

**Clifford Yoder**  
**September 9, 2023**

Alan: What's your birthday? When were you born?

Clifford: October 14th, 1941. Princess Anne County on Holland Rd.

Alan: Whose farm was that?

Clifford: It would have been on Joe Hershberger, Jr., J.I. Hershberger, Jr.

Alan: Now, your dad didn't grow up in Kempsville, did he?

Clifford: No, he'd come from Geauga County, Ohio. This Joe Hershberger that I'm speaking about was Dad's first cousin. There's a number of families who moved from Geauga County, Ohio to Virginia at that time. The reason being, in Ohio, all of a sudden the school authorities got real tough about children going to school until 16 and they'd been going to 8th grade, as far as they went. And they got, I don't know, something got real tough with this. There was a point that they started, they put several of the fathers into jail for that. And my grandpa had gotten a letter. Had gotten a letter also, and they were going to be coming to get him. But in the meantime, there had been plans being made for some of them were going to move to Norfolk. They found the laws were more lenient there. You know, there's a good number of families are planning on moving there. Grandpa's had the sale bill out for their sale, but hadn't had it yet. When the authorities come out, they saw the sale bill, they backed off. And they moved down with the Hershbergers. That would have been the Joe Hershberger family. But there was Jake and Jonas and Andy, the boys, and then a lot of the girls. My Fanny (?) was married to Abner Overholt. Also, there was a lot of Millers come down at that time.

And the Miller family, that would have been in line with Jonas and Menno Miller, their families. They were all involved in that. And then the Bylers came, you knew Clarence Byler, I guess, Curley. His mother and Dad's mother were sisters.

Alan: Your grandmother was a Hershberger?

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: Now, your grandfather was actually born in Holmes County, (Ohio) right?

Clifford: John B. Yoder, born in Holmes County. Some years ago, I was on the farm in Holmes County where he was born, where he grew up. He was there until, I forget what age was it, until he moved to Geauga County.

Alan: Okay, and that's where he met your grandmother?

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: Did he move to Kempsville the same time your dad did, or did they come later?

Clifford: No, they went there twice. Dad was seven years old the first time they went to Kempsville. It was during the Depression, and Grandpa's farm in Ohio wasn't selling. They went down there for a number of years, and it wasn't selling. So they went back to Ohio, and the place sold, and they went back to Virginia. I think Dad was 14 or something like that when they went back the second time.

Alan: And so when your mom and dad got married, did they stay in Kempsville then for a while?

Clifford: For a while. Mom was from Grantsville, Maryland. And she had been working in Kempsville. They were in Kempsville then until 1942 when the, a new settlement was started in Stuarts Draft, Virginia and Grandpa's moved up there. Dad had been working, working on the farm, and Dad's sister went up there. And then that's when my folks moved to Grantsville, Maryland. That's where my mom was from. And we were there, six years, and then moved back, that's when we moved to Mount Pleasant.

Alan: Was your dad, were your parents Amish while they were living in Grantsville?

Clifford: No, they were conservative. They had been Amish before, but when they went to Grantsville, they joined the conservative church there. And in fact, backing up, as this settlement in Stuarts Draft, when that was started, prior to that, Kempsville had been Old Order Amish. And there's, some were wanting cars and some didn't want it. And it carried to have cars. And those that were opposed to that went to Stuarts Draft. That's when that settlement started there. My grandpa's went there, and my folks went to Grantsville. They joined the conservative church there. And after six years, then moved to Mount Pleasant on the Schloss Brothers farm.

Alan: How old were you then?

Clifford: I was eight.

Alan: You remember that move then.

Clifford: Oh, yes. Another thing I remember, when they looked, when they looked about the job at all, you know, there's a Navy airfield just across the, just across the road, you know. At that they're flying the, the prop planes from World War II. And they asked about that, that, oh, no, that's been closed for years. They haven't been flying any planes. The day they moved, January, about January 8th, 1950, I think it was, somewhere around that, they started flying planes, and they're still flying today.

Alan: How did they get hooked up with the Schloss Brothers?

Clifford: Dad was looking for a job, and he found they were looking for someone. I don't know how that came about, but when we went there, that was just a small dairy farm. They were milking 24 cows when we went there. And it wasn't long, without a notice, here come two semi-loads of cows in, and things changed quick. And then your dad was busy with a bunch of buildings for them for a long time. The original barn held 24 cows and they were milking 27. And then there was a big tramp shed barn there, it was a hip roof barn. The first job that converted that, made a dairy barn out of that. And it had 30, uh, 36 stanchions in there. And shortly after that was finished, they built the other barn over to it with 40 stanchions. And it just had a gable roof with a hay mow on that one. And they, they expanded to that. In fact, the reason they had, bought so many cows at one time, this is the time they were shipping some cows over to Palestine. They were doing that and these cows were too near to freshening that they weren't going to ship them on the boat. And Schlossbrothers found out about it and bought them. It was on a good Friday. Just prior to that, E.T. Troyer had been there, he was going to school at Goshen. And he had worked, he was familiar with Schloss brothers. He had vacationed from school and come see if Dad had some work for him.

He said, no, he wasn't needing any help. Well, I think before the day was out, or maybe a day or two later, there were two semi-loads of cows in there without any warning. He got word to E.T. He could find something for him to do. And they expanded from then on. The last several years we were milking 76 cows here. That's what we were milking at that time.

And then we went to school at Mount Pleasant. I was in the second grade and Willie was in the first grade.

Alan: Had the school already moved to the new school by then?

Clifford: Yes, it was the first or second year of the new school.

Alan: Well, if that was 1950, that would have been...yeah, they started in 1950 in January.

Clifford: Okay, well January 1950 is when we moved down there. One thing I didn't know until later on when we lived in Cumberland County, Nathan and Laura Layman were there. She was Laura Shaddinger. I didn't know this until Laura told me. My Mama brought us to school the first day. The first day she knocked on the door at the school door and asked if the teacher was there. And Laura said, well, I am the teacher. She looked real young, you know. She said, well, I am the teacher. So that was the first day of school at Mount Pleasant.

