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Raymond Boles and Russ Wigginton, StoryCorps Interview, 2007

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Participants:

- Russ Wigginton
- Raymond Boles
- Unknown Person

Location: Rhodes College – Memphis, Tennessee

Date: November 27th, 2007

Wigginton: My name is Russ Wigginton, I'm 41 years old, today's date is November 27, 2007, we're at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN, and my relationship to Mr. Boles, I'm the interviewer in this conversation, and he's a coworker and friend.

Boles: My name is Raymond Boles, I'm — my age is 62. The date of 27th, 2007.

Wigginton: Mr. Boles, I'd like to talk a little bit about where you're from and some of your experiences growing up, and certainly I'd like to get to some of your experiences as it relates to the numerous years you've worked here at Rhodes College, but let's start with where you were born and where you grew up.

Boles: I grew up at Wolf Chase area in the _____, but the _____ was then I was born right — that was my hometown.

Wigginton: Okay, so you're from this area.

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: So it probably looks a little bit different now than it did when you were born.

Boles: Yeah, now here it all grew up like Ten — Memphis now.

Wigginton: Yeah, and so you've — you lived your whole life in this area?

Boles: Yeah, my whole life.

Wigginton: Where'd you go to school?

Boles: _____ called Mt. Pisy.

Wigginton: Mt. Pixie?

Boles: Mt. Pisy.

Wigginton: Yeah, and did you go there for —?

Boles: I finished 1965.

Wigginton: Okay, so there was a high school there?

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: Okay, and you went to elementary school in that area as well?

Boles: A place on Highway 64 at Old Grove Baptist Church.

Wigginton: Went to school — elementary school there?

Boles: Yeah, it's called —

Wigginton: Oak Grove?

Boles: — Oak Grove School then, that was just the name of it then.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: What are some of the memories you have of going to Oak Grove and Mt. Pisy?

Boles: Well, after school, we graduate from in 1965, then after that, I started here in about '66, working here.

Wigginton: Is that right?

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: So when you went to those schools, were they all black schools?

Boles: Yeah. Well, the high school did.

Wigginton: Do you have — did you grow up in a household with brothers and sisters, or who was in your household when you were growing up?

Boles: My grandparent — I grew up really on a farm.

Wigginton: Oh, okay. What was that like? What was growing up on a farm like?

Boles: Well, we had about 18 acres. We'd pick cotton; that's how I made it through school after being raised up on a farm, plowed with a horse and a mule.

Wigginton: Is that right?

Boles: They didn't have not tractors of nothing to farm with.

Wigginton: So plowing the — plowing the old fashioned way.

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: How — what was your first memory of plowing? How old were you when you were old enough to get behind that mule?

Boles: About, oh, about 10 or 12.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Boles: Me and my brother and my uncle. That's the only way we had something to farm with.

Wigginton: Yeah. Hard work?

Boles: Yeah.

Unknown Person: Your uncles, they were your father's brothers?

Boles: Yeah, the father's brothers uncles.

Wigginton: And you said your brother. Did you have any other brothers and sisters?

Boles: Yeah, I had two. Well, brought up with two. I had some more, but really, she stayed with us. My oldest sister, she stayed with us; she helped.

Wigginton: Yeah. So did y'all have any other animals on the farm? You just — it was mostly just those mules and the cotton?

Boles: Just the mule, and the horse, and plow, chop cotton and pick.

Unknown Person: What did you do for fun when you were little?

Boles: Did for fun?

Unknown Person: Mm hmm, what'd you do for fun _____?

Boles: Oh, didn't do too much. [laughs] Had to farm!

Wigginton: Yeah, farming was no joke, was it?

Boles: No. _____ too much. No.

Wigginton: Did you have a favorite teacher in school?

Boles: Yeah, she had about — it was two main ones: Melanie Bechtel and one named Miss Grunham. I don't know if they dead now, but I ain't never heard if — if they be living now, they over a hundred and some years old if she's living. Close to it.

Wigginton: What'd you like about her?

Boles: Oh, she used to make you get lessons. If you didn't, you'd be back in the clothes room getting whapped.

Wigginton: So you liked her.

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: Did that make you know she cared about you and she wanted you to learn and —?

