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West Side Oral Narrative Project

Transcribing Discourse and Diversity in  
Saratoga Springs, New York

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April 2021

### **Anthony, Mabel “Biddie”. 1999. “An Oral Narrative Recorded by Courtney Reid.” West Side Oral Narrative Project: Transcribing Discourse and Diversity in Saratoga Springs, New York, Annotated Transcript No. 5, April 28, 2021**

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Anthony, Mabel “Biddie”. 1999. “An Oral Narrative Recorded by Courtney Reid.” *West Side Oral Narrative Project: Transcribing Discourse and Diversity in Saratoga Springs, New York*, Annotated Transcript No. 5, April 28, 2021, edited by Michael C. Ennis-McMillan, Elijah McKee, and Mary Ann Cardillo Fitzgerald. Saratoga Springs, NY: Scribner Library, Skidmore College.

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***WEST SIDE ORAL NARRATIVE PROJECT:  
TRANSCRIBING DISCOURSE AND DIVERSITY  
IN SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK***

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**Mable “Biddie” Anthony**

**An Oral Narrative Recorded by Courtney Reid**

**May 18, 1999**

***Overview***

Mable “Biddie” Anthony (1916-2015) moved from Pittsburgh to Saratoga Springs in 1940, when her husband, Marvin “Butch” Anthony began managing the Hill Top Inn on Congress Street. Biddie poignantly reflects on sweeping changes she saw in the city over her lifetime. She recounts her first impressions of Saratoga’s winters, the summer crowds, and how she learned about the city’s sporting district, which included musical entertainment, bars and restaurants, dancing, gambling, and brothels. From her experiences of living and working on Congress Street, Biddie creates a mental map of homes and businesses, including Hattie’s Chicken Shack, the Golden Grill, and Jack’s Harlem Club. She made many friends while holding numerous jobs, including writing numbers, bartending, waitressing, cooking, and housekeeping for different families. She maps out her family’s roots in Virginia and Pennsylvania and shares her views on identifying as a Black woman and a Blackfoot Indian. She also discusses her immediate family, including her daughters, Suzanne and Michelle. [*Interview duration: 01:03:02*]

***Key words:*** Congress Street, sporting district, Black-owned businesses, Black history, gambling, sex work, food habits

***Editors***

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*PREFACE TO THE ANNOTATED TRANSCRIPTS*

**West Side Oral Narrative Project (WSONP):  
Transcribing Discourse and Diversity in Saratoga Springs, New York**

*You have to visualize these places 'cause it's long gone now.*  
—Edward Smith oral narrative, May 1, 1999

The West Side Oral Narrative Project (WSONP) began in 1998 as a community volunteer initiative to document oral heritage shared by long-term residents of neighborhoods on the west side of Saratoga Springs, New York. Recorded on tape cassettes, the interviews of over 60 residents encompass experiences of ethnically diverse, working-class, and immigrant families living on the city's West Side. Covering events since the early 1900s, the narratives reveal how Irish immigrants, African-American migrants from the South, and Italian immigrants contributed to the social and economic development of the City of Saratoga Springs.

Interviewees comment on a wide range of community activities, including family life, religious celebrations, schools, railroad transportation, the tourist industry, family-run restaurants and other businesses, sports and games, gardening and cooking, gambling, and entertainment in a sporting or red-light district. Residents also comment on the decline of the West Side due to economic downturns, the departure of younger generations, and the displacement of residents due to Urban Renewal and community development. The collection of audio recordings represents a delightful way to imagine the experiences of hard-working and creative families from the African-American neighborhood of Congress Street, and the Irish-American and Italian-American neighborhood nicknamed Dublin that was concentrated along Beekman Street.

Since 2011, faculty and students from the Department of Anthropology at Skidmore College have collaborated with the WSONP to help preserve and present local heritage. We digitized the original set of cassette tape recordings and created oral history transcripts for the Saratoga Springs Public Library. The WSONP collection of audio recordings, oral history transcripts, documents, and memorabilia are available at the library's Saratoga Room. Audio recordings and oral history transcripts are also available online: [https://www.sspl.org/research/local\\_history/](https://www.sspl.org/research/local_history/).

With guidance from the Lucy Scribner Library at Skidmore College, anthropology faculty and students created this series of annotated transcripts titled *West Side Oral Narrative Project: Transcribing Discourse and Diversity*. An accompanying *Transcription Style Guide* describes editorial considerations for producing the annotated transcripts. The series and style guide allow faculty and students to develop new projects and broadly share local culture and heritage.

We encourage others to accept Edward Smith's invitation to visualize people and activities that have long gone. The voices, stories, and laughter within each interview connect us with special people who created a meaningful, and often overlooked, part of Saratoga Springs heritage.

*Professor Michael C. Ennis-McMillan*  
*Department of Anthropology, Skidmore College*  
*November 9, 2020*

**Mable “Biddie” Anthony**  
**An Oral Narrative Recorded by Courtney Reid**  
**May 18, 1999**

COURTNEY: West Side Oral History Project, and I’m speaking with Mabel Anthony in her home on?

BIDDIE: Grand.

COURTNEY: Grand Avenue, and, um, she is also known as “Biddie.”

BIDDIE: I was gonna say ’cause, you’d be surprised the people that know me in town wouldn’t know who Mabel Anthony is.<sup>1</sup>

COURTNEY: So, maybe we could start, Biddie, a little bit talking about, um . . . when you came to Saratoga or when your family came to Saratoga and just kind of—

BIDDIE: Well, my husband came first. He was living in New York, and I was in Pittsburgh because they always told you New York was an awful place. And I wadn’t livin’ in New York. So, he—Mr. Vodery who was a music arranger for the Cotton Club, and that’s where my husband worked at, the Cotton Club.<sup>2</sup>

And then, he came up here at—Mrs. Baker was a . . . well, she wasn’t born in Saratoga, but she was an old Saratogian who had the Hayden House [Hotel] on Congress Street. And she owned, it was called the Stop Off. That was a bar and grill.

*[pause in recording]*

And she owned the Stop Off, which is where Burgas’s Inn is now.<sup>3</sup>

And she died in ’39. Mr. Vodery was her friend, and all the property was left to him. And he changed the name to The Hill Top. That was the bar. Now, they had wonderful cooks. They were known for the best fried chicken, at that time, in Saratoga. That’s before Hattie’s time.

And they had Chinese food. They had Chinese food over at the Hayden House. And that’s how I came here. My husband worked at the Cotton Club, and when Mr. Vodery took over, he brought him up here as the manager. And that’s how I got to Saratoga, and—

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<sup>1</sup> Mable Clara “Biddie” Shelton Anthony, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1916-2015. Burke & Sons Funeral Home. Online: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/mable-clara-biddie-shelton-anthony-obituary?pid=175393063>

<sup>2</sup> Will Vodery owned the Hill Top Inn. For biographical information on Will Vodery, a Black musician, see Lefferts, Peter M. 2016. "Chronology and Itinerary of the Career of Will Vodery: Materials for a Biography". Faculty Publications: School of Music. 62. Online: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/musicfacpub/62>

<sup>3</sup> The address was 102 Congress Street.