Alan: And Laura was your teacher then?

Clifford: Laura Shaddinger.

Alan: Who taught the other room? Were there two rooms?

Clifford: Amos Wenger.

Alan: Amos Wenger and Laura Shaddinger.

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: I saw Nathan yesterday at Ruth Hochstetler's funeral. Talked to him for a while.

Clifford: Okay, interesting.

Alan: It was.

Clifford: He's getting up, he's getting up in years too.

Alan: He is very much so. In fact, I asked him, "How did you and Laura ever meet? Because you were from Newport News and she was from here." So I got to learn all that story.

Clifford: Okay.

Alan: Who all was in your first grade? Or in the grade with you there?

Clifford: Jamie Wenger. David Wenger... been Powell's David.

Alan: Yep, I remember him.

Clifford: Junior Dickerson.

Alan: Junior Dickerson? Oh yeah, Roy Dickerson.

Clifford: Okay. Roy Dickerson Jr. James Mast.

Alan: Okay. He's not doing very well either.

Clifford: I heard he wasn't. Uh, let's see. James, Junior. It's all the boys I can think of right now. The grade up from me would have been, uh, Harold Lehman, Phillip Miller, Esther Troyer.

Alan: Would Carl Wenger have been in that class?

Clifford: Oh yes, Carl, Carl Wenger's in my grade, yes.

Alan: Yeah, he's still doing well. I talked to him a couple months ago. He sent me a bunch of pictures.

Clifford: Okay, good. He's in Florida yet, I guess, huh?

Alan: I think so. I'm not positive. I think he may have a couple different places he lives because he apparently did pretty well.

Clifford: Yeah. Last time I talked to him at one of the reunions there at Mount Pleasant. He did body work for Daniel Smucker at Harrisonburg. And then he went to 1W service in Florida. And while he was there, he, uh, well, did some body work for someone there. But when he was out of service, Jackie and he could make better money where he was. So he stayed there, raised his family down there. And he had his own business there for years. And he sold that, he sold the business and retired from that.

Alan: I think that might have been David or Oliver.

Clifford: That was David.

Alan: David, yeah, okay.

Clifford: You asked about Carl?

Alan: Carl was an electrical engineer, I believe.

Clifford: Yeah, okay. Carl was older. David is the one I was in the same grade with. And then Oliver was younger. I think it was a Wade there. I think it might have been some younger.

Alan: Wade was my age. He's still around and doing well. David passed away just in the last several months. And Oliver, I think he's already passed away, too. But the rest of them, even Dorothy Pearl's still around.

Clifford: Yeah, she was in school then at that time.

Alan: How long did your dad farm the Schloss farm?

Clifford: He was there three and a half years.

Alan: Okay, why did they leave it?

Clifford: You want me to tell you?

Alan: Well, yeah, that's why I asked.

Clifford: Okay, it's a new wrinkle. Things were busy there. I mean, the Schloss farm had really expanded things. The set up they had as far as Dad getting paid and all, the agreement him and Schloss Brothers had was, Dad paid half the feed, they paid the other half. And dad furnished the labor. And then for half the milk check, they split the milk check 50-50. I don't know why or I remember very well, but I don't know, some reason, some people got a burr under the saddle and that was unequal yoke.

Alan: Who would that have been? Who were the preachers then?

Clifford: Well, I remember one time, they were there to talk to Daddy, Eli Kramer was the bishop, but Eli Kramer and Amos Wenger came to our house that one Saturday, I remember that. And because

of the pressure from that, that's why he left there.

Alan: Well, how was Fred (Yoder) able to get by with it a couple years later then? Did he have a different deal with him or had it kind of gone away because Eli wasn't around anymore?

Clifford: I don't know, I never heard, Fred, I never heard any, I never heard any problem about it after that. Yeah. But that's strictly the reason why Daddy left, because of the pressure, the pressure from that.

Alan: Where did they go from there?

Clifford: Well, when we left there, we were at the Bertha Fentress' house. We were there until, uh, and that was right at the time, right that fall was when the folks started leaving Kempsville going to Montezuma, Georgia. These that were going to Montezuma had been producers at Yoder Dairies, and with those producers going out, they were coming short on milk. And up to that point, all the producers at Yoder Dairies were from the Beachy church there. Well, when these start leaving, this kinda changed things. Anyhow, they made a concession there, Levi Kaufman went to Montezuma, and Dad bought his herd, and by doing that, he was able to get in as a producer at Yoder Dairies. Dad was the first non-Beachy producer at Yoder Dairies.

Alan: And you all were still going to Mount Pleasant then?

Clifford: Yes. Ironically, buying Levi Kaufman's herd, they were next to Swartzentruber...remember Eldon Swartzentruber?

Alan: Yeah.

Clifford: Okay, the farm next door. Levi Kaufman bought that herd from dad's farm when his grandparents went to Stuarts Draft. So dad was back in the same place again for a while. We were, we were there from November until latter part of December. Dad rented the Simon L. Yoder farm over on Kempsville Road. Chris Crane, a neighbor had bought it. But they didn't move until latter part of December. And Levi Kaufman said, if you want to, you stay in here, come in here, it won't cost you any rent. You can start milking right away like this. Otherwise he's going to leave a couple boys there to do the chores. So, that's what we did. We moved over there the first part of November, or we were there until the latter part of December when Simon L.'s moved out and then we moved over there.

Alan: That was on Princess Anne Road?

Clifford: Yeah. Just across from the golf course.

Alan: Okay, I remember when you were there.

Clifford: Interesting thing, when we moved the cows, a lot of these farms joined each other in the back. Your dad was familiar with that. And, when we moved the cows we just run them through the field from where we were over to the other farm. We went to Jonas Swartzentruber's place and where Ike Plank lived and over to where we were. Norman Swartzentruber and a few others helped us and we drove the cows from one farm to the other. A few gates opened up and that's how we got the herd moved.

Alan: Never, never, never missed a beat, huh? You kept right on milking.

Clifford: Yeah. We didn't have any trucks involved, you know. It worked real good.