Boles: Right, it'd help get you out of trouble. I guess that's what's helped me. Why I'm at now.

Wigginton: Yeah. Yeah. So when you graduated from — in '65, did you come straight to Memphis?

Boles: No, I still stayed in the country. I left — let me see, '88 where I'm staying now'd be off of James Road.

Wigginton: Mm-hmm.

Unknown Person: Yeah, I go back out there every two weeks now when I got to the bank from my hometown.

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: So is your hometown still rural? Is it still a country area, or is it now more city _____?

Unknown Person: Most city-like now.

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: _____ change? When did it start changing _____?

Boles: Well, I left out there in '87, they was building up then, getting ready to build the mall. It's come — increased from there, now it likes downtown.

Wigginton: Yeah. So when you graduated in '65, you started working for Rhodes shortly after that?

Boles: No, I laid around, then I got a job here in '66 in March — March 29.

Wigginton: Well, you didn't lay around too long! [laughs]

Boles: No.

Wigginton: You were recovering.

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: So how did you get the job here?

Boles: A man named Elsie Gwynn, he's a black fellow who used to paint here. That how I got it. He knowed they was hiring then _____ name Ms. Twaddle wanted somebody to work on the ground; that's how I got the job.

Wigginton: What did you think when you first got the job? What did you know about this place?

Boles: Nothing.

Wigginton: Hmm. Were there many other blacks here when you came?

Boles: When I come here, it was — his picture's now over there at the gym — one black fellow. He's the only student went to school here when I come. I forget the fellow's name.

Wigginton: So it was one black student when you came here.

Boles: One.

Unknown Person: How many black workers?

Boles: Oh, they had about four men, then housekeeping about five ladies and maids when I come, and about one security office, two or three — _____ had about three.

Unknown Person: What was — how — what did this place look like in 1966 when you came?

Boles: More like the campus; half of it looked like a jungle feel.

Wigginton: Wasn't this many buildings, was there?

Boles: No, they finished the student center when I come here, Briggs Student Center, getting ready for cars to park when I come here.

Wigginton: Hmm, and that's not even the student center anymore. [laughs]

Boles: No.

Wigginton: So when you came to work here and you — on a college campus, what was it like being around college students?

Boles: Well, it wasn't too many. When I come here, wasn't more than about 400-some students went here.

Wigginton: Hmm, and did you interact with the students? Did you talk with the students, or was that allowed?

Boles: It wasn't too much allowed then like students talk to us now; it wasn't allowed.

Wigginton: Did they let you know that you couldn't do it or —?

Boles: Right, right.

Wigginton: — told you to just do your work?

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: Yeah. When — so how long have you been here? You been here ever since then?

Boles: Yeah, I've been here since 1966; been here 41 years.

Wigginton: You started March — March what?

Boles: 29, 1966.

Wigginton: I know — the reason I asked you again is because I was born March 2, 1966. So three weeks after I was born, you started working here.

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: Man.

Boles: You see, they didn't have room for students when they started building three years out. That's how Frazier _____ got started, then no, they did _____. Then they built the Frazier _____, then they built — what else? — _____, then they went to Robson, then Hauser, then they added onto the gym, then they built East Village out of the years since I've been here. Then they added onto the kitchen. Three parts been added onto the gym.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Unknown Person: You've been here longer than most of the school.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Boles: Kitchen's been added on.

Wigginton: Then obviously the new library.

Boles: Right, that's the last.

Wigginton: So when you came here in 1966, were you thinking, "I'm gonna work at this place for 41 years"?

Boles: I ain't had no idea I was gonna stay around here this long.

Unknown Person: What did you think you would do when you grew up when you were little?

Boles: I didn't — mostly, I was looking for a job. I always wanted my own money like keep — parents get — see, my mother didn't raise, my grandparents did.

Wigginton: Mm hmm. What were your grandparents like?

Boles: They're pretty strict.

Wigginton: Yeah?

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: So does that mean they — they

Boles: My mother stayed for — she stayed 'round, but she didn't stay with me. I stayed mostly with my grandparents.

Wigginton: Yeah, so they — you had to work a lot and help out around the house and that sort of thing, that work ethic.

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: Yeah. So it was you and your sister and your brother who stayed with your grandparents. Were there anybody else there?

Boles: My two uncles.

