Nobody. But they always...I got to cook supper for them and dinner Sunday and all that stuff for 7 or 8 years. But they had a little boy Annette's age and they always played together good.

**CO:** But now so do you remember when he left? Did things get better when that preacher left and went on?

**MW:** I can't remember who followed him after that.

**Annette:** It was mainly a denomination too. It was a denominational evolves. As soon as it got evolved after him you know still Lynn you know...it was different in those years.

**CO:** well it...can you tell me about your religious beliefs? Can you talk about them? You don't have to if you don't want to?

**MW:** Well I don't know what to tell you?

**CO:** It's just so much a part of who you are that it's almost telling a fish to talk about water? Is that what it is? It's just so...

**MW:** Well we believe in the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we believe in the baptism of the holy spirit. Speaking in tongues. We believe in speaking in tongues, we believe in healing, and you know and all that stuff and just a clean living, a clean life you know.

**CO:** Well can you tell me when you were....do you remember in your earlier life the church being or becoming integrated?

**MW:** It was never integrated.

**CO:** Never integrated?

**MW:** It's still not. I mean it's out in the country, and there's nobody anywhere to integrate it. That I know of.

**CO:** So racially it's not...

**MW:** It's just mostly people who have been there all of their lives, and their children you know all everybody growing up but we didn't have nothing like that back then.

**CO:** But the Pentecostal church is known for its openness to women in the pulpit and black, African Americans, worshiping together...

**MW:** Well I mean I guess there is no difference now in that church. But there's nobody.

**CO:** Now at the time...

**MW:** They don't want to leave town and come way up here in the country. I think that's the reason. I know they'd be welcome. They'd be welcome I think.

**CO:** Even in your day? Even when you were young would the church have...

**MW:** I didn't know about that then. I mean there weren't no trouble when...because you didn't mix them days. You didn't mix. You had to be in different schools. There were different schools.

**CO:** Right.

**MW:** I never went to integrated schools. I remember we had one friend close to us, a white, and he said I'll tell you right now, my boy's not going to go to school with them. But I mean...see they didn't know no better. They didn't know no better. But now, I mean one color is just like another. I don't even see color.

Lynn: You didn't back then either though mama. Mom never did.

**Annette:** Mom never saw color. Never in my whole life.

Lynn: Maggie was like a part of your family!

**Annette:** Maggie would bring black people in and sit at our table. There was never any racism in our family. Even when racism was a big, big thing.

**MW:** I had a black cook back then...sweet lady. Good religious lady. She kept after he was born. And she was an only child and her mother got sick and she had to quit after 11 years of working with us. But see they didn't come no better than her. I had two black women. I had two black women. She worked...the other one worked on Friday and died that night.

**CO:** Oh my. Do you remember when you were growing up. Do you remember the first time you became aware that it meant something to have white skin. Like it mattered if you had.

**MW:** No. I never thought of nothing like that. I never thought that. I don't remember ever thinking like that.

**CO:** You don't remember being conscious that people treated black people differently from how they treat white people.

**MW:** Well see my dad had a farm and there was a little town named Jacob down from Graceville and it was a colored neighborhood, I mean that's all that lived there, well my dad would go over when he would get his crop and get, he'd just go through the quarters and when the car got full them black folks well then he'd go back to the field and they'd work all day and then he'd carry them back home. But uh, that's the only thing we ever had with colored people. They gathered our crops a lot. He just said when I get my car full I just pull off and he'd get it full every day. When he was using them.

**CO:** But you don't personally yourself remember...

**MW:** I was scared of them as a bear when I was growing up. I mean I was scared of them. I don't know whether it was taught to me or manifested from my parents I know my parents didn't teach me to be scared.

**CO:** Well I'm just trying to understand how because many many people have had that experience. Where does that come from. Because your parents, you just said, didn't teach you. Do you remember, did you talk to your parents about that, about things here.

**MW:** No we didn't ever discuss stuff about that that I remember. But I was scared of them.

**CO:** Yeah many people white say that.

**MW:** I remember being scared of them that's about all. Growing up. But just...

**CO:** Well actually I would like to come back to that because I like to talk about what it means to be southern and of course that's at the heart of that but can we talk a little bit more about religion? You don't have to say...

**MW:** About what I believe or what?

**CO:** No you said enough about that. You don't have to tell any more about that. Do you...what was the most, what was, have you ever had anything that you would actually call a miracle happen in your life?

**MW:** Oh mercy. I mean I'd have to go back and think a lot about that.

**CO:** That's okay. That's alright.

**MW:** But I don't worry except...it seems like there is something I can't think now.

Lynn: In Wewa when you got sick?