Alan: How old were you when you started working on the farm, when you actually started doing any work?

Clifford: Seven or eight.

Alan: Not very old then, huh?

Clifford: No, I wasn't.

Alan: What were the first chores you had to do?

Clifford: Well, let me back up a little bit, I'm telling you wrong. When we were in Grantsville, Dad was milking there. Olin Yoder used to go to Wisconsin and he'd buy cows to bring them into Maryland. Dad had sold his cows and so him and Olin had a deal. Dad took care of the cows for Olin. I'm not sure what arrangements he had, but I do remember when I was in the first grade in school he'd help us with the chores. I had to feed the calves with a nipple bucket. You know what a nipple bucket was?

Alan: Oh yeah. I do.

Clifford: I remember at one time we had 13 calves in one pen. And I fed them the nipple bucket when I was in first grade. I kid you not. I got started early.

Alan: Did your dad always farm with tractors or did he farm with horses when they were Amish?

Clifford: Longer ago, longer ago, there were horses, but the one thing that's different is the Amish at Kempsville had tractors.

Alan: Oh, okay. So they never did have horses then.

Clifford: Not there. In Ohio they did. But they had the tractors there. That's one thing that's different from, some of this comes from some different localities, I think, different customs there. But in Kempsville, even the Amish there, they had tractors, they had electricity and telephone. They didn't have the cars. Now some places, you know, some of them didn't have electricity or any of that. But they had everything but the cars there.

Alan: How long did you all stay on Princess Anne Road?

Clifford: Seven years.

Alan: And you left there to go to Land of Promise Road. On the Stutzman place?

Clifford: Yes, Lloyd Stutzman farm.

Alan: How come you moved there from Princess Anne?

Clifford: Because Dad bought the farm.

Alan: Oh, he was just renting the farm on Princess Anne?

Clifford: Yes, yes. He was renting it off of Chris Crane. And Lloyd was trying to sell the place for a few years. Anyhow, Dad ended up buying, that's why we got down there, was because of buying the farm there.

Alan: How many acres did he have on that farm?

Clifford: 370. It was about 170 woods.

Alan: Oh, okay. Still a pretty big farm.

Clifford: It was, but anyhow several years after he sold that, Lloyd come to him one day and he wanted to buy part of that farm back. Lloyd used to, he got a job here and there. And I didn't have to say that...but anyhow

Alan: But it's a fact. Lloyd's a relative so I know Lloyd. Or knew Lloyd.

Clifford: But anyhow, he wanted to buy some of it back and he had drawn the lines of what he wanted. And basically what he wanted was primarily all woodland. Very little farmland. It wouldn't have affected Dad's farming at all, you know. And he thought it over and they agreed on price and Dad sold him that. Well, that made it a whole lot easier on Dad financially here because we weren't farming that anyhow. So that was sold off to Lloyd then.

Alan: I knew Bill and Howard and Harold and Edward, but I didn't know Keith and Jimmy because they were older and had moved away from here until...

Clifford: Yes, same with me, I never met them either.

Alan: But several years ago at Hochstetler reunions, I got to meet them and know them. Nice people, but they were still mad that Lloyd had sold that farm because they wanted to farm it and he sold it and they were still mad at him about it.

Clifford: Well, I can understand that. I know Bill wanted to farm the worst kind of way.

Alan: That's right, he liked to farm too.

Clifford: Well, I remember when Fred (Yoder) was at Schloss Brothers, you know. And then when he left there, they had a sale selling the cows and all, you know. And I remember being at the sale there and the cows were going pretty reasonable. And I know Bill went over to Lloyd and he just tried his best to talk him into buying some more cows there and all. And it didn't happen.

Alan: I remember that sale because Daddy gave me some money to go buy a soda pop, or Pepsi, and I bought a Pepsi and put the change in my pocket and forgot about it. And later he said "you tryin' to steal from me?" I said, "no, I forgot."

Clifford: And a drink was probably a dime then wasn't it?

Alan: Yeah, wasn't much.

Clifford: I know Bill wanted to farm the worst kind of way. And at the time we had moved down there, he was working for Ralph Frost at a farm down at the end of the road from where we were.

Alan: Keith worked in a factory as a foreman but after work he'd go work with his neighbor on his farm and after he retired he went to farming with him and farmed up until his 80s.

Clifford: Where is Keith?

Alan: Indiana, well he's passed now a couple years ago, but he was in Indiana.

Clifford: Wow, didn't he have some kinfolks at Kempsville.

Alan: Oh yeah, he did.

Clifford: I was thinking he did.

Alan: His grandfather was Amish, Lloyd's dad was Amish. And the girl he married, I can't think of her name now, was from over at Kempsville. In fact she worked at Yoder Dairies. I had a picture of

her somewhere and I didn't know who it was. And I asked Junie Miller and he said, "oh that's so and so and so and so. Yeah, she worked at the dairy. Yeah, she married Keith Stutzman, but it didn't last." So I don't know what happened.

Clifford: Well I'm thinking, I remember Harvey Miller there, they lived next to the dairy. I was thinking Keith's wife was related to his wife or something.

Alan: Yes, you're absolutely right, that's right, she was, she was. That's right, I'd forgotten that, you're right, she was related to that family.

Clifford: I'll tell you something that blew my doors in a while back. I met this man a long time ago and hadn't seen him for quite a while. And later I'd met him and that was Emanuel Troyer, Jr.

Alan: Oh my goodness.

Clifford: I don't know if you remember, if you knew of him or not.

Alan: Emanuel Troyer from Deep Creek, yeah. Just barely memory and don't know much else, but I have come across him in my research.

