

Neighborhood Histories: Interview with Sue Hurst

Marshai Petty: Hello my name is Marshai Petty

Briana Mays: And my name is Brianna Mays

Marshai Petty: And today is June 18, 2015. We are going to interview you on detail of Lake County on how Tiptonville originally was separated. Ok. Would you please state your name?

Sue Hurst: My name is Sue Hurst.

Marshai Petty: Ms. Sue, where were you born and raised?

Sue Hurst: I was born and raised in Tiptonville, Tennessee out in Reelfoot Lake.

Marshai Petty: How long have you lived in Tiptonville?

Sue Hurst: Mmm. Sixty-two years.

Marshai Petty: Mmm. That's nice. Did you attend school in Tiptonville originally?

Sue Hurst: I attended school in Tiptonville. Tiptonville High School.

Marshai Petty: Could you tell me how that

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was like, attending school in Tiptonville.

Sue Hurst: Well attending school in Tiptonville was very good. I had excellent teachers. Uh at that time we were not of course consolidated. Uh I um enjoyed school. The school is no longer there and it's been torn down. Uh but I had an excellent education.

Marshai Petty: That's nice. How was it like being a student there?

Sue Hurst: How was I like being a student there? It was just what you did. That's where we went to school, we had fun, we learned and uh that's basically it.

Marshai Petty: Did like, was it hard to get transportation to school?

Sue Hurst: No. We had transportation to school.

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I rode a school bus for twelve years. We got to school about seven-thirty in the morning. School started at eight o'clock. Yea.

Marshai Petty: So, um.

Briana Mays: So, um you said you went to okay. Did you attend school when they, hold on. How was it living in Tiptonville itself back in those times?

Sue Hurst: It was, it was fun living uh going to school in the fifties and sixties, that's when I went to school. Uh it was very good. It was excellent. We had. There were a lot of people in Tiptonville at the time. That's when cotton was king, and of course there were a lot of cotton picking and we lost a lot when.

It was automated

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when they started the cotton pickers. We lost a lot of people during that time. They had to find other employment but the school system was, has always, during my time, was excellent and so was the city. On Saturdays you couldn't walk up and down the streets without running into people. All the stores were open. Now all these stores that you see now were valuable.

Briana Mays: do you mind telling us what stores were ____ back then?

Sue Hurst: Okay. Let's see. Let me start. Well where health bar is now was uh "Council's Fine and Dine". And believe it or not, Ms. Council is still living. She's one-hundred-and-six years old. Uh but it was uh. It was just uh. You had two dry goods stores where uh

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the Mexican restaurant was. Was, was a dry goods store. It was _____ Fine and Dine. And they were open until ten o'clock at night on Saturdays. Uh particularly they were not open at all on Sundays. Uh there was some clothing. There were several clothing stores. Uh where the banner burned was downtown. Uh next door was a uh clothing store called "Caldwell's". There was a store down at east end. Was "Ms. Elma Winters". Uh there was the _____ stores and they were clothing stores. At the end of the street near the uh what use to be the "Chevrolet Company". At the very end of the street was the "Chevrolet Company". Its owned by uh Mr. Hearn. And next door to it was a dry goods store that sold

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clothing. It was the _____ store. There was where uh I don't know what's in that store now but where 'Marcom Rexile". That was a pharmacy. In fact, we housed three pharmacies here at one time. Uh but uh I have to think coming up and down the street. Oh where they, where they renovated what was the "Strand Theater" it was a theater. It was a movie theater. Uh because it watched many movies on Saturdays. Uh I'm sure if I had time I could probably think of more but I was a very thriving little town. During that time were I was growing up.

Briana Mays: So while living in Tiptonville, have you like did you ever have the chance to go to Ridgely, visit any friends or family?

Sue Hurst: I didn't uh well I had family.

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I had some relatives who lived in Ridgely. But uh, when I was growing up I didn't, we did not have cars like they do today. My family was a poor family. We didn't have a car. We went with uh sometimes with some of my aunts and uncles to visit other aunts and uncles down there. But uh, as far as being in Ridgely a whole lot, I was not. Because we did not go to school there either.

Marshai Petty: so how was it like living down here. Like, are there any, are there some things that are different from today?

Sue Hurst: Are there different from today?

Marshai Petty: Mhmm

Sue Hurst: Uh. Yea there're differences uh because the economy for one thing is a, like I said this was a little thriving town up until about mmm probably the early sixties.

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Um but other than that, oh well it was very uh, open. You could go. I lived down at the lake. You could come to town. You could leave your house open. You did not have to lock your doors but that is now longer true in any city. Big or small. It would ____ you to keep you doors locked.