Wigginton: They lived there, too?

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: And they were older?

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: Did you look up to them?

Boles: Well, they didn't have — mostly my grandparents stayed on — yeah, in one way, yeah; mostly my grandmother stayed mostly on me, and moster than he did.

Wigginton: When she got on you, what'd she say? What do you remember about her?

Boles: "Stay out of trouble when you go out!" That was her words! [laughs]

Unknown Person: _____ did you? Did you sneak off and try to go out?

Boles: No, I never did used to do that. When I used to leave the house, I used to tell her, "I'm gone," and she'd say "Stay out of trouble." That was her words.

Wigginton: Mm hmm, and it stuck in your head, huh?

Boles: Right! I guess that's the reason I stay at home now.

Unknown Person: How old were you when you came to _____?

Boles: 20.

Unknown Person: What was going on? Were you married at 20 or no kids?

Boles: No, I didn't get married 'til eight years after.

Wigginton: Who did you marry?

Boles: A girl I go to out in the country to, but she stayed out in the — [laughs]

Wigginton: _____ girl.

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: Are you still married?

Boles: Yeah, I been married 34 — er, going on 34 years.

Wigginton: What's your wife's name?

Boles: Her name Dorothy.

Wigginton: Tell us a little bit about Dorothy. What's she like?

Boles: Oh, she's pretty mean at times, but she's a nice little girl. [Laughter]

Wigginton: She's a country girl.

Boles: Right. She's out there where I'm from. Right.

Unknown Person: How'd you meet her? 'Cause you had been — at that point you'd been coming to the city every day for eight years to work.

Boles: Oh —

Unknown Person: _____ country girl — why you pick a country girl over a city girl?

Boles: Well, used to be a — what you call — a little café we used to go to out there in the country — it ain't there no more; houses there now — where I used to go. We'd dance and listen to records. I wasn't too much no dancer; I'd mostly listen at the records. [laughs]

Wigginton: I guess Dorothy thought you could two-step or something.

Boles: No, I never too much as two-step. That's why I married her. Yeah.

Wigginton: So you and Dorothy have children?

Boles: I have one son, he's 33.

Wigginton: Mm hmm. Does he live in Memphis?

Boles: He live with me. He ain't going nowhere — too lazy to go somewhere. [laughs]

Wigginton: So he doesn't — he's not familiar with that chopping that cotton and that sort of thing, that work ethic.

Boles: Oh, no. No. Uh uh. He's never done nothing like that. Uh uh.

Wigginton: So does Dorothy — did Dorothy work, too, or did —

Boles: Oh, she work at some Kroger's. She's been there about 13 years. She used to work at Shoney's 'til they keep hiring different _____. She worked there for 25 years, 'til there's another man took up. They lost all their benefits, but she still had this job, too, for Kroger's. Now, she work there. She's been there at Kroger's out at Summer here — shopping center, she's been there 13 years.

Unknown Person: Did you say your son was 23?

Boles: Uh uh. 33.

Unknown Person: Oh, 33. Okay.

Wigginton: 33. So either your friends from high school or maybe even Dorothy, how would they describe you? What would they say about you? If I talked to some of your friends from high school? I would say, "What was Raymond Boles like back in high school?" What would they say?

Boles: I don't know. [laughs] I rarely — hardly ever see many of them; they done move away from _____, but I don't hardly ever see none of them.

Wigginton: Would they say you were a quiet guy, a shy guy, or were you the class comedian, or class clown, or were you the athlete, or what — how would they describe you?

Boles: I've been always pretty quiet, and _____.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Boles: My wife get on me now, "You ain't got nothing to say!" I always been quiet. I stay out of trouble, I—

Wigginton: Yeah. So you've always been quiet.

Boles: Yeah, I never did be much getting into trouble. My grandmother used to get on me about that; I guess that's why I didn't.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Boles: I probably been locked up now.

Wigginton: So you — what's made you — you're clearly not a person who changes jobs every six months. What's made you stay here so long?

Boles: I don't know. I guess 'cause I've been used to working, and I ain't never did switch. I don't see there many left, I guess I just stay. I don't hardly miss — I don't miss work now. When I get sick, I still come on to work. My boss get on me now sometime like, he's, "How come you don't take off?" I still come to work.