COURTNEY: How old were you?

BIDDIE: Huh, let me see, 1916, 1940. I was 23, I think. No. Well, one thing, 23. I only came for two weeks, and I came in the wintertime. And when I got off the train, up at the station, I said, "Oh my God." I never seen that much snow in my life. And, I was ready to get on it and go on back home [COURTNEY: *laughs*], because I thought Saratoga was like a suburb of New York.

And when I got on that train the next morning, and—I got, I came by Pennsylvania, so I got off in New York, and I had to stay there till nine o'clock. And I had friends who had used to live in Pittsburgh, and they took me to the station to get the train. And we rode.

And when the—oh, it was just like a day like today, in New York. And when we got to Albany—course they changed conductors. And this man got on here dressed up in a . . . heavy coat with a chinchilla collar I said, "Oh my God! Where am I going?" And that's how I got to Saratoga.

And this is God's country. I love it. Now, I go home every year, sometimes twice a year, but I'm ready to come back. But of course, Saratoga has changed since I was here—came also. But it's lovely.

COURTNEY: Tell me more about your husband's job. I mean, in The, The Hill Top?

BIDDIE: It was The Hill Top then. He was the manager and bartender. He tended bar and—'cause that's—he was a waiter in New Y— at the Cotton Club. Then after—well, we were there quite a few years. Then during the war, uh, he was so afraid he was gonna have to go to the Army, he went to work at the GE. And he worked down there for years—but I knew he wasn't going because he had flat feet. They weren't flat feet that arches fell, he was born with 'em. Well, when you're in the Army and you've got flat feet, they don't want you 'cause they do a lot of marching. So he was classed as whatever the last thing was, and he worked at the GE.

And . . . then what happened in . . . lemme see, and then they know about Jack's Harlem Club?

COURTNEY: Tell me about Jack's Harlem Club. Did you go there?

BIDDIE: Oh yeah! But, when I first—in 1940—see, Jack's Harlem Club was, he had owned the house on Congress Street, 72. And the Harlem Club—well, of course, then they just called it Jack's. But Patsy DeVivo had a pool room on the corner of Cowen and Congress Street. And upstairs was a big . . . well, it was like a hall. It was huge. And that's where Jack's Harlem Club was. He only opened in the summer. It was up there. He had a doorman, canopy. And then you'd come down the street and watch the people that went there: Bing Crosby, Mae West, *all* stars. 'Cause at that time, all the stars would be here in August.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For more on these memories, see Matt Leon, "Woman recalls thrill of '40s summers in Spa City," *The Saratogian*, March 12, 2004. Online: [https://www.saratogian.com/news/woman-recalls-thrill-of-40s-summer-in-spa-city/article\\_17447e98-2b28-5a2e-8624-3c87f50e9b2f.html](https://www.saratogian.com/news/woman-recalls-thrill-of-40s-summer-in-spa-city/article_17447e98-2b28-5a2e-8624-3c87f50e9b2f.html)

And he had—the reason it was called the Harlem Club because Ed Smalls have a, a club in New York on Seventh Avenue, I think, anyhow, or St. Nicholas, one or the other. And which he was known all over the country for his, and he had a floor show which lot of 'em were Cotton Club entertainers where he—they always closed in the summer. So Jack had all the entertainers from New York up here.

And then, across the street, there was a place called the Blind Pig. That's the afterhours spot. They sold whiskey. They sold barbecue, spareribs, fried chicken, potato salad . . . pig feet . . . everything. Now, let me tell you. Now, if you wanted to meet all the celebrities, all you had to do after three o'clock, go to the Blind Pig 'cause they was all in there. And then they have, it was a girl who used to wait at Jack's. Course she was known all over, and her name was Ethel Frey. But they, she used to call herself Ethel Regina Frey. And she also was a dancer and the—well . . .

And of course there was Fallick's Baker shop on, ah, on Cowen Street<sup>5</sup>, who was there for years and years and years.

COURTNEY: And what kind of shop was that?

BIDDIE: A baker shop. It was the Jewish baker shop.

COURTNEY: Uh huh.

BIDDIE: And you used to go in there, in two and three o'clock in the morning and get the hot rolls right out da oven. Let me see. What else do I need to—you need to know? I can't . . .

COURTNEY: Did you go into the Blind Pig?

BIDDIE: Heck yeah! In fact, in late years, I worked in there. As, I, I tended bar for him.

COURTNEY: You were a bartender?

BIDDIE: Yeah, well I used to work in Goldie's and Jimmy's.

COURTNEY: As a bartender?

BIDDIE: Yeah. But I was, I was called—I called myself the travelin' barmaid.

COURTNEY: Oh.

BIDDIE: And—

COURTNEY: It wasn't your husband that sang?

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<sup>5</sup> Fallick's Bakery shop was located at the corner of Cowen Street and Congress Street.

BIDDIE: No, no. Uh . . . what did she tell me? The Clantic—the Chanticleers? Bill Heard? He was the singer. Now, Mr. Vod[ery]—see, all these—and, course The Hill Top had entertainment. Bill Heard was a Chanticleer. He, they sang in, at the Cotton Club. And The Three Yams was three young fellas from Virginia who danced and sang. And they could dance. And Toni worked at the Cotton Club. She was a dancer. They were all at The Hill Top, and they had a lot. And in the summer, you couldn't get in there. Be packed to the doors.

That's where Anita's mother used to be a waitress in the summertime<sup>6</sup>. And that's how her and I became friends in 1940, when I came. She, Anita stayed down on Congress Street with her grandmother. And she came up—I came in January, uh, Feb—January the 24<sup>th</sup>. And she came up to see her mother and take c—and see 'bout Anita. And then she came up to The Hill Top, and we became friends from that day to the day she died. So—

COURTNEY: So tell me about being a traveling barmaid.

BIDDIE: Well, I also—I don't know you all want to hear this. I wrote—

COURTNEY: I want to hear everything.

BIDDIE: I wrote numbers for years, 'cause numbers was just like uh, like, the legal numbers are now up here. Policemen played numbers with ya, and, uh, Leary was the head of everything, like ah—and when I first come here, you—only two people you heard about was Judge LaBelle and [James] Leary.<sup>7</sup> I said, “Don't they have a mayor or somebody?” They told me, “Yeah, but he don't count.” [*laughs*]

That was many—that was many year ago. And—but I didn't start writing numbers till '45 because a friend of ours was, was the controller for this inn. And they used to turn in to Tuffy, Tuffy Levo who lived down Beekman Street.<sup>8</sup> First he lived on Con—ah, Grand Avenue next to Anita's house 'cause I used to live upstairs.