Briana Mays: okay you said earlier that your family didn't really have a car. Well we were old that there was a bus service that ran from Tiptonville to Ridgely. Can you tell us about that?

Sue Hurst: Yes well I don't know about Tiptonville to Ridgely. There may have been but I'm not sure of that. There was a bus that ran from Union City, Tennessee to here because I've ridden that bus many times. Because I used to live in the lake where uh close to Ellington Hall across the way. Uh it was a little grocery store. In fact, the

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grocery store is still there. Franky Sharp runs it. Uh we lived behind the grocery store on uh the next street over. And we uh, we would stop and uh if you were out there, he would stop, pick you up. I don't know what the rate was. I'm sure there was a monetary rate but I don't remember that. And it stayed, I don't know how long it stayed that turned around and took you back home and then it took you, then they went on back to Union City. His name was Mr. Newsom that drove the bus. There were many taxis here too. There were at least three taxi cabs here at the time.

Briana Mays: So what happened to those services?

Sue Hurst: Well those services, like everything else. If you don't have the people, they cannot survive either and that's what I'm saying. When cotton, when they begin to automate the cotton picking.

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There were a lot of people in here that uh, of Africans Americans, Whites, Hispanics came in here and picked cotton. And it was three dollars a hundred folks. But uh, when all that began, these people began to lose their jobs because of not being able to pick cotton. And that was their livelihood. They had to find other place to go to make a living son therefore if you don't have the folks here, you're going to lose business because they can't live off of nothing. You know.

Briana Mays: Were there any thriving businesses that you could or even people could visit?

Sue Hurst: The places in Ridgely?

Briana Mays: yes.

Sue Hurst: Uh yes. There was a hardware store uh who was run by uh Mr. Albrey Wood.

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There were dry good stores down there as well. Uh I'm not really familiar with them because like I said I didn't uh, when I was growing up I didn't uh, I wasn't down there a whole lot because of due to my lack of transportation as well. You can't hire a taxi to take you when you don't have any money on your own so. But yes, it was a little thriving town as well from what I know. But like I said it just went away just like here now.

Briana Mays: so what do you think happen to the businesses?

Sue Hurst: Well again, the businesses couldn't survive if you didn't have a lot of people here to uh buy from them. Uh and that's why you have these little towns that are just, going away

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and we're not the only ones. If you look around Troy, Hornbeck all those place, you just uh. Their storefronts are closed as well, empty buildings.

Marshai Petty: as far as school life, would you say there was a natural rivalry between these two towns?

Sue Hurst: Oh yes and I, the story I know is that we were great rivals between the football teams and till this even though we don't play, now they're consolidated, but that was always the great rival was uh, the two cities and their football teams. And until uh this last generation, me and probably another one, uh its. I have fun with it. I always have because

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I use to, I use to ??????? uh, I use to tell them I said "you know where the courthouse is don't-cha?" We always had fun. I don't know that there was ever really any great animosity uh but it was just the rivalry. They used to play on, they use to play football on uh Thanksgiving day and that was the big thing for Thanksgiving.

Marshai Petty: So, where there a lot of um games played throughout the year?

Sue Hurst: Oh yea I'm sure there were but uh, that was the "biggy". Whose gonna win on Thanksgiving Day?

Marshai Petty: So would you say because back then with the football rivalry that they took it like to another level?

Sue Hurst: Yes they probably, probably so.

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Uh I really am not, that I know, but if there was any other great divisions, as far as that, I am not sure. I'll be honest with you. You probably need to, if you got some older folks than me, some of those folks in their eighties, if you got any that's in their nineties would be wonderful too, but that may give you more insight than I have. But it always, it has been, and as I said I think it will stay that way to at, point until all those old folks are gone. And like I said, it's not, I don't know of anything that's bad about to it, you know.

Marshai Petty: So I hear that you were a doctor. Where did you start off doctoring at?

Sue Hurst: Well I am not a doctor. First of all, let me get that, let me make that very clear. I'm a nurse practitioner.

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Ok. And where did I get it?

Marshai Petty: Where did you start?

Sue Hurst: Where did I start? Oh, I started many years ago. Um, I became a nurse. I'm not gone tell you when but many years ago. Uh I will tell you. It's been fifty years. Uh, but I started at uh Methodist Hospital School of Nursing and it took me, I got out, did all this work and then took thirty years before I went back for my undergraduate uh schooling at the University of Memphis. Uh and then I left in ninety-seven and went to school in Vanderbilt. I went there twice. Uh and my degree is from Vanderbilt in nurse practitioner.