Wigginton: So you got a work ethic that goes way back.

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: That's just how you — that's what you know.

Boles: Right. I don't miss now. He's been here going on — Kevin Cycle — he can tell you now, I been — he's been here only six years; he ain't never seed me took off since he's been here.

Unknown Person: You don't take off for weekends?

Boles: I'm talking about like five days a week, like fellows take off through in the week like they got something to go do, take off, call in; I ain't took off since he's been here, and he's going on six years.

Unknown Person: What do you do for fun?

Boles: Place where I used to go, that ain't there no more. I don't go _____ out of town, no saloons. I don't go there; I just stay at home weekends. My wife be working; I just stay at home, watch football games.

Wigginton: You like football?

Boles: Right. I guess now I've got too old. I don't try to go. I stay home.

Wigginton: So do you — one of the things I remember, and it's still the case today, is like it hasn't changed at all in 20 years. When I was a student here from 1984 to 1988, you were always recognized as a quiet but very nice guy, spoke to everybody, but pretty quiet and reserved. You're still the same way. I mean is that how you've been the whole 41 years you've been here? Is that how you —

Boles: I guess that's how my grandmother brought me up to if they speak, speak; if they don't, don't worry about it. I guess I'm dead weight now.

Wigginton: But you did say that when you first came, that you didn't have as much interaction with the students, but it seems like I see you talking to students more now.

Boles: Oh, some of them, they do talk. They ask how the campus look, then they stop and talk. Well, I don't try to razz them and start talking; they stop and talk, I talk with them.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Boles: Some do that now.

Unknown Person: Do you remember Mr. Wigginton when he was going here as a student? What was he like?

Boles: Oh, I've seen him with — every time I see [laughs] — [Laughter] I'd see him, he's talking to the lady he's married with now. When I used to see him around here, they'd be together, walking around, I guess be going to class.

Unknown Person: _____ like them back then?

Boles: I guess, yeah.

Unknown Person: Was he as secure as he is now, or no? What was he like as a young man?

Boles: Oh, when he seed me, he'd wave, but they — when I see them, they be walking around, I guess be going to class, getting ready to go to class, they'd be talking. [laughs] Yeah.

Wigginton: Well, I know when we came back, it was — for us, it was so important that when we saw familiar faces like yours, and we were glad to see you, and we felt like y'all were glad to see us, and that meant a lot to us. So has it been — what's that experience been like, not just so much with me and my wife, but just seeing particularly black students who went here and you remember them, and then seeing them when they come back. Does that stand out to you?

Boles: Oh, yeah. I've seed a whole lot of the older professors what used to be here now, they gone. I seed a whole lot of them at the — when they had the reunion that was at the thing.

Wigginton: Yeah, at Homecoming?

Boles: I know the faces, but I — I don't know the names, but I know the faces when I see them. They ain't about four or five old ones around here now, so they ain't many. All of them gone, retired.

Wigginton: Yeah. So when you see old students, the black students in particular, do they — do you enjoy seeing the black students over the years when they come back?

Boles: I seed a few at the reunion. They done changed, look like they got a little bit —

Wigginton: Little wider?

Boles: Young folk — old folk spread, I call it.

Wigginton: Yeah, yeah. [Laughter]

Boles: I know they faces, what I said.

Wigginton: Yeah. They speak, too, don't they?

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: So why do you think they — why do you think people like me, and my wife, and others, why do you think we always make sure we speak? Why do you think?

Boles: Well, I guess that's the way your attitude, way you's brought up, that way I can see.

Wigginton: Must be something about you, too. I mean do you think people — black students here have respect for you?

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: What do you think they respect about you?

Boles: Well, some, they — some they've been to get to know you, they speak, and some don't know you, they not gonna speak, but they see me. But some of them speak; some don't, but they know who's around here, and there's more of them here than there used to be.

Wigginton: Oh, yeah.

Boles: I heard one _____ about 60-some of them.

Wigginton: Actually, it's over 100 now.

Boles: It over 100?

Wigginton: Over 100 black students at Rhodes.

Boles: Really? Well, it done increased then.

Wigginton: That's a long way from one when you were here — when you first came here.

Boles: Yeah. I remember what — when it started all, sure was but one. Now, you say it's 100? I didn't know it was that many.

