

Speaker 1 ([00:02](#)):

It is June, Tuesday, June 11th. This is Jennifer. I'm here with Jay McClendon.

Speaker 2 ([00:08](#)):

McClendon.

Speaker 1 ([00:08](#)):

Yes. And Mr. McClendon, you have a lot of family history in Lithonia, is that right?

Speaker 2 ([00:15](#)):

That is correct. I brought some stuff here. Let's see, actually, I think some of this may be more regarding Redan,

([00:40](#)):

Which is, okay, so this is a picture that was taken in 19 41, 19 40. I'm sorry. So this was my uncle Will who is here and his wife, aunt Maddie, can't see where they are. I can't write. So he is here and I guess that's, no, I think that's her. So several years ago there was a guy who was an archivist, and this must've been five, six years ago. And I gave him a copy of this and he said, oh, I will put it in a McLendon file at the History Center. So I don't know whether that ever happened or not, but here is, you can have this and most of many of these are his children or their in-laws.

Speaker 1 ([01:57](#)):

And what was his full name again?

Speaker 2 ([02:00](#)):

William. Well, actually I think he went by Willie McLendon. We always referred to him as Uncle Will. I only met him a few times as a child. At that time we were living in

Speaker 3 ([02:14](#)):

South Carolina, so

Speaker 2 ([02:17](#)):

We were not in this picture. My dad's brother and my dad's brother's here and his wife.

Speaker 1 ([02:29](#)):

So Willie McLendon was your uncle by your Yeah, he was,

Speaker 2 ([02:35](#)):

Yeah, uncle

Speaker 1 ([02:36](#)):

By your dad's. So your dad's brother? My dad's side.

Speaker 2 ([02:42](#)):

His dad's brother.

Speaker 1 ([02:44](#)):

Oh, I see.

Speaker 2 ([02:45](#)):

Okay. And with a lot of work from a lot of people, we got names for most of these.

Speaker 1 ([02:57](#)):

Oh, wonderful.

Speaker 2 ([02:58](#)):

Now this one I do not have a copy of. So do you have provision to make a copy of something this size?

Speaker 1 ([03:07](#)):

I would. You'd have to leave it with me and I'd have to get it back to you because I'd have to hook up my big scanner.

Speaker 2 ([03:13](#)):

Right, well we can do that.

Speaker 1 ([03:14](#)):

Okay, wonderful.

Speaker 2 ([03:16](#)):

Okay, so let me point out a couple of people here that might be, okay. So, this is, and a lot of these, I only know by reputation. Alright, so this is Aaron Cameron, his son was mayor at one time of Duncan, of Lithonia.

Speaker 1 ([03:42](#)):

And what was the mayor's name?

Speaker 2 ([03:45](#)):

Duncan Cameron.

Speaker 1 ([03:46](#)):

Duncan Cameron was the mayor,

Speaker 2 ([03:49](#)):

I think. Maybe only one term. I'm not quite, and that was fairly, Duncan would be, was like eight years younger than I am. And then this was his Mary Grace Chupp was kind of a mover and shaker in Lithonia.

Speaker 1 ([04:13](#)):

I have heard the Chupp name. Yes.

Speaker 2 ([04:15](#)):

So that's her. Now. There's one woman in here.

Speaker 1 ([04:22](#)):

And what's the relationship between Aaron and Duncan to Willie?

Speaker 2 ([04:28](#)):

Well, cousin, I guess you would call that tenuous. Okay. Her mother who is probably in here somewhere, Haley (?) Lee, is right here. Okay. Haley Lee. She was a Reagan (or Reagin) and she married a Chupp and both spouses died during the Spanish flu epidemic, like 19, 19, 20, that era. And then she ended up marrying my dad's dad. So it's all very convoluted, I think. I'm not sure where my dad and his parents were in Atlanta at that point.

([05:36](#)):

And I am not sure whether Aunt Anna Lee, I think she must've moved to Atlanta because she and my dad didn't get along very well with her as a stepfather. I think my dad was probably the first college graduate on that side of the family. And she may have been on his case about working instead of supporting the family because they, I'm sure they needed it. And now this woman, there's several these that aren't named, I have no idea who this woman is, she is very thin, but looks like a lot of older women in that era that had probably been smoking for years and years or doing snuff or something another. And they all see, they ended up with kind of a dark complexion and were somewhat almost emaciated. Okay, well I can leave this with you, but it took, not everybody is named, but it took a lot of work from a lot of different people to get these names put together.

Speaker 1 ([07:05](#)):

And what was your father's name?

Speaker 2 ([07:07](#)):

His father, his name was Jewel Floyd McLendon. JF McLendon. He was born in Lithonia in 19, I think it was 1905.

Speaker 1 ([07:24](#)):

And what were the names again? I

Speaker 2 ([07:26](#)):

Got Jewel, Floyd,

Speaker 1 ([07:28](#)):

Joel,

Speaker 2 ([07:28](#)):

J-O-E-L-J-E-W-E-L-L.

Speaker 1 ([07:32](#)):

Jewel Floyd. Got it. And you said he went to college?