Marshai Petty: So did you work in a doctor's office in Lake County?

Sue Hurst: No, no. There

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were three doctors in this county at the time. Well actually two....three..... no four in the county. Three were up here in Tiptonville and uh one in Ridgley, Dr. Acray?? was uh in Ridgley. U yea there were three doctors here at the time. Uh, Dr. Raney was down at the railroad. That office there where doctor Brendra?? has his, the one across the street from the liquor store, uh that was his office. *laughs* Uh Dr. Holafeild?? Was in where Daisy's office is uh, attorney Daisy, and Dr. Smife?? Was in the clinic was turned in Curry's Funeral Home which is now default. It siting there on the corner of Church St. and ????? St.

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Marshai Petty: So um what made you want to be a nurse?

Sue Hurst: What made me want to be a nurse. Well, my mother wanted to be a nurse and she never made it there. She didn't have the manage to do so. And I guess from there um, and a lot of my teachers, one in particular that I lived with for three or several years, past away. She wanted me to teach and she wanted me to teach Latin, but I told her "I don't want to teach. I want to go to nursing school." But she was the great pusher. She's the one that pushed me that if I was going to do it to get on the stick. So you need a mentor. Ok.

Marshai Petty: Are you still practicing in the nurse field?

Sue Hurst: Yes. Am I still practicing? Yes I am still practicing part-time.

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I did work in Tiptonville most of the time but now I am in Ridgley Clinic. The WBA Clinic. I am the lone practitioner and um, I work three days a week.

Marshai Petty: So while you were working in Tiptonville, did you have a lot of patients from Ridgley come up here?

Sue Hurst: Oh yes. Yea. Well yea uh... because I forget, because that Ridgley clinic didn't open until probably the eighties. So uh, yes we had people come up here. But also Dr. Acray was still living at the time and he was seeing patients in Ridgley as well. Uh, most of the doctors here had stop uh, practicing other than Dr. Holafeild died in nineteen-seventy-seven so uh, and Dr. Smiife had retired I think uh, Dr. Raney had

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left but anyway, yes we did. Yea we saw them.

Marshai Petty: How was it moving from or to I mean Ridgley to Tiptonville?

Sue Hurst: How was it moving from Ridgley to Tiptonville or from Tiptonville to Ridley?

Marshai Petty: Ridgley to Tiptonville. Oh Tiptonville to Ridgley

Briana Mays: Tiptonville to Ridgley.

Sue Hurst: To practice?

Marshai Petty: and *Briana Mays:* Yes Ma'am.

Sue Hurst: Oh. No problem. I uh, doesn't matter to me who I see, where I see them, uh, as long as we can help them. It doesn't matter.

Briana Mays: So was it a big change in environment from how they did stuff in Ridgley than how they did in Tiptonville?

Sue Hurst: No there's no change in how we practice. UH, you just, if you have people to see, you have patients to see, you see them. You see them for what they're there for an uh,

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you try to teach. That was me.

Briana Mays: ,*Sue Hurst:* ,*Marshai Petty:* *Laughter*

Sue Hurst: but anyway, no there's really, there's no division there if you're asking uh, between Tiptonville and Ridgley uh as far as takin care of patients. No ma'am.

Briana Mays: So how would you say uh, the doctor offices in Ridgley and Tiptonville are now different from back when they did back then?

Sue Hurst: Uh well, actually there's not a lot of difference in the practice at all. Uh, things have, medicine itself has changed a great deal since I've been in it, but uh as far as taking care of people, no, because we are the same entity as Tiptonville. We are the satellite clinic of this Tiptonville Clinic up here. Uh,

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they thought there was a need to open a clinic in Ridgley back in the early or middle eighties. Uh, I'm not sure uh, we uh, we. The new clinic in Ridgley, where we are now, was built in nineteen-ninety-two and we went in that building. Before that we were across the street in what used to be the fluff and drive. Yea. An old building they just sort of set up and slung together and we saw patients over there, but anyway it's not been a great difference at all. No difference at all.

Marshai Petty: Okay, well we don't have any more questions to ask you, but is there anything else you would like to add on to what we didn't ask you about?

Sue Hurst: Well I think you've covered pretty well, but uh, I guess, I think, I think uh, um...

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like I said the division is not quite bad as it used to be. And as you, since they consolidated the school system in nineteen-sixty-four, when everybody was brought together, that changed a lot of the complexion of the division really. Um but I have enjoyed your interviewing and thank you very much.

Marshai Petty: Thank you for your time.

Sue Hurst: You're welcome.

Briana Mays: Thank you.