And every time I went into Jimmy's or Goldie's, they said, “Will you stay here just a minute?” That's how I called myself the traveling barmaid. 'Cau—and then if Jimmy went away, I worked. If Goldie went away, I worked. But I wasn't what you'd call a dyed in the wood bartender. I was a whiskey pourer and a beer opener. But I could mix some drinks too, but I didn't want to.

So that's—then, when the . . . uh . . . well, when Kefauver got in, that's when the numbers left here.<sup>9</sup> So then I wasn't a, a number writer anymore.

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<sup>6</sup> See Anita Turner's interview included in the West Side Oral Narrative Project Collection.

<sup>7</sup> To learn more about Judge LaBelle, James Leary, and local politics, see Veitch, Greg. 2019. *A Gangster's Paradise: Saratoga Springs from Prohibition to Kefauver*. Manchester Center, VT: Shires Press.

<sup>8</sup> The person's full name is Anthony “Tuffy” Levo.

<sup>9</sup> The Kefauver Hearings in 1950 and 1951 investigated organized crime and corruption of public institutions in the United States.

COURTNEY: And when did you and your husband move into the house?

BIDDIE: 1959, the last day in November.

COURTNEY: And what's the address on that house?

BIDDIE: 166.

COURTNEY: Grand Avenue.

BIDDIE: Mhmm.

COURTNEY: And did you have children?

BIDDIE: Yes, I have two girl—daughters—and a whole lotta grandchildren. There—that's my rogues' gallery.

COURTNEY: Yeah.

BIDDIE: And those are my other grandchildren, my white ones. Those are people I worked for, for years. Still work!

COURTNEY: You're still working now?

BIDDIE: Sure.

COURTNEY: Where do you work?

BIDDIE: I work for Millie Macy who has the Image on Broadway.<sup>10</sup> Been with her for, I don't know how many years. Well, her daughter hadn't started to school yet, and she'd been out of college two or three years now.

And I work for Mrs. Humphrey over on, uh . . . Monroe Street. I work for Mrs. Porter. I used, I used to work there doing day's work until '88 when I got sick. I had to go to, in the hospital. So in last years, couple a years, I worked taking care of her husband because he was, he wasn't—you wouldn't call him a invalid, but he was, couldn't—he had to walk with a walker. And he died in April, so I been up there several times since then . . . bein' a dog and cat sitter.

So that's—course this neighborhood is—see, I used to know all the people in, in this vicinity, but you see, it's different now. I don't know half of the people. See like the Adinolfis, the Scudders, and those are still here, but I used to know all of 'em. And you see when you—now, you see people you ain't never seen before, even over here. And of course, just like everywhere else.

COURTNEY: And where are your daughters now?

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<sup>10</sup> Image Photo was a photography store located on Broadway.

BIDDIE: Well, oh, one lives here in Saratoga. She lives in Diamond Place. My oldest daughter lives in Stratford, Connecticut. She's, uh, some kind of CP sump'n<sup>11</sup>. Well, I tell you what she does. She gets jobs. She works at Leon and Lawrence. That's a, uh, concern that gets—well they get jobs for everybody and do different things. She gets jobs for minorities, in, not in small places, in big places like GE and different big places that are up there. Course she's been there for long time. And . . .

COURTNEY: Can you describe some of the, um, impressions you had when you first arrived?

BIDDIE: Oh yeah!

COURTNEY: When you were 23 years old?

BIDDIE: Oh yeah!

COURTNEY: Besides the snow. [*laughs*]

BIDDIE: I said—well, the most amazing thing was, when you went down Broadway, you crossed at crossings. The middle of the street—let me tell ya, Saratoga had the best, uh, cleanup system for anybody, bar none. And at that time, of course they didn't have snowgos<sup>12</sup> and all them things, but they plowed and pushed the snow in the middle of the street. It was just like a island all way up. And—but every crossing was open.

Now you wasn't goin' cross in the middle of the block. You's goin' cross at the crossing. That amazed me. 'Cause I came from Pittsburgh that had snow, but not snow like they have here. Now they have the same kind of weather we have. Uh, I had never seen that much snow. Never!

And—course Congress street, at that time, was a sporting district.<sup>13</sup> There were lots of houses on it, and that amazed me. I didn't know what it was. [*laughs*] Stupid!

COURTNEY: Um, I think I know what you mean by a sporting district.

BIDDIE: Yeah.

COURTNEY: Yeah.

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<sup>11</sup> This is a regional variation of “something”. *Source*: “Something.” In *Dictionary of American Regional English*, Frederic G. Cassidy and Joan Houston Hall, editors, Volume V, page 120. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985-2012.

<sup>12</sup> Snowblowers.

<sup>13</sup> Some American cities designated an area called a sporting district (also called a red-light district) with various forms of entertainment, including bars, restaurants, dance halls, gambling, and sporting houses (brothels) with sporting women (sex workers or prostitutes). For more on this topic in Saratoga Springs, see “Spa City no stranger to night life.” *The Poststar*, March 8, 2006. Online: [https://poststar.com/news/article\\_af299294-8bfd-5a25-ac5e-30d62f4ffeb2.html](https://poststar.com/news/article_af299294-8bfd-5a25-ac5e-30d62f4ffeb2.html)

BIDDIE: I never knew nothing about none of that, you know, so—

COURTNEY: How did you figure it out?

BIDDIE: Well, I didn't. I asked! [*laughs*] It was a woman across the street, next to where the Hayden House used to be, who was Billie Griffin. And I don't care—now, upstairs over the bar, it was rooms. 'Cause, see, people came, and then a lot of people lived there that worked, that came to Saratoga and stayed year round. Uh, every time I went out—'cause I didn't stay up to no three o'clock when the bar closed. Every time I came through there and looked out the window, this woman would be in the street—three o'clock, six o'clock. I don't care what. And she had a child dog, and he used to sit in the window. She cleaned more snow than anybody I ever seen. And I said, "Wonder when that woman sleeps?"

Then, when I get up in the morning and come down, because I, we lived there, so I had breakfast and everything down in the bar. 'Cause they had a cook and everything. She would be in there! And her water had froze, so she didn't have any water. But she came 'cross. She always got her water from The Hill Top. So the bartender that was there was David, and he was a singer. Now, he sang at clubs down on Broadway, and he called her "Rebecca at the well." So one time I said to him, "Why, when does that woman sleep?" He said, "I don't think she ever sleep." And I said, "Because I don't care what time I look out in the night or day, she's out there." I said, "But why does she have to sweep and clean snow all night?" He's the one tol' me what it was. I said, "Huh!" Well, I say, "I ain't never knew nothing 'bout that clever [*laughs*] stu—stuff."