Wigginton: Yeah. Course, the still's a lot bigger, too.

Boles: Yeah, they increased _____ year, but they get to go to class at different time; I don't see all of them, many as I used to see.

Wigginton: Yeah. So are you doing — when you first came, are you still have some of the same responsibilities now in your job that you had when you first came to Rhodes?

Boles: No, I really don't work like I used to, or not as hard as I used to; he don't let me.

Wigginton: Yeah. [laughs]

Unknown Person: What did you have to do that you don't do anymore, like what did you have to do in the beginning?

Boles: We used to have great big — I don't know if you have they used to see on the great big wide _____ we used to have to pick leaves in.

Wigginton: Oh, yeah!

Boles: You seed them then! We used to have no leaf sucker; we used to pick them and carrying them in the back 40; that's why we used to pile up leaves, how it got to be like a jungle. If you get you some dogs and a gun, you could go hunting back there if you wanted to. Jump you some rabbit; that's the way the commons was back then.

Wigginton: [laughs] Yeah, yeah.

Boles: Where we used to dump our leaves at. Now, we put them in the dumpster, and when we fill it up, the truck come get them. We used to didn't have all that. We used to had limbs that was piled up back 40; they'd burn them. We used to didn't have no dumpster. We just had to wait and burn the

garbage every other month or so; we had to pick them cans up, then haul them away and burn the brush. We didn't have no dumpster like — Rev. Ben Dalton started that when he come here, getting the dumpsters.

Wigginton: Yeah. I wanted to talk a little bit about Memphis. What do you think about Memphis? Do you like Memphis?

Boles: Yeah.

Wigginton: What do you like about it?

Boles: Well, I brought one — Memphis — oh, no, it ain't like it used to be.

Unknown Person: Is it better?

Boles: What?

Unknown Person: Is it better?

Boles: Memphis?

Unknown Person: Mm-hmm.

Boles: Oh, there's so much crime; I think that's what's making it so worser. That's all you hear now is shoot, shoot, shoot. It used to, you didn't hear all that.

Wigginton: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Boles: One day I guess it will get better than what it used to be.

Wigginton: Have you ever thought about living somewhere else other than Memphis, though?

Boles: I live on the outer edge, I guess you call it the Frazier area.

Wigginton: You live in Frasier now?

Boles: Yeah, the edge of Frazier, I call it, right off of James Road over here.

Wigginton: Mm-hmm.

Boles: Yeah, I been there going on — will be about 20 years next year. My hometown really's out by Wolf Chase, was where I really born and raised at. I go out there every two weeks, but I don't ride too much downtown. I bet I ain't been downtown in over 30-some years.

Wigginton: [laughs] Are you serious? Why don't you go downtown?

Boles: I never did much shop downtown. They say everything most of what there used to be down there's closed.

Wigginton: Yeah, that's true.

Boles: I don't go. I go out really Wolf Chase area. If I ain't going there, I go on over to Old Poplar out of Austin Peat when I want anything. I really don't go — ain't never been — go downtown. There probably ain't nowhere to park.

Wigginton: [laughs]

Boles: That's what they say; I ain't been.

Wigginton: So you're a country boy.

Boles: Right. That's where I was born and raised, the country. Most of that my home, country.

Wigginton: Yeah. What about your brother and sister now? Do they live in the Memphis area?

Boles: I got one stay up — what I go and stay with — she's still out there, and I got one stay — don't stay too far from me. She stay downtown, and she go back out there every once in a while to the country. Yeah.

Wigginton: Mm-hmm. What do you like about the country?

Boles: I guess _____. _____ building was back then. Now, it's like city mostly now. That's the way I go when I go out shopping. I don't hardly go downtown.

Wigginton: So —

Unknown Person: Do you think if you could, you'd choose to be back on the farm and doing more farm work?

Wigginton: Uh uh. Not now. [Laughter]

Boles: _____, ain't nowhere to farm out that way now. Uh uh, all that I know from where I used to stay, 64 over into Germantown _____ Germantown Road, that used to be farmland. Now, it's building from Germ — 64 to Germantown ain't nothing but apartment building and everything. I remember when it wasn't nothing but farmland all out there. Now it's all in shopping center.