**Annette:** The brain tumor in Wewa. It disappeared.

**MW:** I guess that's what it was. I was thinking it was something and that must have been what...

**CO:** Do you remember what happened?

**MW:** I can't remember now.

**CO:** that's okay.

**MW:** What is it about it?

**Annette:** she was diagnosed with a brain tumor and they had x-rays and took her to Columbus, Georgia to the hospital.

**MW:** Oh yeah I remember now. And they sent me to Columbus. Lord. Yeah. Lord yeah that was a miracle.

**CO:** That sounds like a miracle.

**Annette:** And then a doctor came out...

**MW:** They prayed, I don't know how many times I have been called up you know in the church to come up and let us pray for you and all of that stuff but I now can't get over mine and how come I was...

**CO:** That's okay.

**MW:** Oh yeah I went to the doctor there in Wewa. He sent me to Marianna and the man in Marianna sent me to Columbus. To a big hospital and all that stuff.

**CO:** And then when you got to Columbus did they tell you...

**MW:** Was that when they said it wasn't no one.

Older **Annette:** it was truly miraculous. And the doctors were just 8:09 inaudible8:06.

Lynn: She remembers when she was being prayed for. Mama, you used to tell us that you felt like something burst.

**Annette:** Yeah [talking to her mother] you felt a burning in your brain like when you were healed.

**MW:** I can't remember much.

**CO:** That's okay.

**Annette:** Yes they measured...

Lynn: Then they had x-rays right after then and it was completely gone.

**MW:** Yeah I was thinking there was something but I didn't remember.

Older **Annette:** ...went over there to witness this. My Daddy was scared to death because of the brain tumor.

**MW:** No it never bothered me anymore.

**CO:** So do you remember when it was?

Lynn: early 70s.

**Annette:** Yeah early 70's

**MW:** When?

Older **Annette:** Early 70's in Wewa.

**MW:** Yeah yeah 70's in Wewa

Lynn: 72. Or 3.

**MW:** Yeah I worked in the church. I've done everything but preach.

**CO:** You've done everything but preach?

**MW:** preach...

**CO:** You did preach?

**MW:** I've done everything but that.

**CO:** Everything but preach okay.

**MW:** But I mean, I worked at the church all of my born days, all of my life. If I been big enough.

**CO:** but how did you feel when you were younger about women preaching?

**MW:** I ain't never been. I don't know about that much. I remember some people being against it but I don't think my family was. No.

**CO:** Now I think I know how you are going to answer this but I'm going to ask you anyway, do you believe in an afterlife.

**MW:** Yeah I believe in an afterlife.

**CO:** What a silly question. What do you think...

**MW:** I hope there is an afterlife.

**CO:** What do you think it's going to be like...



**MW:** Oh Lord. I mean young'un if I was to tell you all I think about that, it'd be a long time, because the preachers today, I'm going to try to cut this short as much as I can, preachers preach like heaven is just like the United States. I mean I am going to write this myself. I am going to write this down. And I'm going to say now this is strictly a question that I want to know. I want somebody to explain heaven to me. Cause the ways these preachers talk, oh He's gonna put a crown on her head, oh he's gonna put a robe, he's gonna talk to us, and there's gonna be so many people in heaven that you couldn't even number them in my book. Well they talk like it's gonna be just like a little handful. Jesus you can talk to Jesus he's gonna put a crown on your head. They don't take any alternative to get around to half of them. They're gonna be trillions and billions too many. And a crazy praying where is he gonna get a place big enough to put that many people. This is just questions that I want to know. And then they say there's a lake of fire and he's gonna throw you in that lake of fire. I said I don't believe he's gonna throw nobody in a lake of fire. I said he made every person that was ever made, and you think he would take you and throw you in that fire? I believe you may get punished some, but I don't believe that he will ever have a lake of fire and throw you in that fire.

**CO:** Okay now you know that a lot of people in the....when did you come to believe that...

**MW:** Well that's the only thing that I believe. These are questions. And I said, are we all going to be the same color. Are we all going to talk the same language? Are we gonna have a mansion, are we going to have beds, and bathrooms, and showers, and combs, and mirrors. And what! What are they going to do with me! I never run out of time! Never never! And well...

**CO:** Well now Mrs. Monette was there a time in your life that you did believe that there was going to be a lake of fire?

**MW:** No.

**CO:** No? You've never believed?

**MW:** I just never believed that God could throw you in a lake of fire.

**CO:** Well so now tell me, when you were small and they...

**MW:** No, I might have when I was small I mean...

**CO:** You might have, okay. But when you were afraid of the beast that was going to put the mark of the beast on you...you were afraid then of a Hell, but at some point you stopped being scared. Do you remember when that was? Were you a teenager, were you an adult?