But I can say this: all of 'em that—they used, all the girls used to come in The Hill Top, and we used to play—I learned how to play pinochle. And we used to play pinochle. But I can say this much for 'em: all of 'em respected me.

And so then in the summer time then, oh, it would be hundreds a girls. Not—I mean girls with college education, schoolteachers, and whatnot. Very pretty . . . but see, they ca—

COURTNEY: Black and white? Or mainly . . .

BIDDIE: Oh, no, this was all Black.

COURTNEY: All Black. And were their clientele Black?

BIDDIE: Oh, no!

COURTNEY: The clientele were white?

BIDDIE: Yeah. And see lot of 'em were from Washington, lot of 'em from, uh, down south and taught school—not dummies by no means. But you see that the money was tremendous. And that, they come up here thinking they ain't gonna see nobody they know, and they were surprised the amount of people that came that knew 'em from home, had no dreams of what they were doin' up here. So that's—well, that's not one of the good points of Saratoga.

COURTNEY: Well, it's part of the history.

BIDDIE: Course! Yeah, course they had it all over—all over—uh, they had a woman that was over on—well she was out—it's on the east side, but it's like, you know, the roof where, uh, the dog man has the, the veterinary out on—goin' out towards the lake. Uh . . .

COURTNEY: Uh, Union Avenue? Dr. Robinson?

BIDDIE: Yeah.

COURTNEY: Mhmm.

BIDDIE: On that—he's right on the corner. And on that road going up that way, this woman had her sporting house. And she'd—they used to come in town. She'd bring all the girls and things. Well this Saratoga was, I guess, was noted for these. Course now it's—but of course, uh, these were sporting women. That was their living. They were sporting women. They weren't trashy women. And when they came out—I mean, everybody has a night off. They came out, they was as big a lady as anybody else. Very nice girls, and very few of 'em that weren't educated. Precious few.

Now, what else would you like to know?

COURTNEY: I'm gonna ask you something off the record if I—

BIDDIE: Ok.

*[pause in recording]*

BIDDIE: —Fellas come up here from New York for the races. Well they knew 'em all, and, and course, most of time, at that time, uh, they were sporting, being different kind that's here now. You—course none of that stuff that's going on now, you don't hear of. Very few got locked up for stealing or things like that. And of course, wasn't no dope in that—there probably was dope somewhere, but not in Saratoga.

And when they come up, the sporting girls were just like anybody else. They, and they, like them, like—course they never bothered colored fellas. And they didn't bother—whoever had the house did the calling, at that time.

And . . . well then Jimmy's bar. It wasn't open when I came here. Jimmy worked at the Worden [Hotel]. Now, he was known all over Saratoga, Jimmy Elliot. Then he had Jimmy's bar, which was on the corner of Congress and Federal Street, which he got in May of '40. And of course, all the people that was around then, I'm 'bout the only one left. Them that ain't—them that isn't dead is in a nursing home. And I thus say, I'm an old woman, so—*[laughs]*

I-I-I can't think of anything else. Most I know 'bout Joe Scudder and the store round the corner there and—

COURTNEY: Tell me about Joe Scudder.

BIDDIE: Did you know, round on Beekman Street, there's a sub shop up. But he sells pizzas and—well, that was Joe Scudder's. Joe Scudder had a store there. He was there when I came here. Him and Mrs. Scudder, and they had four daughters. Now it's only one of 'em left. And Gracie still lives there.<sup>14</sup>

COURTNEY: You would shop there?

BIDDIE: Oh well, it was just a neighborhood store, you know. Yes, I bought lots of things there. 'Cause, at that time, he sold greens and meat. It used to be a truck that came from Vermont or somewhere every Wednesday with meat. Had the best beef you'd wanna put in your mouth, and it was reasonable. Course everything was reasonable then. Well I tell you! It was just as hard as it is now, because people didn't make what they do now. Oh, I bought—I always bought things like bread and milk, which was the same price everywhere. I always—'cause I always'd run out the back door and go over there. And cold cuts, he had good cold cuts. And he was here for years, and I don't think he could write English.

But Mrs. Scudder took care of everything, I mean business end. And when I wrote numbers, all those people in that area was my customers.

And then 'cross the street was the Adinolfis with the barbershop. Now, that barbershop was there for years and years. And, uh, Mr. Adinolfi died, I guess about five or six years after I was here. Course and Nicky was always in there. And of course Nicky just died here the other year.

But I used to eat at all them places. Mrs. Scudder would have coffee and things when I come to get her numbers, and I had to go 'cross the street to Adinolfis and have lunch 'cause they always had the best spaghetti. And they're the ones that taught me how to make spaghetti. I can make spaghetti good as they can. Well, anyhow.

COURTNEY: Tell me how you make their spaghetti.

BIDDIE: Well, I tell you. Only difference is, I put sugar in mine. They don't put sugar in theirs. They take, uh—you put, if you don't have ro—any roast pork or anything or, you take a pork chop. Now, they always cooked it, you know. Not—it didn't have to get real done. And they browned the garlic in the oil, but you didn't use the garlic. You threw that out. You br—you get the flavor. And I also put green pepper in mine. They don't put green pepper. And you sauté onions, and they use sausage lot a time. Well, I use pepperoni. And then you put your, uh, tomatoes, tomato paste, and the tomatoes in, into this garlic and onion business. Then you pour it—well, I always put the tomato paste in there, and the tomatoes would be in the pot. But you

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<sup>14</sup> See Grace Luciano's interview included in the West Side Oral Narrative Project Collection. Joseph Scuderi and Margaret "Maggie" Sess owned Scuderi's Store at 79 Beekman Street. The Italian surname Scuderi was Anglicized as Scudder, which become the name of well-known sub sandwich at the store. Grace Scuderi Luciano, the youngest daughter, retired and sold the business to Gary Latte who named the store Marino's Pizza.

mash it up. And then you season it, of course. I add a little bay leaf in it, and, uh, and the onion and the garlic, of course. That's seasoning.

Then I put the, the, uh, tomato paste in the frying pan and, with the water. Then you pour that into the tomatoes. And I also saut—I used green pepper and onions, so I'd have onions and green pepper and pepperoni in the frying pan, sautéing it. Then put the tomato paste in it, and put it in the pot, and you cook it slowly. It's supposed to be red, not dark. The po—the, the, uh, pork chop, I cut up. And I always bought, uh, pork, uh, not the center cut of the loin, the end part. I forget what you call. Always bought that and cut it up and put it in the pot and let it cook slowly.