Wigginton: So are you planning on hitting the 50-year mark here at Rhodes College? How long you gonna be here?

Boles: Well, I'm 62 now, I'm getting ready about 66, I'm intending to throw in my hat, and that's gonna add four more years.

Wigginton: So you gonna get 45 years in.

Boles: Be about 46 when I get ready. I got to work up 'til I get 66. I be done put in about 46 years when I get ready to lay.

Unknown Person: That's a long haul.

Boles: Four more years ain't long! [Laughter]

Wigginton: So — so what's it been like to see so many people come and go?

Boles: Oh, like they didn't like it.

Wigginton: Have you ever been tempted to go?

Boles: Yeah, in my younger days.

Wigginton: What made you stay?

Boles: When I got older, it wasn't no use. I don't been here that long; no use me leaving now. That's the way I used to say it.

Unknown Person: Where's Mrs. Boles _____?

Boles: Oh, she's gonna be holding on like this — I told her one day I have fun, "I'm fixing to get ready to leave now. My age coming up, and I'm getting 62." She told, "You ain't gonna go nowhere; you leave me with all these bills, you might can leave when you get 66."

Unknown Person: Mr. Boles, how old were you when you bought your first house?

Boles: Well, I was 43 _____ first _____. If I'd had have got it younger, I'd have had to pay for.

Unknown Person: How did it feel when you were gonna get your first — if you moved in when you were younger, and you said you can't wait to have your own money, and then _____?

Boles: Yeah, felt good to get to do what I wanted it. When you renting, you can't. Yeah, now I do that now, and I get out there; I gotta decorate like I want, putting plants. When I come there, I didn't have all that.

Unknown Person: You garden. You like plants?

Boles: I put most plant. I don't plant many flowers; I put plant.

Unknown Person: Did you do that when you were younger? _____ did you all — at the farm? When did you learn how to do that?

Boles: I didn't start planting around _____ 'til about 1980-some when I bought it. That was in '88.

Wigginton: Oh, so when you bought the house, that's when you got interested in doing —?

Boles: Yeah. Used to plant around here, but while I was renting it, I didn't put none around here.

Wigginton: Yeah, but you did it here at the college?

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: Yeah.

Unknown Person: What's your favorite plant?

Boles: Well, I ain't got too many favorites. I see something pretty I like, but I really like planting azaleas, or boxwoods or something like that. Hollies, I buy. I go get them, the cheapest ones I can get. I ain't spending the big money in them like what some they put around here. I go get the cheapest ones watch — years watch them grow.

Unknown Person: Mrs. Boles like plants and stuff?

Boles: Oh, she like flowers; she don't care too much about the plant. I do plant some flowers she like.

Unknown Person: She doesn't plant any.

Boles: Uh uh.

Unknown Person: You have the green thumb. You're real good at it?

Boles: She's — she want to decorate the house; she don't do too much outside. Sometimes she help me rake the leaves up; that ain't too often.

Wigginton: [laughs] That's on a special occasion

Boles: _____ don't work outside. She works inside. She paint; I don't do that. She do that. She don't let me do that. "I'm painting that." I'm, "Thank you, ma'am, I don't want to paint no how."
[Laughter]

Unknown Person: _____ y'all get along well _____ .

Boles: Oh, we do.

Unknown Person: What did you think, like do you remember when you first met her, you first saw her? What did you think when — when did you know that she was gonna be your wife?

Boles: Oh, I courted for about — let's see — met her in '72, court her for about two years, and in '74 we got married January the 28th.

Unknown Person: So you all got ma — and so did you do the traditional thing? Did you go ask her parents?

Boles: Yeah, we told them — one day she told her mom, "We gonna get married." She didn't have too much to say. She didn't have nothing but one girl no how. She done passed back here; her mother used to stay with us, too. She died about a year ago. She been gone about a year now. She stayed with us.

Unknown Person: Where did — is your mother still alive?

Boles: Uh uh. I lost my mother in '72. She's been gone about 35 years.

Unknown Person: So before you even got married.

Boles: Right. She — think she knowed her, but she didn't know here too well.

Unknown Person: Then so shortly after you all got married, you had your little boy that summer.

Boles: Right.

Unknown Person: What did you — how was that, being a father for the first time? Well, for the — how was it seeing your little boy for the first time?