Clifford: Okay, Jr. was, I think, the youngest boy. He was a walking encyclopedia. He passed away just less than a year ago. And anyhow, long story shorter, he had a son that was a doctor in Sarasota. My son's a builder there in Georgia. And he called my son and wanted to see about building a house there in Georgia. And Darryl told me, he said, "I don't understand, this doctor called me from Sarasota and wanted me to build a house. I don't know him." And it ended up, he built a house for him. What it was, this boy had gone to school at FSU in Tallahassee. He used to go to football games and stuff like that there. And he wanted to get closer to Tallahassee. So he built that house there. But then later, later he moved out when he retired, Darryl did a lot of work for another house. His sister got to know him then. And Emanuel was around there somewhat. I got to know him better then. He had been to Blountstown and some things like that. And then later, later years, he went up to Abbeville, South Carolina. He was there for a good number of years. And he had a son living there. But when I, the last few years ago, I started calling him. I'll tell you what, if I ever enjoyed something, he was like a walking encyclopedia. I found out more from Mount Pleasant and stuff like that than I ever knew before. Talking about bygone days. Just like one, you remember like the men's Sunday school class, the adult Sunday school class, remember you used to have it on the Amen Corner in church?

Alan: Oh yeah.

Clifford: Lloyd Stutzman used to teach the men's Sunday school class in the Amen Corner.

Alan: Really? I talked to Bill not long ago, and I asked him, I said, how come you all left the Mennonite church? And he said, well, Daddy didn't think he was getting some support that he should have gotten from the church, and so he went to the Baptist church. I don't know if that's true or not or what the story is, but that's what he said.

Clifford: Oh, it was, it was just amazing, some of the things that... and he worked at Yoder Dairies, Junior worked at Yoder Dairies before he was married, you know, he used to pick up milk from farms there and all. I found out more stuff around there than I ever, I ever knew. I'm going to put one in, I'm going to put one in you, brother. Do you remember years ago when, when someone had burned a cross in Eli Kramer's front yard, front driveway?

Alan: I do. Who did it?

Clifford: I remember when people talked and talked about it, and thought, ah, Ku Klux Klan and all this, you know. Junior told me his daddy is the one that did that.

Alan: For why? A joke or because he didn't like him?

Clifford: Him and Eli didn't hitch horses the best. Of course, they weren't the only ones to say that, but anyhow, they didn't hitch horses the best, I don't know what it was, but he, he took that cross and set it in the driveway there, and then the fire, got away and nobody saw it.

Alan: It even got newspaper write-ups. In my research I came across newspaper articles. Oh, a cross burnin'! Bishop in Mennonite Church! Big Deal!

Clifford: Yeah, yeah. Emanuel Troyer, Emanuel Troyer Senior is the one that did that.

Alan: Well, now I know.

Clifford: Like Paul Harvey would say, now you know the rest of the story. Oh it was amazing. You know, Junior's, remember there, he lived at Deep Creek, and then at, you know, there were Mount Pleasant too, and wow, wow, wow, it was just really interesting to me. I was really enjoying that.

Alan: How old is he? What years would he have been there in his teenage years?

Clifford: In the '40s.

Alan: Is he still living or has he passed on?

Clifford: He's passed on, less than a year ago, and he was 93 when he passed away.

Alan: Oh, gracious. That's getting up there.

Clifford: It is. But you know, it's just amazing, I mean going back years ago, it's just amazing what life was like then and what things were. Today people couldn't a'got a grip on that. It's just like that you booked your dad, wrote there. And do I remember right, that one Saturday evening, didn't have a way home from the dairy and borrowed Robert Mast's bicycle and rode it from there to home?

Alan: I've heard that story, yeah.

Clifford: Okay, I've read that book.

Alan: The first people who moved here in the early 1900's didn't have electricity, didn't have telephone, didn't have anything. If you couldn't bring it with you, you just didn't have it.

Clifford: Junior remembers some of that, you too, but I remember that Robert wrote a history of early settlers that were there. It was bare bones existence for a lot of people.

Alan: Yeah, it was, and they didn't do very well financially for a number of years, and it just took a while to get established, and it took a while for the modern inventions to reach them, such as they were at the time, but eventually they did. Even as late as...do you remember Francis Miller? Nancy and Nina's dad?

Clifford: Yeah.

Alan: Anyway, we interviewed him shortly before he died, and he was talking about when he was, oh, about six or seven years old, he got appendicitis, and so his dad put him in the wagon and carried him to Fentress to see Dr. Burfoot. And at that time there was nothing they could do for him, and Dr. Burfoot said... it was in the wintertime... he said, "get some snow and ice and pack it in an inner tube and put it on him and pray that he survives, but otherwise, nothing we can do." And so on the way home, he stopped at Sam Weaver's, who was a preacher here then, and Sam Weaver

had an old inner tube, and they packed it full of ice, and Francis said, “they put me to bed, and I just suffered for about two days, and then I started getting better, and here I am.”

Clifford: Wow.

Alan: You know, something that today is, if you catch it, is real simple. Well, let's go and get rid of that thing right now, back then was a death sentence almost.

Clifford: That's just amazing to me how some of that was. But I remember, one thing Daddy had told me, you know, we were at the Schloss brothers, he was back and forth with Abram Wenger, he could help fill silos and stuff like that there, but, you know, Abram, watched how he spent his money too. I'm sure you know that. But I remember one thing Dad said that kind of surprised him. He was there one time, and he looked at the chicken house there, and Abram had used barbed wire for electric lines to light the chicken house. Daddy told me that.

Alan: Oh, for heaven's sakes. Did you ever have many dealings with Abram?

Clifford: No, I didn't. I knew him, but I said I didn't have any dealings with him.

Alan: That's interesting. He was part of that Wenger clan. A.D. Wenger Sr. came here, and he was Powell Wenger's brother, and another brother was Abram's father, so when Abram came here, he came as a nephew to A.D. Wenger, Sr. and Powell Wenger brother [*actually Powell's father, Timothy Wenger's brother*].

Clifford: Uh-huh. The only thing I remember did, if I remember right, I remember in school, when Brother Wenger said something about Abram, did Abram come there from Saskatchewan, or something like that, western Canada?

Alan: Yeah. Well, he was actually born in the valley in Virginia, but then went to Pennsylvania, and then A.D. Wenger Sr., who was married for a very short period of time before his wife died. Now, A.D. Wenger Sr. didn't have any money. He was poor as church mice. But his widow was the only daughter, only child of a very wealthy Mennonite couple in Millersville, Pennsylvania.