**MW:** An adult, I don't know...

**CO:** Is that what keeps you...

**MW:** But I have tried and tried to figure out, and another thing I was going to ask because you know the United States is big. And there's large stone mountains, stone houses, big, big buildings stuff that won't burn, and there's all the animals and there is this sea, ocean, lakes and rivers, and they are all full of live stock and stuff, well what in the world is going to happen to all of that water and all of that livestock? What about all the horses and all of these wild animals in the woods, down to a flea or an ant? And all that stuff and birds and buses and hospitals and schools and what is gonna become of all that stuff? How will he destroy it. And make room for heaven. There are going to be a lot of people in heaven. I think there'd be more in heaven than in hell. But I don't believe there will be a burning hell. I mean I don't know just what the Bible says about it but I don't understand it.

**CO:** you just don't believe it?

**MW:** I just that's just me.

**CO:** No I...

**MW:** There must be something that I cannot understand. That God would have made you and then put you in a lake of fire to burn for the rest of your...I mean there is no end to it. I can't see that, I can't see it.

**CO:** yeah but you, that's a strong sense of challenging something that many people bet their lives on that there is a hell and you don't believe it and it is interesting to me...

**MW:** But I don't know what they are going to do with the stuff that's on the earth!

**CO:** I know. I know.

**MW:** All of those stone mountains!

**CO:** Yeah...

**MW:** All that stuff...

**CO:** Well asking the right questions is really the key, and so I think it's incredible that you come up with all of these questions.

**MW:** Lord I could just keep naming them over and over...just things that I wonder about you know...I mean are we gonna...what kind of clothes are there gonna wear; will there be the same robes and shoes; and will there be roads and buggies and what are we gonna do for meat, and I mean it's...

Lynn: We would never talk about that around her, because you know how spiritual and all she was and we all kind of got to the same place and never mention it to her. And then she started asking all of these questions like "Whoa, where is this coming from!"

**CO:** Right well that's what I want to know! Where does this come from!

**MW:** But eternity I mean you just can't imagine never being an end to what is going to be the end of this...

## Part 2

**MW:** going to do for eternity. That's what I want to know and what are we going to do with this stuff that's on the earth.

**CO:** you think about that a lot.

**MW:** I try to figure it out sometimes but I can't.

**CO:** But obviously it doesn't really trouble you.

**MW:** No.

**CO:** You're not troubled about it.

**MW:** No, nothing don't trouble me.

**CO:** Well okay if nothing troubles you then it sounds like you are at peace in your heart...what gives you the greatest joy? What makes you feel joy?

**MW:** Oh mercy. I haven't ever thought about that. Just living. I mean so many things. So many things that you enjoy. And I don't know one thing that I could say. I don't know.

**CO:** Well that's a great answer.

**MW:** I don't know.

**CO:** Many things give you joy.

**MW:** I mean I enjoy health. And I enjoy company. I love people. I love everybody and I like to be with people that's jolly. I don't like groaners. I can't go with grumblers. Just nothing try it. They just yell and yell. I ain't gonna mess with that kind of people unless I can help them.

**CO:** yeah

**MW:** That's why I want to make them smile.

**CO:** Well that's probably why you don't hear many people grumbling because you make them smile.

**MW:** I won't let them grumble around me for long.

**CO:** Well I'm going to ask you something, you just said that you've got all these questions in your mind about the afterlife. Are you certain of anything? Are you certain of anything?

**MW:** About what the Bible teaches and all?

**CO:** No mam, just anything.

**MW:** Oh you mean in heaven?

**CO:** No mam, anything at all. Are you certain of anything?

**MW:** Certain, certain, certain...

**CO:** Absolutely sure.

**MW:** Lord I don't know I ain't never thought about it. Certain. That's sure that means sure...Oh I can't think of nothing now. Can ya'll think of anything? Any of yawl in there?

Lynn: No.

**MW:** I can't think. Certain...now ask that question again.

Lynn: Give an example to her...

**CO:** Well usually it depends on the person but people who had a difficult life, when I ask that question they say that they are certain of death, and that's the only thing that they are absolutely sure of, is that they will die.

**MW:** I don't know, I might not die.

**CO:** You might not die?

**MW:** No I might just go on to heaven when he comes.

**CO:** So you believe that there will be a rapture?

**MW:** I don't think everyone will have to die. When he comes back, there's gonna be a lot of lives that never died. And all them's dead gonna come up. And so...

**CO:** Sounds like you are sure of joy.

**MW:** Yeah.

**CO:** Sure of joy...

**MW:** Yeah, that's all I don't think about sorrow. I think about the good side.

**CO:** Alright. I think we are going to stop a minute okay... (Tape stops)  
(getting tap water)

**CO:** Do you mind talking a little bit about loss?

**MW:** About what?

**CO:** Loss, losing someone through death or...

**MW:** Oh loss...

**CO:** or separation or something...

**MW:** Okay.

**CO:** What has been the most difficult loss that you have experienced through death?

**MW:** They've all been bad.

**CO:** They've all been bad yeah.

**MW:** I reckon you say your husband, about the closest person you've ever had to ya.

**CO:** Right.

**MW:** your husband...but my mother died so young, three children left at home, but they were all big enough to take care of themselves and all that stuff.