Now when I make it, I got—so I like garlic, so I don't throw it away. I put it in with the stuff. But I don't make it often anymore because, uh, I'm not supposed to eat it. I can have a half a cup, so I'm not going to waste my time making a whole thing. Once in a while, I say, "Durn it! At this stage of the game, I eat what I want." 'Cause, as I told you, I'm no baby.

COURTNEY: Tell me where your parents are from.

BIDDIE: My mother and father—my mother's from Harris—Harrisonburg, Virginia. My father's from—my mother's from Staunton, Virginia originally, and my father was from Alexandria, Virginia. My mother was—her mother was a full-blooded Indian, from the Blackfoot tribe. I used to—

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COURTNEY: Your mother's mother?

BIDDIE: Yeah.

COURTNEY: Your grandmother?

BIDDIE: Yes.

COURTNEY: Wow.

BIDDIE: And so was her father—her husband—her father, yeah!<sup>15</sup> He died when he was eighty-some years old, had every tooth in his head, never had a toothache in his life, and never owned a toothbrush. Cleaned his teeth with his finger and salt. And now—

COURTNEY: Now is that, is that in Virginia, that tribe?

BIDDIE: No, oh—well, I guess it was. I don't know. And when I was in Washington, my sister and I went to the Smithsonian Institute, and I forget—see, Indians take the name of the, of the chief. Now I can't, I used to know his name but—

COURTNEY: This would be your grandfather's name.

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<sup>15</sup> We assume Biddie is saying that her mother's mother (maternal grandmother) and her mother's father (maternal grandfather) were Blackfoot Indians.

BIDDIE: No, this would be my grandmother's maiden name. Now my grandfather, I don't know what . . . but . . . he, uh . . . why, anyhow, this was in the Smithsonian. And that's how we knew—well, we had, my mother had told us different things about it. And you see, we were foolish instead of writing these things down—and of course, it'll come to me sometime in the night what the chief's name was, which was my mother—grandmother's maiden name before she became an Allen. And my father's mother, who also was Indian and lived to be a hundred and seventeen years old. She died when I was six years old.

COURTNEY: Do you remember meeting her?

BIDDIE: Oh, yes. I have [*laughs*]—I'm not gonna say the vivid memory I have because it isn't, wasn't nice. Yes, I remember. My father used to take us up to see her ever—'cause she lived up the hill from us with her son, her grandson I think.

And I—my family in Pittsburgh was some of the founders of the neighborhood where we lived in.

They were the first families there. And of course some of 'em still there. So that's about all I can say about 'em.

[*pause in recording*]

In Virginia when I, when I was 10, but my father's father, I never knew. Course he was dead before they ever came from Virginia. 'Cause Alexandria's just outside of Washington.

COURTNEY: And what was your, um, grandmother's married name?

BIDDIE: Shelton. And, well, uh, my mother's mother's married name was Allen.

COURTNEY: Allen. That's it, ok. And then your mother's name was?

BIDDIE: She was an Allen before she married my father, who was a Shelton, Louis Shelton. Now he was known all over Pittsburgh. He, he taught—which one was't? George? One of the Kaufman sons who had—who were Jewish. He taught him how to speak English. 'Cause he worked at the courthouse for years, and Kaufman's was right down by there. And that's—I come from a big family, six children.

COURTNEY: Six children?

BIDDIE: Three girls and three boys. And my oldest sister died in 1927, and she had a daughter who was two years old, who's—my mother had, naturally my mother took her. So I still, I don't feel like she's my niece. I feel like she's my sister. And that's about all there is to the Sheltons and the Anthonys.

And of course my husband's—well my husband's mother and his stepfather, I knew. I didn't know his, uh, father 'cause he died when Butch was two years old.

COURTNEY: Your husband was called Butch?

BIDDIE: Yeah. Well I—see, in Pittsburgh that’s what everybody knew him by, Butch. Up here, everybody knew him by Marvin until I came and I start to callin’ ’im Butch.

COURTNEY: Now were you married to him when you moved up here?

BIDDIE: Oh yeah! I’d been married couple a years, and, well—see, he used to work at the Schenley Hotel. Then work got scarce, he went to New York. That’s how he got to the Cotton Club. I said, “No, I ain’t coming there.” I used to go—they used to have excursions. I used to go, like, you leave Saturday and come back Monday morning. I used to go over on weekends like that. But I wasn’t, wasn’t goin’ there to live. And that—I came up here in ’40. He went there in ’38.

COURTNEY: And what was his full name?

BIDDIE: Marvin Anthony.

COURTNEY: Marvin Anthony.

BIDDIE: And . . . and of course, he died 1973. And I’ve been here ever since. ’Cause this—I love—Saratoga grows on you. When I go away, I’m, I never stay less than three weeks. When my sister lived, I always stayed a month. Now I don’t want to impose on my niece, so I stay three weeks. I could stay as long as I want, but I feel like maybe, you know, three weeks is long enough. And I look forward to coming home. ’Cause this is—

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COURTNEY: Would your family come here to visit you?

BIDDIE: Oh yeah!

COURTNEY: Your siblings? For reunions or Christmas?

BIDDIE: Well, no. The reunions they, we had in Pittsburgh, but now I’m the only one left of my immediate family. And Suzanne and my great-nephew, they were to take, ya know—fix another reunion, but you see that’s a lotta work, lotta work. And they never got around to it. Course there’s a whole lot of ’em still left. I mean but they’re farther down the line. Like my sisters, I have two children, and course they have—Floyd lives in Washington. He’s a doctor, and he has two children. His son is in Africa. He was a lawyer for the American Affairs in Africa. Then his daughter’s in Atlanta, but you see, they had lots of money. I’m, I’m the poor one. But—

COURTNEY: When did you start working for the, uh, women that you were telling me about?

BIDDIE: Oh! I used to work—before that, in 1960, I went to work for Mr. Carroll, Mrs. Carroll, who was Lawyer Carroll, was on Broadway where the Image [Photo] is now. And, um, I worked there—well he died in ’68. I used to work there every day. After I got my numbers, I went there.

And I was there till, every day till he died. Then I used to go twice a week 'cause she didn't need nobody to—she need to do something first. But her and I were friends till she died. In fact, I used—she, then she moved over to the Gaslight Apartments. And I used to go to store for her and 'cause she was getting, you know, something was happening. But we were dear friends.

COURTNEY: Tell me how the numbers work. When you say you got their numbers.

BIDDIE: Well, you had a pad, with a . . . with a pad, and you had a white sheet on top and a yellow sheet on the bottom. And you had a, um . . . them blue things, you know, that you put in—

COURTNEY: Yeah.

BIDDIE: Uh.

COURTNEY: Mimeograph. Uh . . .

BIDDIE: Now, well as I know the whatcha call. Anyhow—

COURTNEY: I know what you're talking about.