Clifford: Okay.

Alan: And when she died, they'd only been married a year or so, he inherited the house that they lived in, which was brand new because she'd just built it, two farms and some stocks and bonds, and she still gave away what would be the equivalent today of several hundred thousand dollars to missions and so forth.

Clifford: Wow. So he was set.

Alan: So he was set. He had money then, and part of what he got was a farm in Canada, and he hired his nephew, Abram, to go up and farm that farm for a number of years.

Clifford: That's interesting. No wonder Brother Wenger knew where he'd come from.

Alan: Yep. They were cousins. First cousins.

Clifford: I didn't know that. I didn't know they were related. I heard him say they're from Canada there, come down. That puts a piece in the puzzle.

Alan: Yeah, and in fact, when they came here, they were from a different conference, so they were fairly liberal, and hard to believe it, but he didn't wear a straight coat. He wore a necktie when they first came here, and she wore jewelry and makeup. But after they got here for a while and figured the church out, they talked it over and decided, well, you know what? If we're going to

be a part of this community, we're going to have to fit in, so he got rid of all their necktie and coat and put on a straight coat, and she got rid of the jewelry and the makeup, and by the time we knew them, they were plain old folks.

Clifford: Wow. Wow, wow, wow. Amazing. Some of those things from long ago. Ah...Carson Hochstetler raised this boy. He lives up above Farmville.

Alan: Stephen?

Clifford: Steve. Yeah. I didn't know Stephen's background until he told me that.

Alan: What did he tell you? That he was a Tenefoss?

Clifford: That he was a Tenefoss boy? He had a Tenefoss daddy. Yeah. I didn't know that.

Alan: Well, Marcus was also adopted. He was a Culpepper.

Clifford: I knew he was adopted. I knew we were two different families.

Alan: Yeah, it was a Culpepper who was related to... his grandmother would have been a King who would have been Cary Miller's niece because Cary Miller was a King. From Sol King.

Clifford: Yeah, she was a King, yeah. Where did she live?

Alan: Cary Miller? Oh, Culpepper? In Fentress.

Clifford: Okay, I didn't realize that.

Alan: Yeah, they grew up in Fentress. One of the daughters married a Combs. For some reason my mother was friends with one of them and so even as kids we'd go visit them every now and then.

Clifford: Okay. That's interesting. When you first moved into Fentress, that settlement there, you take over, well from where you folks were going over to Carter Road and that all those were small acreage places. I mean because a lot of your farms were at that time.

Alan: Yeah, according to what I've read in the beginning they figured one man could handle 25 acres and that was about it. And if he wanted more than that he needed help.

Clifford: Well, in Georgia used to be one mule or two mule farms. I mean they're acreage that way, that's the way they figured it. Like there were buggies and all that stuff, I mean a lot of these little tracts of land through there.

Alan: Yeah, and it wasn't until later years they started putting them together and making bigger farms. A lot of little farms.

Clifford: It's interesting over the years how things change like that. That's very interesting, a lot of interesting history there with that.

Alan: What was your dad like? Was he stern or affectionate or hard to get along with or expected hard work? What are your main memories of your dad or your impression of him?

Clifford: Well, he was a hard worker and he'd be very stern. He got along good with people. I've never found he didn't get along with people though. As far as us, as children he could be very stern.

Alan: He didn't have to get along with you all, huh?

Clifford: Well, we better had to listen to him, that's all I can say. The consequences weren't good.

Alan: How about your mom?

Clifford: Different, she was easy going, very understanding, like that.

Alan: What do you think is the most important thing that your dad taught you? Or that you learned from him?

Clifford: Well, hard work was one thing. I mean it was, he wanted things to be right. In other words, to stand up for what's right, you do right in life. I mean, you know, being thorough in life is there. Like I said earlier, some things, I mean they didn't know how to put it on a front or whatever, but what you see what you get. That's just the way it was. It's pretty much the way it was.

Alan: Now, your mother was sister to Sarah (Yoder), right?

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: Okay, and then Fred (Yoder) was a brother to Dan (Yoder)?

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: Okay, took me the longest time to get that figured out.

Clifford: My mother's from Grantsville, Maryland. She was a twin. She had a twin brother, at Grantsville there..

Alan: What was his name, was it Jerry?

Clifford: Irvin. Jerry was a brother to Fred and Dan. And then also there was Alvie, I don't know if you remember, Alvie would have been younger. Earlier years he was there, in fact he worked for his brother Dan, then moved up to Gladys. They were all brothers.

Alan: How come they came to this area in Virginia?

Clifford: I don't know. They came from Oklahoma, I believe.

Alan: Yeah, I know Fred did, yeah.

Clifford: But I don't know how it happened they got there, I don't know.

Alan: How long had you all been on the farm down on Land of Promise before Johnny was killed?

Clifford: Well I was 19, I was 19 when we moved down there and I was 21 when I left.

Alan: Okay, were you still there when he was killed?

Clifford: Oh yes, yes indeed. As a matter of fact I looked at the calendar the other day, I can't say for sure at the moment, but this day or two right now is right in the time, the anniversary of when he was killed.

Alan: Yeah, that's right, it was September of some time, I don't remember the date either. School had just started.

Clifford: I remember that, I remember that incident very well. I was cultivating corn, there's a place called the Middle Block, it's back a'ways, and Daddy stopped, he was going further back, Daddy was

going back there to sow some seed, and he stopped to see me, he talked to me there. We were just talking a little bit and all of a sudden we saw this big cloud of black smoke come up. I said "I wonder what that is". And Willie was back behind where I was, Daddy was going to see him too, but we saw this smoke just building up like that, and Dad said, "Well I better go up and check on that before I go, before I go back." Well he went up there and that's when he found there was a tractor was burning and Johnnie was underneath the rear tire. Yeah, that was quite a day anyway.