Anne: She was 49 when she died.

**CO:** Did you learn things about grieving when you suffered those losses? Did you learn...

**MW:** No I didn't. I don't remember learning nothing. I mean right now I can't think.

**CO:** You just took the...yeah.

**MW:** Lost my husband, he was sick so long till... you know that makes a difference.

Anne: She could just accept things.

**CO:** So it kind of helped you prepare for it? Because he was ill. Okay.

**MW:** And he was a good Christian man and he knew his condition, and all that stuff. But he loved them young'uns, Lynn and Annette, lord have mercy. He worshipped them.

**CO:** In the experience of grief and loss, did those painful experiences have a silver lining to them? Did you learn something from grieving that turned it into joy?

**MW:** I don't remember nothing about that. Just see where we were when he...I can't even remember now. I reckon my minds getting disturbed now. Can't think.

**CO:** Have there been other losses besides the death that have been difficult, such as being separated from your family when Anne moved to California. Was that difficult?

**MW:** Well kind of the way it happened. See it wasn't just sudden. And they were ministers and evangelists you see. And they started off small and just got bigger and bigger.

**CO:** So how did you cope with...

**MW:** So we just went to go see them every time we could get there. My husband meant he was gonna go to see them young'uns if he had to go by plane or car or walk or whatever. He was gonna see them young'uns. I reckon he was worse than me, but he just thought he had to see them young'uns. Anne went to school down in Lakeland, Bible school, and I mean he'd go, and for a few days [after we got back] he'd be talking about going back and I'd just wouldn't even act like he was talking. I'd just go about my business. I wouldn't even talk about going or nothing. But boy just a few weeks you couldn't talk him out of it. Man he's going and we'd get on...and then there wasn't no 4 lane highways and after he left, I think I

don't know...but anyway the roads got crooked, you know and narrow and all that stuff and he'd just fly down here.

**CO:** Ms. Monette do you remember when you were a lot younger and you would see somebody with white hair, or not even white hair, do you remember a time when you were younger and you thought 40 was old? Remember when you were young and you would think that you would see somebody?

**MW:** I probably did. I mean I don't know for sure...

**Annette:** tell them what you thought when Lynn was born.

**MW:** What did I think?

**Annette:** You said that you didn't think you would live to see them graduate from high school.

**MW:** Said what?

**Annette:** You said you didn't think you would live to see him graduate from high school. You thought you were so old. Do you remember? You tell her that?

**MW:** I said that! See I can barely remember that. I thought I was...well see the way that happened, see the year Annette graduated Lynn was born.

**CO:** Now what year is that? What year? Anne when were you born?

**Anne:** 35, and he was born in '52.

**CO:** okay.

**Anne:** I'm 76 now and he's 59 and she's still living. He graduated from high school a long time ago!

**MW:** Annette finished school the year he was born. And I said, Lord have mercy, I have got to wait 6 years, and start a child back to school! I said



when he finishes high school I will be so old, I won't even get to go to graduation.

**CO:** Oh my goodness I can't believe that.

**MW:** Now I believe that, I believe that. I knew I had to wait [the first six years] and then I had to wait 12 [more] years for him to graduate. And I said, Lord I know I won't be able to go to his graduation I'm way too old.

**CO:** And now you're sitting here talking to me, and your 76 year old daughter is sitting there.

**MW:** Oh, Lord have mercy.

**CO:** It's amazing how our ideas about age change.

**MW:** When you're young especially. Do you remember when you began to realize that people were treating you differently because they were thinking about you as old? Do you remember that? No. Okay. Well let's see. What's been the most difficult part of aging?

**MW:** Lord I don't know. I don't know.

**CO:** What do you like about being the age you are now?

**MW:** I don't worry about it.

**CO:** You don't worry about it?

**MW:** Ask anybody, if I didn't know my age and somebody told me that I was that old I would say you don't know what you are talking about. I wouldn't believe it for nothing in the world; nobody would never make me believe that I was ever this old. If I didn't know for sure.

**CO:** That's a great point. How old do you feel in your mind and in your heart.

**MW:** I don't feel.

**CO:** Okay that's right.

**MW:** Well I don't even think about getting old.

**CO:** Well right.

**MW:** I don't sit around here and think uhhhhhhhhhhh. I just feed the birds watch the birds do anything I want to do, and live happy.

**CO:** Yeah yeah.

**MW:** I don't never worry.

**CO:** Do you recall a time in your life, a time that you think back to that is an age, if you could stay at one age that you would stay at that age?

**MW:** Oh mercy I don't know.

**CO:** No okay that's okay. Alright. You've traveled, well other than going to visit your children, have you traveled much?