Boles: It was okay. [Laughter]

Unknown Person: Where was your father? _____.

Boles: Well, I never knowed mine. I's brought up kind of without father. My grandparents more raised me. Grandmother.

Wigginton: Yeah, but your grandfather was around?

Boles: Right. He passed after I finished school in '65. He's been gone about 42 or 43 years along.

Unknown Person: _____ probably made her real, real proud that you finished school.

Boles: Yeah.

Unknown Person: _____ proud at the moment in this life so far?

Boles: Well, I been waiting on the other four years where I can quit working, so I be getting up early every morning I guess.

Wigginton: What time do you get to work?

Boles: Oh, I get here about, oh, 5:00-something. My wife got to be at work at 6:00, so I just come in one car. I have two, but I just come in one.

Wigginton: Do you like cars, or they just for transportation?

Boles: Yeah, I have a — I got — I just bought a — I got a utility truck, too, and a car. I just bought another one here, a car, about four months ago, another new one. I wanted a truck and got a deal on the car _____ fell for that. She likes to keep me in debt before I retire. That's what she call herself, though. [Laughter]

Wigginton: So you think when you retire and have put 45 years in at the same place, you'd be pretty proud of that?

Boles: Yeah. Think I will.

Wigginton: Well, I think you will have the — you'll be the — have the senior — the most time of anybody ever in the history of the college.

Boles: Yeah. Next year I be done tied with Joe Neville before he — when left. I think he put in about 42; used to work in housekeeping.

Wigginton: That's right. Yeah, I remember Mr. Neville. So you catch up — you'll catch up with him next year.

Boles: Right.

Wigginton: Are y'all friends?

Boles: Yeah, he called me about three months ago; he was out here, he didn't see me, so he called me at home. He's doing all right

Wigginton: Yeah, that's good. So you, when you retire, are you gonna spend more time in your yard? Is that one of the things you're looking forward to?

Boles: I guess that's the reason I'm doing it up now, putting more different plants what give me something to work with if cold weather don't kill them. That's what do about before it turned cold, buying me some more different, putting in, and my wife asked me how come I'm buying all them plants. "Well, I'm trying to put them in there while they'd be big enough when I get ready to retire, I'll have something to do."

Unknown Person: Do you have any grandkids?

Boles: I don't have any. No. My kid —

Wigginton: Would you like some?

Boles: Yeah, but he don't have any yet. [laughs]

Unknown Person: Gotta make him have some.

Boles: Not yet.

Unknown Person: Mrs. Boles wants some, I bet.

Boles: She don't talk all that much about it. I guess she might be, but not now, she ain't. She don't talk too much about any kids.

Wigginton: Do y'all like to travel?

Boles: Oh, I never — no, I ain't too much at travel. As far as I done been the age I am now, that's as far as I've been. That's been about — what'd I say _____ — 18 years ago, that's far as I've been Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Wigginton: Is that right?

Boles: I ain't no traveling person. Well, I never did travel no way.

Unknown Person: You like to keep your feet on the ground, stay close to home.

Boles: I ain't getting on no plane, no way.

Wigginton: [laughs] No?

Boles: Uh uh.

Wigginton: Was there any other — anything else you'd like to say before we finish, anything else we need to — you'd like for people to know about you?

Boles: Oh, let — that's about it, I guess, if you don't have no more.

Wigginton: Well, when — I'll ask you one more question and we can end on that. When four years from now, when we have your retirement party here at Rhodes College, what do you think people who come to that party, what do you think they're gonna — when they get to speak about you, what do you think they're gonna say?

Boles: Some _____ what I'm gonna be doing, where I'm going. [laughs] _____.

Wigginton: Say no further than Hot Springs?

Boles: I don't know. I might not say I'm going there. I'll be messing around in the yard. Might tell them my wife be — might start cooking.

Wigginton: Yeah, people are gonna say things about you, though. They're gonna say, "Raymond, you've been this, this and this," and they're gonna wish you well. What do you think they're gonna say about

you? If I get a chance to get up and say a few words to you, what do you think I might say, or what do you think some other people might say?

Boles: I don't know. I hope it's a good word. [laughs]

Wigginton: Something good, right?

Boles: right.