But there was, one thing that happened there, as soon as the people come in right away and all, and usually there's a lot of activity on the farm like that, but that day after everything was quiet, nothing was going on, it would have been soon after lunch time, there was a fella come in that used to stop in, I think it was from a power company, they just put new equipment in there, in the milking parlor and stuff like that, and he'd come out checking on things, and everything was real quiet, and Willie was up there. And fella said, "what's going on, everything is so quiet, and I thought somebody died or something." Willie said, "well they did." You know, that man felt so bad about it, he never showed his face out there again. He didn't mean to harm anybody, but just making that remark to him, he didn't realize what had happened.

Alan: What was Johnny like?

Clifford: He was an easy going person, good worker. Some years later when we were living in Georgia, Marty Miller was doing some plumbing work for a fella, talking to him, he said he used to live up in Chesapeake, and I don't know the course of conversation, he said something, he remembered that years ago, that accident where a boy got killed on a farm accident, the tractor was burned. Marty said, yeah, he said, he's got relatives over here in Meiggs, he said he felt so surprised that, you know, the connection that made in their life.

Alan: What was Willie like growing up?

Clifford: He was a hard worker. He was, I'd say he's more outgoing than I am, but he was a hard worker. Dependable.

Alan: Were you on the farm until you were 21?

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: So you fulfilled your commitment to be there until you were 21?

Clifford: Yeah, I was. I mean, Dad wanted me there until I was 21, but he never made any, he never talked to me about it, about my birthday coming with it, and never said anything. I didn't know where I was at, and a fella come along looking for a job or something, you know, I'm like, hey, if that fella comes in here, then I can be free to go. That's what I did.

Alan: Where did you go?

Clifford: Hartville. I was dating a girl from up there.

Alan: How'd you meet her?

Clifford: Bible school. Bible school.

Alan: Where was Bible school?

Clifford: The Winter Bible school was in Hartville, Ohio. And she was at Red Lake for two years, voluntary service there, but she was coming back, you know, coming back that winter. I didn't know where I was at or whatever, but I didn't know where I was at. Right.

Alan: And so when he said you could go, you did.

Clifford: I did. I mean, you know they say hindsight's 20-20, I mean, you know, what else is different? You know.

Alan: How long did you all date before you married?

Clifford: Two years.

Alan: Did you all stay in Ohio then for a while, or where did you move from there?

Clifford: When we got married, or before we got married, we'd been talking about it, we both wanted to go to Sarasota, Florida sometime. And when we got married in June, we said, if we want to do that, time to do that before we have a family. And so that winter we went to Sarasota. We're down there for six months and come back to Hartville. And, that fall they had an ordination. We were part of the Conservative Mennonite fellowship at that time and there's a church in southern Michigan that, that would have an outreach type thing. They wanted for ministers there. And anyhow had for ordination there. And I was in lot for that. And I was ordained there then.

Alan: Ah, okay. So you all lived in Michigan for a while then?

Clifford: Yeah, we lived there four years. And then the Bible school was... the principal from there was from Oregon. And he'd been coming here for quite a while. And he was gone so much. He did four or five, at least four months a year or more. He got with the church out there didn't want him to go anymore. Unless he sent some ministerial help out there. Then we were asked to go out there and we were there for four years.

Alan: Wow.

Clifford: I wanted to come back to Virginia. That's when we went to Cumberland.

Alan: What was the reason you went to Cumberland from Oregon?

Clifford: Well, coming back, we were 3,000 miles away from our family. We didn't want to raise our children that far away. And for the reason we went out, I said I didn't need, didn't see why we needed to stay there. We wanted to be closer to family. That's why we come back and that settlement at Cumberland was starting there. I knew a lot of people there. We were invited to come there, too. Went there. So they were closer, closer by.

Alan: What church did you attend there?

Clifford: There, Cumberland, close to Milans' (Hochstetler) were. I met your dad there already.

Alan: Oak Hill?

Clifford: Yeah, Oak Hill, yeah.

Alan: Oak Hill, okay. Yeah, that's where they had Ruth Hochstetler's funeral. What were you doing then? Were you building or carpenter work or what?

Clifford: I did carpenter work. Just building, carpenter work, yeah.

Alan: Where did you learn that trade?

Clifford: Well, in Michigan, I worked for Clyde Wenger from the church here. I started carpenter work there. I learned from him.

Alan: Where did you go from Cumberland then? Or did you stay there until you retired?

Clifford: We were there seven years. And that's when a settlement was being started in south Georgia. That's when Marty Miller went down there. Mary's folks and some of her family had moved to Sarasota. We didn't want to go to Sarasota for this. In Georgia, we'd be closer so we went down there. I was there for 40 years. And I got some health issues come up here, got to the point where the children thought it best to come up here. I had a daughter living here,. they said, yeah, plenty of room. So, I come here. And several years later, I had some more health issues come up so I'm in rehab at a nursing facility now. I'm doing real well, I don't have any pain or aches, no. It just changed a lot of things for me. So, I've been doing that.

Alan: You've lived a lot of different places.

Clifford: Yeah. I've seen a lot of different things. One interesting thing was, when we were in south Georgia, there was, just about an hour south there in Tallahassee, there's a children's home there. We used to help with some construction work for a long time. And in fact, I worked for them for seven years, and I stayed on campus and had a, lawn there, and, a thrift store, worked at a thrift store there. And, I was talking to a fellow there, an older fellow standing there, and I was being relieved or something...

I said, "like MacArthur said, I shall return." I said that.

This fellow looked at me, and he said, "I was standing beside him when he said that.

And I said, "you what?"

He said, "I was standing beside MacArthur when he said that."

Now what's the chance of running into someone who did that? I met him at a thrift store in Tallahassee, and he told me that.

Alan: You never know, if you're out in the public, you run into all kinds of people, who have been to all kinds of places.

Clifford: It's just amazing sometimes.

Alan: What was your perception of Mt Pleasant, the church? What were they doing right? Or wrong?

Clifford: Well, as I recall, and I remember hearing Dad say it too, that he felt that the good attitude, you looking out for each other, helping each other, and like that, I think that's a strong factor there. I often heard Dad mention that, and I appreciated that.

Alan: I think it's one of the things they still have, one of the main things I see in the church. Even more so than in the past is the mutual support and good feeling, the good will.