**MW:** Lord let me think...

**Annette:** She's been to...

**MW:** Can you help me Lynn...

**Annette:** She's been to the Holy Land; Egypt...

**MW:** Oh yeah I've been, went three trips overseas. Three trips. Three different trips. Overseas. We went about four or five countries twice. And the last time we went to Jerusalem. We went to Israel. And all them countries...

**Annette:** She loved to travel. And she always loved going on trips. I mean we always went on vacations, covered the states....

**MW:** We've always went down to big lakes around, course I was, what's the name of this town, lot of pretty lakes. Camp out.

**Annette:** We camped on the ground with quilts and things...

**MW:** Yeah! We went swimming. We swam in the middle, and people would ski and I mean we lived it up when we was young. We lived!

**Annette:** She was a goer and an active and a lover of life. Fully.

**CO:** Yeah it sounds like it.

**MW:** But some of the church people you know we would get together and we would go down there and spend the night and just have the biggest time!

**CO:** Camping?

**MW:** Camping. We camped a many, many, many a time up on them lakes.

**CO:** Well one reason why I was interested in travel is to find out how would you explain to somebody outside this country how different the South is from the rest of the country. Do you ever think about that? No? Okay. Alright. So to be a southerner has not ever really meant anything to you?

**MW:** No.

**CO:** No okay. Good for you.

**MW:** I'm glad I'm a southerner.

**CO:** You are glad you are southern?

**MW:** I am glad I like where I am. And I'm happy.

**CO:** What does that mean to you? What does it mean to you to...you just said you were glad to be southern, what is a southerner, what does it mean to be a southerner? I mean...

**MW:** More freedom for one thing. We have a lot of freedom.

**CO:** In the south?

**MW:** yeah!

**CO:** you think so?

**MW:** Yeah as far as I know now! Everybody might not can say that. But I do have my freedom.

**CO:** But you like the identity that southerners have?

**MW:** Yeah.

**CO:** Alright.

**MW:** It's all I know.

**CO:** Right, right. But most of us that were born and grew up here, unless you travel a lot or unless you live outside of the region it is all we know. So I guess it wouldn't go...One reason the south is so thought of ...

**MW:** I was going to go see when the boys left...

**CO:** Right at 3:30 yeah...One reason people think of the south as different is because of all the troubled race relations, but it sounds like you didn't experience that.

**MW:** People didn't know no better.

**CO:** yeah of course.

**MW:** We didn't know no better.

**CO:** But it sounds like your family had different understanding of what it meant to be white or black. They didn't have the kind of deep seated prejudice that a lot of people did...

**MW:** they didn't ever talk about us none, about things like that....as far as I knew.

**Anne:** a lot of daddy's customers were half black half white. But probably more white but he was always...and he would go visit them at their homes and he would I mean....

**CO:** But where, Anne, do you think that came from?

**Anne:** I don't know, and then...

**MW:** Annette talk up so I can hear what you're saying now...

**CO:** I am asking her about the family's...

**MW:** I mean I can understand what she says but I wasn't understanding any...

**CO:** She's talking about how your family, your relationships with blacks when she was growing up...

**MW:** Yeah I had...

**Anne:** I never felt that fear...even though I never went to school with them or to church with them. But we were close to blacks, and I love to go to this one black couple's home, and we would just sit on their porch and visit.

**CO:** But even I mean Anne, even in your generation, that was unusual. We don't have to go back as far as your mother...

**Anne:** Well see our church was the first to integrate in the city with Jimmy as the pastor and then Anne, you know how he has never had em. And we've always got in trouble about it. Always. But it's just been a basic core of our very being. But my dad was so so...he loved blacks.

**CO:** I mean the thing we try to figure out is what it is that makes some people love or and/or accept and or question the systems in place and...

**Anne:** Well somehow or another like mother has come into this "no lake of fire stuff" on her own. I mean that's an evolution...you know what I'm saying. That's an evolution. Well my Daddy --- Stan, preaches about him like, Stan calls him a "Kingdom Man" way ahead of his time out of the box because he just loved people. He accepted all people and where that came from I don't know.

**CO:** Because at some point he was really influenced by this preacher but he broke out of that...yeah...

**MW:** But he didn't have a family and when he seen we got a different set up....yeah.

**CO:** And of course that could have very well have been a big influence. Because it sounds like her family, Ms. Monnet's family was more open. He went more for our family than he did his own family.

**Anne:** Her daddy was one of the most wonderful people as far as personality, like I say, I never heard Papa Taylor raise his voice, a loving loving man. And my Daddy was raised by tougher personalities. Strong-willed personalities, and none of them were church, but my daddy was always different.