BIDDIE: You put that in between the white sheet and the yellow sheet, and you wrote the numbers, and you tore off the white sheet and gave it to the customer. The yellow one, you turned in at the office. And we paid in—

COURTNEY: Where was the office?

BIDDIE: I think it's two houses in the back and two was in the front next to the shoe shop, which all the Levos lived there. You know different—Dark "Tuffy" lived on one side. His sister lived upstairs. They built a house for the other sister that lived next door, and the mother lived and father lived downstairs next to the shoe shop, and his brother lived upstairs. And, uh, and you turned in there. And you paid income tax. Oh yeah, you were listed as investment brokers.

And the man that, the banker, lived on the corner of Division—he didn't live there—Division Street and Railroad Place. He had a horse room upstairs.<sup>16</sup> The bus terminal was downstairs on that corner. And I forget his name, the banker, but—and he used to come over to Hattie's and play numbers with all of us. I mean with big money. And then, of course, they had a lay off if it was too big, you know. They laid off in New York, but see, now the numbers are legitimate. Which see don't make—anything the state wants to do, or the people want to do, they do it.

[*pause in recording*]

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<sup>16</sup> A horse room is any place where a bookmaker, also called a bookie, would book a bet. It was an earlier form of off-track betting that was an informal economic activity and not considered legal until the State of New York made the activity legal in state controlled locations and called it off-track betting (OTB). Many horse rooms were located on Congress Street, and some were located downtown in newsrooms or other local businesses.

In the Urban Renewal. The fella, Joe Jackson used to live on Cowen Street. He bought the house next to mine across the street. I had two friends, Helen and Frank Hatton, lived on Williams Street. Mary Moore lived on Williams Street. All those people were in the Urban Renewal. And at that time, I lived on West Circular Street. But that part wasn't in the Urban Renewal, from Williams Street down.

Now, Jimmy Elliot—well course, Jimmy was dead, I guess, by that time. The bar, all that, I can't even visualize things that were there, the baker shop and all that. Jimmy's Bar was on the corner of Federal and Congress, where, uh—what's there now? Oh! The Niagara Mohawk's there now. It was the telephone was there first. And Hattie's was on, uh, the other little street. See, you forget the names of these things 'cause they're so, been so long.

And all those little houses that was up that street are down, and then they built the—they put all them different things in there then. Now where, uh—*[pause in recording]*

—building, they set it on fire. They said it was—that was on Federal Street, round the corner on Federal Street. Round—second house around from Congress Street. And they said it was, um, um . . . you know, uh, in other words, they were teaching firemen how to—but that wasn't the reason. It was so much vermin in there, that the fire—that nobody was going in there to tear it down, so they burn it down. Naturally they—it didn't spread nowhere.

And Jimmy's was a big brick building at three stories. But I didn't see him when they tore it, 'cause, well in fact he wasn't down that way when they're knocking things down. And, uh, all way up to, uh, Washington Street.

Now I used to live, when I first came here, 52 Washington Street, which was on the corner of Federal and Washington, 'cross from the Baptist Church. And then up, uh, back there the, uh, Mount Olive Baptist Church was on Williams Street, and, oh, lot of houses and things. But they didn't cross, uh, Hamilton, 'cause those houses still there. 'Cause the Browns, I can't think of the—we used to call them girls, but they was women. One of 'em, the name was Dorothy, lived on the corner of Hamilton and Circular.

COURTNEY: Dorthea?

BIDDIE: Dorothy, the last name was, started with a B, I can't—

COURTNEY: Brownell.

BIDDIE: Yes!

COURTNEY: I know a Dorthea.

BIDDIE: Oh you do? Well, I knew her and her sister.

COURTNEY: I wondered if you knew them.

BIDDIE: Oh yes. And then Mrs. Carroll, when she moved, she moved into the Gaslight Apartments. Course they were—she had known 'em way before I ever knew 'em. And, uh, course they sold their antiques. They had a lot of antiques, and they wasn't cheap either. [*laughs*] Course, both of them died.

And, uh, then I, uh—Mrs. Hammer where the, where, uh, I call the man, uh, “Chicken Charlie” so much I can't never think of his name—Kentucky Fried Chicken place is, that used to be Hammers.

COURTNEY: And tell me about Hammer's. What was it?

BIDDIE: Hammers. Mrs. Hammer was a, well, I, er—Mrs. Hammer still—I worked for her too for years when her children were little. Now they all grown. Uh, I—Mr. Hammer was something. I can't remember what he was, something in politics. But this is the, the older Mrs. Hammer, not the one that I worked for. They had the, well, after she died, her children got this place because her husband had died when—her youngest daughter never knew her father, and 'cause they lived in New York, and after he died, they came up here and they stayed with Gram, as they called her. Then she had a house out on, well she still out there on Nelson Avenue. Now, she works for, uh, Bruno. But her and I are friends. See, I become friends with these people. Not, I mean, I work for 'em, but I'm also their friend.

Now, I go, well I haven't gone lately, but every Tuesday, Madeleine and I go to lunch up to Compton's. I stopped in the office the other day 'cause she's been having trouble with her leg, so she hasn't been going up there. But, uh, as I say, I still work. And Mrs. Humphrey, I've been with her . . . since 1960. No—'68 because that's when Mr. Carroll died. Course her daughters were all married. Now they're—got three or four children of their own, and gr—she's got a number of grandchildren. She hasn't got any great ones yet. And she's a year older than I am. Now, she goes to Florida every winter, so I don't go. Though she'll be back next month.

COURTNEY: So you've gotten used to Saratoga winters. You don't go.

BIDDIE: Oh, the Saratoga winters don't bother me. Oh, I'll tell you something. Saratoga winters are nothing like they used to be. Twenty-five and thirty below zero was a normal winter day, but you never realized it was that cold because it was dry as a chip. But see, Saratoga doesn't got—wind you didn't have, rarely. Now see, it's gotten like every other place. Just like they say, “Do whirl them round and the sun doth move.”<sup>17</sup> I am satisfied. It's going around the—why, everything has changed. You don't have the snow that they had. 1945 we had one of the biggest snowstorms, negative temp that you ever wanna see. Trees were—wasn't leaves on 'em. That Easter, it was 80.

1947, May the tenth, they had another snowstorm. I mean, this was snow heavy as lead because it was wet, but you had to shovel it. Course you had lots of it. And Willie Mosley had his car—had a picture of his car with the snow on it. But now winters are—they ain't nothin'.

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<sup>17</sup> The audio is difficult to hear, and we did not find a reference with a similar idiom.

COURTNEY: I've noticed it myself. I've been here thirty years, and I can see the change.

BIDDIE: Oh yes, it's—

COURTNEY: Did you know Willie Lum?