Clifford: It's been a feature of a long time, and it's commendable. Yeah.

Alan: I ran into...I forget who it was now, but somebody who used to live here and they'd been to four or five different churches since they left here...they're not in the area anymore...and I asked them what made you move from church to church to church and he said, "well, I haven't found one like Mt Pleasant yet." I told him, "I don't think you will. You've gotta have a hundred years of history and be born there." Who was the most influential person in the community that you have recollection of?

Clifford: It would be hard for me to put it down to just one person. I know people, different ones that had a, certainly had an influence, an impact. I mean ministers there, but then I remember, Homer Wenger taught a Sunday school class a number of years, he had a big part in that. I remember, different one, a song leader I just always really appreciated was Abe Buckwalter. It's just his voice, and all this kind of way, and just something about it, that I just, I just loved to hear when

Abe Buckwalter lead singing. He left a lot of bits in me.

Alan: Was your family involved in the Norview church?

Clifford: Yes, sure were. We attended out there a number of years.

Alan: Was that a mission church at that time? Was it a black church, or a white church, or half and half?

Clifford: It was started as a mission church. I don't know why, I don't know who was the instigator, pushing that, or whatever, but it was started as a mission outreach there. Levi Kramer was the pastor.

Alan: He'd built a house right there hadn't he?

Clifford: He had a big house, the church was on Widgeon Avenue. And his house, you had to go back a ways. What happened, we attended for a number of years, Elmer Hershberger's had, Elam Peachy from Deep Creek, different ones like that, but really, what happened there, this is right at the time of segregation, that kind of stuff going on. Widgeon Avenue was the unwritten line between the blacks and whites.

Alan: Oh, I didn't realize that.

Clifford: They were building new houses on the other side of the road. But the old side, that was a no-no. And, you knew how some of your old timers felt. There's a couple of houses that were for sale on Widgeon Avenue. There's one that was three doors down from the church. A couple bought that, a little older couple, they weren't married, but they were doing some work at the house while getting things ready to move in there. One night, somebody bombed the house and had dynamite blow the front porch off.

Alan: Were they a black couple?

Clifford: Yeah. They were the ones who were going to buy the place. And this was white territory. And, when that dynamite went off, it cracked the windows in the house beside the church, but it didn't do anything to the church. A little later, there's another house on the other side of the church where something similar happened. There was a black couple who had bought a house. And they also did some dynamite in there. They're trying to say thee is not a 'wanted here. So that was, I'd say it's kind of a transition. Now we had Summer Bible School there that had been a few black children came to Bible school. But, eventually they ended up getting people from the black crowd, black congregation.

Alan: But initially it started out as a white congregation?

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: But then the neighborhood changed so...

Clifford: Yeah.

Alan: I've read some stuff. I've gotten copies of the church minutes of business meetings from 1895...I'm sorry, 1905. And there's quite a bit of mention of the missions they were doing, that

being one of them. But it doesn't really get into a lot of detail. It just mentions how much money they spent on it and who's there working it and things they got planned for the next year.

Clifford: Where was that at?

Alan: Norview.

Clifford: That's new to me. I didn't know that.

Alan: Well, this is in the minutes for the business meeting at Mt Pleasant, since they were basically paying for... or heavily supporting the church there in the early days.

Clifford: What was the date on that?

Alan: I've got the minutes from 1905 but Norview started in the early 1950's.

Clifford: I remember when they built that church. It was a block building. Johnny Wenger plastered it. We had outdoor, still had outdoor privies. Feature that in Norfolk. But that's where it all started.

Alan; That was in the early '50's wasn't it?

Clifford: Yeah, it was.

Alan: I've got some picture of the church while it was under construction and then some afterwards. Do you get on the computer there?

Clifford: No, I don't have it. My daughter has hers. She gets things online and that kind of stuff. I can't, I don't have it. I'd love to have her touch or whatever it is, I'd be interested in getting information on some things.

Alan: It's [mtpleasantmennonite.com](http://mtpleasantmennonite.com). There's about 3,500 photographs, some books folks have written including my Dad's book, Robert Mast's book, Mary Bergey's book, some other books. And the interviews I'm doing, some of them are on there, a lot of 'em I haven't processed yet. Some histories of the early founders I've written and put up there. Just a little bit of everything. Copies of The Budget from 1895 to the present if they mention Kempsville or Mt Pleasant.

Clifford: Since I'm here, I go to urology once a month here in Lynchburg. I wear a catheter, I'm diabetic, once a month I go to Lynchburg. Awhile back in was in there one day this lady came in and I said, I want to know who that is. I wanted to wait until I could come out. She was waiting for me when I went over there. And here was Ruth Hochstetler, Carson's wife. She came in there and her daughter-in-law was there...What's her name? Hochstetlers...

Alan: Julie?

Clifford: Yeah. Met them there at the doctor's office in Lynchburg.

Alan: She's Reid Broadwater's daughter.

Clifford: Yeah, yeah.

Alan: How about that? You never know who you're going to run into.

Clifford: Going back a little, you mentioned about, you knew Grantsville Maryland. You knew how the Broadwaters got started going to church and like that?

Alan: No, how?

Clifford: Okay, well, in Grantsville. There's several different churches there were wanting to start a...there's an empty schoolhouse out there, Medina Ridge, that was empty. It wasn't being used. And some from several different churches there wanted to start a work and Sunday afternoons, they'd have Sunday school out there. And Daddy was wanting to help, and he was interested too, you know. And anyhow, we started that. And somehow, he had gotten to know the Broadwater family. We were back and forth some. Like, Daddy Broadwater used to (unintelligible) for the family. Now, the Broadwaters were poor. And I said, poor? There wasn't much of nothing there. I mean, nothing. And anyhow, through this, they invited the Broadwaters on Sunday afternoon up here to Medina Ridge at the Sunday school up here. And they came. That was their start. And that's why they're in the Mennonite church today.

Alan: I had never heard that. That's interesting. Well, how come, Reid was the first one to come down this way?