**MW:** Well he became a Christian when he was just a young boy.

**Anne:** So it's really amazing.

**CO:** But you know you crossed that racial etiquette line. Anne is talking about how, was it in your mother's household where you would invite blacks in the community in to eat at the table?

**Anne:** Yeah my daddy would take them back there and mother cooked all the time.

**CO:** But you know that was a big taboo...

**Anne:** Oh yeah absolutely.

**CO:** And that's almost universal. Even people who had a tolerance that was unusual, nonetheless would not violate that taboo, so how it is that you all were open and accepting and? So you never did...did you realize you were violating a taboo? I mean did your realize that that was not proper etiquette in elsewhere in the region? You did?

**Anne:** remember when you brought Sanders back there and he wanted you to feed Sanders when you'd cook a good meal?

**MW:** Yeah I fed him a lot of times and carried him home. I'd fix him oyster stews all the time. He liked my oyster stews.

**Anne:** See like mother she took care of...there was two week revivals in our church. Okay she kept every evangelist those two weeks, cooked for 'em, they never gave her a penny. Me and her cleaned the church and never got a thank you. Nobody was hired to clean the church she always did it. She assumed responsibility for the entire church.

**MW:** I remember...

**Anne:** She was the choir leader, the Sunday school teacher, the WM leader, the Sunday school teacher...

**MW:** The secretary...

**Anne:** Like she said, she did everything but preach. She was the secretary as long as...

**MW:** 20 years I think...

**Anne:** That's when she finally left but she always assumed responsibility with, I mean could you imagine keeping people two weeks at a time and like she kept the pasture every Saturday night.

**MW:** No current, I mean a lot of the time we didn't have no current...

**Anne:** But I mean...

**MW:** But nobody else didn't have none.

**Anne:** she didn't look at it as a burden.

**MW:** The preacher he'd come you know a pastor and we would have the evangelist there and say all you laters come and say you're going to take care of the preacher. (makes complaining noise). I say I'll take 'em.

**Anne:** That exposed me to people from all over the nation who came as evangelists and even the man that married me was one that would come and stay in our home. So I was exposed to these variety of personalities of people from all over the north, the west, because in the Assemblies of God, evangelism was big. Well this enriched my life greatly that she did this.

**MW:** And we always enjoyed 'em.

**Anne:** Yeah we just enjoyed 'em.

**MW:** And sometimes the man you know they'd come in the kitchen and help me. And he'd come in one time and we had a bunch of rabbits, white rabbits. He wanted one of them things to eat so bad. I said, go ahead and kill him and cook him, so he got him and cooked him. And our pastor, his

wife was curious, curious, about her. He went and stayed with us every Saturday night. They couldn't drive back to Slocomb just a couple of miles so they stayed with us.

**CO:** now Ms. Monette why do you think you were so willing to do all that and not complain?

**MW:** I don't know. I don't know.

**CO:** Well I wish you did. I wish you could tell me...

**MW:** I don't know, I worked all my life.

**CO:** Well I can see that.

**MW:** And I done everything in the church that anybody can do. And about 20 years secretary, I got my records in there.

**CO:** And it sounds like you didn't get paid for a lot of that.

**Anne:** None of it.

**MW:** I ain't never get no pay.

**Anne:** She never...I remember...

**MW:** How come he stopped...well we lived out there in the country closer to New Hope Church, and then we built the rooms on the store. Well the church there we could walk across a road and be at the Assembly of God Church. And then we'd drive about 3 or 4 miles down a country road to get to New Hope. And we decided, you know we would start to going to that church in town. And so...

**CO:** Did you still work as hard? When you moved to the church in town?

**MW:** Did I still what?

**CO:** Did you still work as hard when you moved to the church in town.

**MW:** Well we had the store.

**Anne:** And Daddy was sick and she ran it.



**MW:** Yeah I ran the store yeah.

**Anne:** And it was general merchandise, fertilizer, seed, gasoline, clothes, shoes. She ran that store when my daddy got sick. Then she ran that motel in Wewahitchka. Cleaned the rooms, rented the rooms, rented the boats.

**MW:** No, KV rented the boats and I rented rooms.

**Anne:** I think she gave so much to the Universe that's why she is so filled with joy she's never felt lonely in these 25 years, she has never had lack in her spirit. Well I think it's because she gave to the Universe her entire life. Like my daddy would bring half the church home with him after church, every Sunday night. She would have to fix for them.

**MW:** The Baptist church here in town is the biggest church in town, he'd have them come and go on in and eat with us and he'd go on in and eat with us.

**Anne:** anybody who came in the store, a salesman, come on in and eat with us.

**MW:** I would never know...but I had a cook then that helped me.

**CO:** So you had somebody to help you cook.

**MW:** Part of the time...after Lynn was born...

**Anne:** Not when I was young...

**MW:** Just when Anna was born...I couldn't do it.

**CO:** Did you like to cook?

**MW:** Well I didn't even think about it. It's just natural. It just comes naturally.

**Anne:** A great cook. She cooked. We never had, we lived in a grocery store, so we never had to buy groceries. We never had to buy gas in our life. I mean everything was right there. We had no needs.