BIDDIE: He—<sup>18</sup>

[*pause in recording*]

[*laughs*] He was the, was the, uh, Chinese chef at the Hill Top.

COURTNEY: Ahhh.

BIDDIE: For years! Then he was across the street in the Hayden House also. I was here before Willie Lum, 'cause Mr., Mr. Vodery brought him from New York, and he—at that time, he was some kind of good Chinese food cooker. Course I never liked all the different things but, I only liked yakame. Now, none of these Chinamen know anything about yakame.<sup>19</sup>

COURTNEY: I don't know anything about yakame.

BIDDIE: [*laughs*] It's, it's a flat noodle.

COURTNEY: Ohhh.

BIDDIE: And they have pork like yakame, chicken like yakame.

COURTNEY: Do you make it?

BIDDIE: Oh no. I ain't no Chinese. Only place I can get it is when I go to Pittsburgh, I get it. Only one Chinese restaurant. I got it out here to the—whatever that one was out here on Washington Street when my niece and them were here. We went out there for it, but, uh, and I was out to Madeline's one time, and they sent out for Chinese food. And they asked me for what I liked, and I told them. And they brought it, but it was—I have never had greasy Chinese food. That was greasy.

COURTNEY: So, Willie Lum was a good Chef?

BIDDIE: Oh yeah! Then when he got—then, he had the Hayden House after, uh, Mr. Vodery died, he had it over there. And he had a goat in the yard. [*laughs*] So I said I never ate any more, sump'n that I would eat if they, if I didn't eat Chinese—eat the yakame. 'Cause then the goat

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<sup>18</sup> We think she's saying "Heck yeah!" before the recorders was paused.

<sup>19</sup> She refers to a variation of a noodle dish called yaka mein or yako mein, which some recipe collections describe as a Chinese dish with influences from New Orleans and other Southern regions.

was gone, but people don't know, the goat's good meat! Then he moved down on, um—now what is that Street?

COURTNEY: Henry Street or—

BIDDIE: No.

COURTNEY: Phila?

BIDDIE: No, it's—

COURTNEY: On the west side?

BIDDIE: No. It's on the east side, across Broadway th—down on, well—now what do they call? I guess they call that Maple Avenue. 'Cause the building isn't there anymore. 'Cause the High Grade Market used to be on the corner, and he was next door. Why, I used to go down there. Well most time, I'd call up and order it and go pick it up and bring it home. And then we'd eat down there a lot of times, too.

Then Willie married a girl, a woman. Well, she was a gir—young woman and, uh, then she left him and went back to New York, so. Then Willie was around on, um, Ash Street? Round there, anyhow. He died from around there.

COURTNEY: And did you know Hattie?<sup>20</sup>

BIDDIE: Well I'll tell ya when I knew Hattie. Well I came in the wintertime. They always went to Florida. She came back in May, 1940. That's how long I knew her. And at her funeral, that's why the—Channel 10 and all of 'em was there. The woman came over to me, what did I know 'bout Hattie? You know, how long I had known Hattie. Well, it was 50 some years because, and I said to her—I didn't say it to her that day, but I met her again. I said, “Well, why did you come to me?” Because the woman that bought Hattie's told her to come over there because I was one of the oldest ones there that knew her.

I worked for Hattie.

COURTNEY: Did you work for Hattie?

BIDDIE: I used to go round there on Saturdays in the summertime, Saturday nights, because I used to wait on some of the people. And—but of course, the girls that worked in there, they didn't know I was a Saratogian. And every time a dead head come in, they'd say “It's your up.”<sup>21</sup> So I told 'em one time, this fella came in, he used to work at Mount McGregor [Correctional

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<sup>20</sup> Hattie Moseley-Austin opened Hattie's Chicken Shack on Federal Street in 1939.

<sup>21</sup> The term “dead head” seems to refer to someone eating without paying, such as an employee or an associate of the owner. The term may also refer to customers who are known to not leave tips.

Facility].<sup>22</sup> And I had waited on him many times in Goldie's and Jimmy's, and he always went in the bathroom and took off, put his—took his money out of his shoe 'cause that's where he kept it. They wasn't gonna rob him.

And he came in, and the girl said, "It's your up." So I said, "Okay." So I waited on him. It didn't make no difference to me because that wasn't my regular job. So after I waited on him and he left, I said, "Now, I'll tell you what." See, at that time the waitresses had to wash their own silver and glasses, make their own salads. I said to ya, "You all gave me him, and I know him better than you all do." I said, "He don't give up one quarter." I said, "Not that it mattered that I wanted a tip." I said, "But as a matter, you all thought I didn't know him." And I said, "I, I'll tell you something. I live here." See, all these girls were girls from down south somewhere that came, that were going to college. And they came up here. Somebody told 'em about this place, for they made barrels of money. I said, "So now I tell you. Uh, I'll—." Course I had to take the cash. Hattie didn't trust them on Saturday night. And, um, I said, "Now wash your dish—your silver and your glasses and make your salads." And then, I said, "I'm goin' around the corner a minute."

Well I went around the corner, and this woman that I told you that had the sporting house out by Robinson, she was in there with her girls. And a friend of mine who used to stay at my house went with one of the girls, and they were around to Goldie's. And another friend of mine who lived here, but, who used to live here, and she was in New York, and her and her friend were up at Goldie's. So they said "Biddie where you workin' tonight?" I said, "At Hattie's." They said, "We'll be around shortly."

So I went back and told the girl, I said, "I tell ya. I got two customers comin'. Up or down, they're mine." So at first Sully came. I said, "Hold it! That's my customer. I don't care whose up it is." Then, after they got served, Emma and her friend came in. I said, "Hold it! That's my customer." I made more off of them two then they made all night. Because, well they were good tippers at all times.

So then I sittin' down when—I'll finished the, uh, your chores, so then you had something to eat. So I said to the chef, I said, "I'll have a steak." 'Cause I was, I'm steak crazy.

The girls said, "Oh you can't have—."

I said, "I can have anything I want."

"Well no, you have to eat—."

I said, "I don't have to eat nothin' that you say I have to eat." So I had the steak and French fries, and, the chef—

COURTNEY: This was at Hattie's?

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<sup>22</sup> Mount McGregor Correctional Facility was a medium security prison for male inmates. The facility was closed in 2014.

BIDDIE: Yeah. It was when it was on, on, uh . . . hmph . . . almost, almost—Federal Street! That’s what it was called. And, uh, then Hattie came in later on, and the girls said, “She had steak!” Hattie said—see I’m gonna pay for what I eat. I knew that steak wasn’t on the agenda. And I don’t eat chicken wings and, and rice and things stewed up anyhow. I don’t mind chicken wings, but I don’t want it stewed up with no rice and stuff. But of course, they put on pots for the help. But see, I wadn’t regular help. And so then, Hattie said, “Oh yeah, she—.” Hattie was a troublemaker [*laughs*]. Said, “Oh yeah, she eats what she wants.” But then I told Hattie, “I was gonna pay for it.” But she said, “Oh, forget it.”