Clifford: Well, for a couple of reasons. One thing, he had a neighbor, a next-door neighbor, a boy that was fairly close to his age, that was not good company. And that's just putting him out. He was not good company. And his parents were concerned about that. And Reid was about aged too. He had to quit school. And Daddy was needing help on the farm there. And so, Daddy hired him. So, consequently, he came to Mount Pleasant. He lived with us there. And like you say, the rest is history.

Alan: Okay, so he came to Mount Pleasant to work for your dad?

Clifford: Yes.

Alan: Then he met Kathryn and he had a reason to stay.

Clifford: Yes, he sure did.

Alan: He and Freddy Keffer both boarded with us for a while. I guess after he left your Dad.

Clifford: Okay, I didn't realize he did. But then when we were still over at the Bertha Fentress place, Reid went up to Grantsville to see his folks one time. And his older sister came back with him for a little bit. Selva Jean. That's how Dale Dickerson met her.

Alan: Ah, okay. Interesting. How many children do you have?

Clifford: Four.

Alan: How old are they?

Clifford: Oldest one is, I don't know, upper 50s, I don't know, 57, I'm not sure something like that. I got a boy and three girls. I forget the age of the girls, all the girls there. My boy's a contractor in Thomasville. He's done very well with that.

Alan: Where do your daughters live?

Clifford: One daughter lives in Georgia. There's another daughter living here at Gladys. Another daughter is in southern Indiana.

Alan: Oh, you all got spread out across the country too?

Clifford: Spread out. I don't know if you've ever heard of a place in Indiana called Fresh Start Rehab?

Alan: No.

Clifford: Okay, well there's a place there in southern Indiana. Her husband, Tim, he was an administrator there for 25 years. He worked with different problems, all kinds of problems. That's where he was there. They're still out there. Yeah, that's where we are, they're scattered about some..

Alan: Kinda like the Wengers, it's ironic, the Johnny Wenger's and our families were pretty close because we all had children the same age. I mean with all the kids there was an opposite there somewhere. And they're spread out all over the country and only Preston and Sydney are even left in the area anymore and they don't live in the community. And yet the Keffer's all live within about 5 miles of each other. We're all still here.

Clifford: Talking about the Wengers, if I remember right, I think Preston's birthday is the same day my sister Dorothy's is and Sydney's the same day mine was. Dorothy's is October 12th and mine's October 14th.

Alan: Yeah, I know they're both in October. I'm not sure what day, but I know they're both in early October. Yeah, Sydney retired several years ago and lives in Virginia Beach and Preston is still working, running the plastering business.

Clifford: Okay, plastering.

Alan: Yeah, well, he and Sydney were partners and then when Sydney retired, Preston just kept right at it.

Clifford: I didn't realize they're plastering? Well, they've been at it a long time.

Alan: They have. Started out when they were 7 or 8 years old. And Howard and I were good friends and still are and he lives up near, shucks, near Blackstone in that area. Out in the hills.

Clifford: Is where?

Alan: It's up near Blackstone, Virginia.

Clifford: Oh, Blackstone. Okay, yeah.

Alan: And just putters around, drawing pictures, kind of an artist thing and raising grapes and a little bit of crops.

Clifford: Well, it's wonderful. I was seeing, is someone there, one of them was living out in Floyd County?

Alan: Yeah, that's Howard. Yeah, that's Howard.

Clifford: Okay, yeah, okay. Well, see, there's a number of people over here from Gladys who moved over to Floyd County and started a church over there.

Alan: Oh, really?

Clifford: Yeah, they've been there for a number of years.

Alan: We had a young lady that took care of my mother the last year she was still living, who came in here and she was a very plain Mennonite girl from Floyd County. I don't know if she was Amish or Old Mennonite or what, but she was very plain.

Clifford: She was from where?

Alan: From Floyd County?

Clifford: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, I know what you're talking about, yeah. That's the church, that's the group there in Floyd County. Okay. What was her last name?

Alan: I don't remember. I didn't really know her. I'd see her when I came in to see my mother a couple times a month, but she was very shy, never talked very much. I asked her a couple questions and she wouldn't give me much of an answer. It was like she didn't really want to talk to me.

Clifford: I get it mixed up. Henry Zook married twice. I think she was related to a stepdaughter or something in that family. I'm not exactly sure what it was. Somewhere close to that family there.

Alan: I should know that and I don't because I just did some stuff on the Zooks, but I can't remember now.

Clifford: See, Henry married Iva. Iva, she was from Grantsville, Maryland. Yeah, I remember that one of those girls was there for you, helped take care of your Mom there.

Alan: Yeah, her name was either Mary Yoder or Naomi Yoder. I'm not sure which.

Clifford: Okay. Maybe that kin folks there in that family.

Alan: Delilah Brenneman was another one. Anyway, I just took a quick look at her payroll there. I'm not sure I even knew her name when she was working there. I just didn't have much. If I came in, she'd head for the kitchen, I guess to give us some privacy.

Clifford: Yeah, I remember when your folks built the house there.

Alan: I know when I was in my late teens, your dad started buying gasoline from my Dad. And Daddy gave me the job of digging the hole for the tank, which I dug a lot of holes for tanks with a shovel. So, summertime, and I'm down there digging like nobody's business, you know, hot, sweating, thirsty, tired. Here comes your mother with a pitcher of lemonade and a glass. And I got to tell you, that was the best lemonade I have ever tasted before or since.

Clifford: She do have a good lemonade.

Alan: She did that. And I never had much interaction with your mother, but she always seemed so pleasant and calm and peaceful and generous.

Clifford: I'll tell you something else she used to do. Before she was married, she worked around Norfolk there. Elmer and Eli Yoder were the ones who started Yoder Dairies. They were first cousins to my mom. She worked for them and she made the chocolate for their chocolate milk at that time.

Alan: Really? That's before she married your dad? Well, I've got an appointment I've got to get to Clifford, so I need to get going, but I appreciate you taking the time to talk to me.

Clifford: I sure appreciate you calling, too. I'm really glad for that. If you have any questions, we'll see what we can do.

Alan: I'll give you a call.

Clifford: Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. Take care.

Alan: Thank you. Bye-bye.