**MW:** We had a man that went from the gulf to Panama City to dentist and every time he went, he went pretty often, he'd come on back there anytime and go on in and eat dinner with us.

**Anne:** Everybody moved down there during lunch time.

**MW:** KV would make them, just about it.

**Anne:** Full blown meal. Breakfast homemade biscuits, sausage and syrup, and she would fix mine, she would do the biscuit and put the meat in it and pour the syrup I mean, it was a phenomenal way to live that we lived.

**CO:** It's the doing it with no resentment no bitterness no expectations...

Anne: I never heard her complain about anything.

**MW:** If you expect nothing, we just lived happy; went to church every time the doors opened. And Lynn was born on Sunday morning at about six o'clock, Saturday afternoon I found out through one of the women that goes to church there if anybody cleaned the church and she said she hadn't cleaned it. Well anyway it hadn't been cleaned so I asked her to go with me and I went, late in the afternoon Saturday and cleaned that church and he was born the next morning. It wouldn't have been done if I hadn't of done it.

**CO:** Well that's probably why he's such an easy going guy. Well I'll tell you what I'm not going to ask all of these questions about history, I'm just going to get to, this is my last section can I just ask you a few wrap up questions?

**MW:** Yeah.

**CO:** I know that some of these questions sound like I've asked them already but just think about it, what period of your life was the happiest?

**MW:** Lord have mercy...I just I don't know. Must have been when we got up and we got older, I don't know what, I don't know.

**CO:** Well was it?

**MW:** Well I guess, I don't know, it was probably when I was working in the church, and he was one of the deacons, and I think that was when I was, I taught juniors and teens, well I done everything you could do in the church , but I think them was about the best years. And KV was the deacon and he taught he taught Sunday school and that Sunday school class and I taught the juniors and part of the time I taught the teens. I had children's church and you know.

**CO:** So you were busy.

**MW:** I led the choir part time and Annette played and I led the singing. And you know how a choir is when you have one person lead the singing, and anybody wanted to could come up and sing. That was most of my life in the church.

**CO:** So was that before Lynn was born?

**MW:** Yeah yeah a long time. Long time before. She just learned to play the piano good and I led the singing. Just I was busy busy busy enjoying everything I did. Keeping the preacher and working the in church cleaning the church and...

**CO:** So my next question is going to be a waste of time because I was going to ask you if that was the happiest time what was the unhappiest time but doesn't sound like you've had one.

**MW:** Saddest...happiest time...saddest time. Lord I can't place the saddest time. I just don't know...

**CO:** Well it's alright.

**MW:** We always had a good life and a good, pretty good houses to live in.

**CO:** So when your husband died was that a rough year for you? The year...

**MW:** Well I had several rough years with him...you know sad. I had to take all the responsibility of the store before he died. He couldn't his mind wasn't working. He kept his books, but then he couldn't keep the books,

and I had to take all of that over and he didn't, he'd stay in the house till the middle of the afternoon and I had the full responsibility, and he would go to the store and get it open and go get the restaurant set and while I work in the store and he would sit up there and he would come up and say why do I have to buy the groceries and all that stuff and that was about my worst time I reckon...

**CO:** So that was a little bit too much work.

**MW:** It was more than I should have had to done. That was rough. Yeah. Just oh...probably managing that store because of his illness. Yeah. But of course we had help in there, but still they don't mess about that business. I had to do the buying and...we usually had a bout two hands to help us. Besides us two.

**CO:** Were your workers usually good? Were they good workers?

**MW:** Yeah always, well we had a lot of high school children but we had, we usually had a market man take care of the meats and stuff. He didn't do nothing but just work in the market.

**CO:** Can you think of three turning points in your life? Times that have changed so...I mean they can be obvious times like getting married, when Anne was born, when Lynn was born, just other times that were dramatically, that dramatically altered your life. Can you think of three?

**MW:** I suspect it's about them times when Brother ????? was our pastor. And we would go spend the night on the lake and a lot of them church people, not a lot but probably 2 or 3 families, and we would all go spend the night down here on the lake, and all that stuff, sleep out under the stars and in the tent...

**CO:** So this is when Anne was little?

**Anne:** No no no no?

**MW:** Was you married then or?

**Anne:** No all my growing up through...

**MW:** But I mean it run over to, we did that some in Lynn's life, because KV bought him a good size boat and learned how to ski.

**Anne:** Yeah he had a tent.

**MW:** That was about our best lifetime during that time. We were camping out with all those church people, and they were just great. Good church and good schools and all that stuff. We had the best time I don't know what years....