Because I used to do lots of favors for Hattie. And I—when my children went to Pittsburgh every summer. Because see summer, from June, they left after school let out. They were always in Pittsburgh for the Fourth of July. And I took in laundry. I wrote numbers. I tended bar. In fact, in the summer I worked every night. But you see, I did this because I had two children, and I wanted them to go to school. I wanted the best for ’em, ’cause they didn’t do—Suzanne finally went, finished. Oh, they both finished high school. And . . .

Let me tell ya, I took in laundry for years. Just until ’88. But of course, that was when the sporting girls—see, I did sporting girls’ laundry. And I told ’em, and I charged ’em anything I wanted. I didn’t, I didn’t over charge, tell you the truth. But I did their laundry. It was a good living.

COURTNEY: Mm, wonderful. Yeah.

BIDDIE: And I did Mrs. Hammer’s laundry just until ’88. Sometimes 60 blouses. It was just blouses and things like that, which she had satin sheets. I did them and, and her children’s clothes. They were, they went to Saint Peters, and, and I did their blouses ’cause they wore uniforms then.

COURTNEY: Where’d your children go to school?

BIDDIE: Huh?

COURTNEY: Where did your children go to school?

BIDDIE: St. Peters.

COURTNEY: Same? Uh-huh.

BIDDIE: Yeah. Ah, but they went to, uh, Saratoga. Well Suzanne only went once. Suzanne finished in Pittsburgh, at Peabody. Michelle finished at Saratoga High. But, uh, they went to grade school at, uh, St. Peters. Then, it was eight dollars a year . . . for two. [*laughs*]. Well it just shows you how, how time changes.

COURTNEY: How far did you go in school?

BIDDIE: Foolishly, I only went to the tenth grade. See my mother and them insisted on an education because they knew an education was important. My father died when I was 15. And then, you know, you just, you don't . . . but I tell ya something. I know more than these, some of these kids that graduated from high school. 'Cause I'll tell ya something they don't have. Common sense. From the White House down.

Well now, my mother and father and them way back they used to call it mother wit. And I was very sorry after I came up here 'cause I was here 'bout three years 'fore I ever did anything. I kept saying I'm going to Saratoga High and, and finish. Still puttin' it off. I knew I would have to pay, but I didn't want the whole day. I didn't need gym or all that. I just wanted the academic part. And kept puttin' it off and never went. So.

COURTNEY: Mother wit. I like that expression.

BIDDIE: Well that's what my mother and them always called, and all it is, is common sense. And you can believe me. If you don't believe it, listen at some of these people, they're from the White House on the television. They, they've got book learnin' but nothin' up here.

Well the girl—well, I'm not gonna say that because that's on.

[*pause in recording*]

I always say colored people because that's all you ever heard. And Margaret Mead many years ago when this "Black" first came out, she used to be on the, on the, uh, television or the radio, one or the other. And I was workin' at Mrs. Carroll, 'cause I used to have her every an—she said, "You know when I came up, if you called 'em Black, those were fighting words." I am not Afro-American! These people talking 'bout Afr—now everybody here, every colored person is not Afro-American! And I, I resent being called Afro-American because I'm not. I am an American, from the original Americans, a descendant, whatever.

But . . . I mean as the lady said that kissed the cow, "Everybody to their own choosing." Let them be what they want, but I'm not. Well of course I'm—I guess you could say because I'm from the old school. And [*laughs*] when I say old school, it's the old school.

COURTNEY: Right, and I grew up—

[*pause in recording*]

BIDDIE: And you hear me sayin, "Black." Even when we were kids, if my brother said, "You're Black," that's fighting. You fight. And it was just a matter of saying. But I'm—as I say, everybody to their own choosing.

And I don't name nothin' else I can tell you 'bout this neighborhood. I can tell you one thing. This block and all—well not next door—but all up here was, was white. Oh yeah. And the—Mary Fisher, which she was a Fisher, owned that house across the street. And her father was a shoemaker down on Cowen, on uh, Caroline Street.

COURTNEY: You said this was all white. In what era? What age are you talking about? When you moved in?

BIDDIE: No. When I ca—oh yeah, most, lot of 'em when I moved in—no. Ms. Belgrave's house was never white. It was always colored. Oh, I guess many years ago, 'cause I've got a, a book on Saratoga over 100 years old. And the, the names of the different houses and streets, uh . . . course some of them are different now. Now, that house was always there, the big yellow house up the street was always there, uh—and it has who the people owned it and whatever. And I always was goin' take it to somewhere and see was it, had any value, but I think they have lots of 'em around. I'm not sure though.

COURTNEY: You have that book here?

BIDDIE: Yeah. It's 100 years old.

*[pause in recording]*

BIDDIE: Where um, the pizza place is, that was a, that whole thing was a hotel. I can't think of the name of it.

COURTNEY: Rip Van Dam?

BIDDIE: Oh no. Rip's on the corner of Washington street. The pizza place on the corner too. I think it was the United.

COURTNEY: Where Pope's, you mean Pope's Pizza.

BIDDIE: Yeah.

COURTNEY: That they've torn down now.

BIDDIE: Oh, long gone. That was one of the first ones they tore down.

COURTNEY: Well t hey tore the pizza place down now too.

BIDDIE: Is it gone? See I, I haven't been that way.

COURTNEY: I, that's what I heard last night.

BIDDIE: Well I knew they were tearing it down 'cause somebody was gonna build, who is it? Some bookstore or something? See I am under the impression Saratoga is getting like everywhere else. They're greedy, they're greedy. And, and, and local business, I mean that are owned and run by local people don't have a chance. See this is one of my soapbox things too.

COURTNEY: It's on tape.

BIDDIE: Oh.

COURTNEY: That's good!

BIDDIE: And my argument also is—oh I, I, this ain't for this kinda stuff.

*[pause in recording]*

COURTNEY: So Biddie and I have been looking at a book she has here. Um, it's a Saratoga directory from . . . 1879 to '80. *[reads]* *Business Directory of Saratoga Country* to which is added a large list of farmers and an appendix of useful information. To find a name, you must know how to spell it. *[no longer reading]* It's a very old book with lots of people in it and lots of professions and, um, pretty neat. If you haven't seen it, it's worth calling Biddie to take a look at it.

BIDDIE: Yes it, uh, it was quite interesting, and when Steve brought it to me—'cause he said, like he said, "I have no use for it." And I've had it for many a year.

COURTNEY: Well, thank you so much!

BIDDIE: I hope it was—

*[end of interview]*