**CO:** Nowhere was that? Graceville?

**Anne:** In our home church in the country.

**CO:** Okay. Alright.

**Anne:** Where I got married. I got married in that church, and then they changed it to the found church.

**CO:** If you could, have you made mistakes in your life?

**MW:** I probably have. I don't reckon I've ever thought of it. Mistakes...mistakes...

**CO:** Mistakes yeah....

**MW:** Lord I don't know. I don't know now.

**CO:** Well if you could live your life over again, would you do anything differently?

**MW:** I expect I would, but I don't know...what would I do different?

**Anne:** You wouldn't change nothing would you?

**MW:** We just had a good life. I reckon I don't know. Right now I'm blank.

**CO:** Well that's okay. What do you consider the most valuable lesson you've learned in life?

**MW:** Oh mercy. That's another one...what in the world would I think? 95 years in the time...I reckon when I was working in the church and farming all at the same time.

**CO:** So in those years you learned how to...

**MW:** I worked in the fields....and we was regular in church and I did a lot of things in church. I was the lady's leader WM leader and Sunday school teacher, and song leader and just I reckon that would be about my best time.

**CO:** Okay.

**MW:** When Annette was young, just starting out on the piano.

**CO:** Has there been a single individual who has had the most influence on your life? Who in your life has been the biggest influence on you?

**MW:** Mercy, mercy. I might have to think about that a long time. Who was the most influence....Lord I can't think right now. No I can't think.

**CO:** That's okay.

**MW:** Um I could think later but right now Lord have mercy that's....

**CO:** What are you proudest of today in your life?

**MW:** Oh lord that's another hard one...I am proud everything is as it is.

**CO:** Well okay alright.

**MW:** I'm thankful for everything. For everything. I mean I don't know nothing. I mean I would really would change or would like to change I mean really. Ever in my family, and my family is Christians, and church goes and ministers. Three ministers in the family right now, and there's four children there is one just reached 13, and the rest all of them is younger, and I think that would be the best thing is just my immediate family. All Christians, all working for the lord, and singers and musicians, you know just about every one of them is musicians. And...they all played

in the church and two grandsons, are preaching the son in law preaching, and pastors they pastors, two big churches.

**CO:** Oh I know....

**MW:** That's I guess that would be the happiest thing about my life is the family yeah. The condition of the family.

**CO:** And how would you like to be remembered? When you are not here anymore, how would you like to be remembered?

**MW:** Lord that is another hard one. She was just a good person one thing. Oh lord I don't know...

**CO:** That's okay that's a legacy.

**MW:** What would you say Annette?

**Nannette:** Well you were a good person, a happy person, you were a joyous person, a giving person...

**MW:** Well that's all I know. I was happy and enjoyed life.

**Nannette:** Happy person...

**MW:** And enjoyed life....

**Nannette:** No worries. She rolls with anything, death. No matter what. She just...and she's always been that way.

**CO:** I'm going to ask you one more now and this one is hard so we can let Anne answer it okay. What would you title your life story? What would the title be?

**MW:** Oh the title...

**CO:** Yes mam, the title, "Monette Ward: . . . ." What would the rest of the title be?

**Anne:** Like if you wrote a book about yourself what would you want the title to be?

**MW:** Oh Jesus I need to think about that. That's something special. That is something special.

**CO:** Ms. Monette that gives everyone a hard time. That's a hard question.

**MW:** That is!

**CO:** I know.

**MW:** Now ask the question again?

**CO:** That's right. You're going to write the story of your life in a book what would you title the book.

**MW:** OH what would I title the book about my life. Lord have mercy I never have put a title on nothing.

**CO:** It's hard.

**MW:** Can you think of anything?

**Anne:** Yeah immediately I knew what I would...

**MW:** Well say it!

**Anne:** Be Happy!

**MW:** Well it seems like it needs to be something more.

**Anne:** No that's you ...just be happy.

**MW:** Seems like it ought to have a deeper meaning or something.

**Anne:** That is very deep...

**MW:** More I don't know what you call it...higher up in education.

**Anne:** no don't try to make it difficult. If you can't think of something.

**MW:** Let's see now...that would be the name the name of the book. Live a good happy life and no worry. Is that...how does that sound?

**CO:** That's just fine. That's a perfect title.



**MW:** Can you remember that?

**CO:** Yes mam that's a perfect title. I don't need to remember it we've got it on tape. Yeah.

**Anne:** I created a short title but hers is better.

**CO:** Well yeah. Not everybody gets to title their life. So um yeah.

**MW:** Yeah just enjoy life. Be happy and enjoy life.

**CO:** Well I think I'm going to turn my recorder off, and let you get by that's not quite all of the questions I usually ask.

**MW:** Well you can ask them...

**CO:** Well that's alright. No it's alright because it's kind of out of order but this is I think we got...