Speaker 2 ([07:39](#)):

After they had moved to Atlanta, then he went to Georgia Tech and got a degree and went on to, well, that's a whole other story, which doesn't really have anything to do with Lithonia. But Uncle Henry, that was his brother, Henry Otis, he actually moved in with Mr. Chupp and inherited the Chupp home place his own, let's see, that would've been on Rock Chapel Road. And I'm told that, so most, as I said, we lived in Columbia, South Carolina or most of my really small childhood. And then we moved to Douglas County, Georgia during the Second World War. And so we would go see Henry in Rock Chapel now and then. But you didn't have interstates. It wasn't that easy to get from Douglas County. It was 45 minutes to get into Atlanta and then another 45 minutes or an hour to get to Rock Chapel. So, this is from Ancestry, and this shows, I think the part of the McLendon and the Chupp family we would be interested in. So this is my dad here, and this is yours. So, his mother was a Chupp and her older brother, whose name was Jewel, had died at a young age. So then when she had a child, she I guess was adamant that he should be named Jewel and all the relatives called him Jewel, but he never went by Jewel. I guess that was kind of a sissy name at that point. Okay. So, from this you can see some of the Chupp connections.

([10:30](#)):

So, Jacob Samuel was the one that lived in Rock Chapel. And so he was born in 1860, so he would've been a child during the Civil War and died in 1940. And I only met him as I was a very small child. And then he married a (inaudible) woman and I don't think, I'm not sure where they were, the (Hardiges?) were from. And then she died. She died in 1908. And then there was another woman, I never, I'm trying to think of her name, Alice Cooper. Alice Cooper Chupp. And I never quite got straight, whether she was just kind of a live-in housekeeper or whether she was a wife or what. But when Mr. Chupp died, she apparently had no, could not inherit the property. I asked my cousin about that and he really didn't remember anything about that. He would've been fairly small too. So then at some point, Henry and Dorothy, who are here and here, moved into the house and raised their family there. And so, they were the ones that were living there when we were visit in the mid-forties, late forties. And usually we didn't go into Lithonia as I recall very much. My dad was friends with Aaron Cameron because my dad was a salesman and Aaron was a salesman. But after, I don't recall when Aaron died, but it was probably back during the forties or very early fifties.

([13:04](#)):

So, then we could see that some of the other Chupps here. And so, the Chupps really are the ones that have the Lithonia connection much. And let's see,

Speaker 1 ([13:23](#)):

And most of these folks were born in Lithonia or lived in Lithonia.

Speaker 2 ([13:27](#)):

They lived in Lithonia. Right. So, Jacob Samuel was my dad's grandfather and he was very close. He was very close to him. And there was a rumor that Jacob Samuel had actually paid for my dad's college education. But I never thought to ask my dad how he, obviously there wasn't a Hope scholarship or anything like that back in the twenties. So, then his dad then was James Henry Chupp, and then they come back to David Chupp and then back to Samuel Jacob Chupp, not to be confused with Jacob Samuel Chupp. Well this is not that unusual that the names are reused maybe in the same combination. And they didn't necessarily have attached Junior or anything like that to it. So, I wouldn't be surprised if quite a few of the people on this Chupp side had, some of them were, and probably a lot of them are buried in the Chupp Cemetery. I think. I thought I put this together. So, this is a document that was passed on to me by, and this was written, this starts talking about when the Chupps moved from South Carolina to Lithonia. And this is written by a woman by the name of Carlton Stokes. And honestly, I have no idea where she fits in, but she was either, she must've been a child of one of the Chupps way back when, maybe David, or maybe even further

Speaker 3 ([16:00](#)):

Back.

Speaker 2 ([16:02](#)):

But if you read this, well, I think there is a lot of error in here because they talk about coming from Amsterdam, Holland to America and so forth, so on. And then it refers to this area called Dutch Corners. Dutch Corners in South Carolina. Well that area now is, this is outside Columbia. And that area is for all my lifetime at least has been called Dutch Fork.

Speaker 3 ([16:49](#)):

But

Speaker 2 ([16:49](#)):

It turns out the Dutch was really the German word for Germany that do, so then that corrupted the Dutch, the Dutch Fork community has a historical association or something. And I contacted them by email and they did not have any record of any chops ever having lived in Dutch Fork. But there's some really interesting stuff in here.

Speaker 1 ([17:38](#)):

Do we know when that document was written?

Speaker 2 ([17:41](#)):

Well, we know when it was typed, which was 1973, but we don't know. I do not know when it was written. Okay. She said that she was 78. Carlton said she was 78 when she's writing this. And she talks about the Civil War and she talks about the Chupp Cemetery, which is right in, okay. So, I didn't really know very much about the Chupp Cemetery until I started looking into this. So it is, you can find it on Google and it is at the intersection. A lot of these roads have been renamed. See, do we have a wif that I can get on?

Speaker 1 ([18:39](#)):

We do, but I don't know the password. I don't have the password on me. Oh, okay.

Speaker 2 ([18:43](#)):

Alright. So, it's the Chupp family cemetery used to be right in a road junction. So you had the, I guess the Rock Chapel Road coming this way, and then I think Union Grove and right in the middle was a cemetery and my cousin confirmed that. So it was like a traffic circle, basically. You had to drive around this. So at some part, and this is, and this was probably 30 years ago or so, the State Highway Department wanted to move the road a little bit to get it out of the intersection. And this road is also called Turner Hill Road. So, this goes down to I-20. So if you've been out that way, you, so you have Stonecrest Mall, it's down in here. Okay. So they've moved the road. So now this is right off to the side and the road, which is now a four lane road. It just used to be just either a gravel road or a two lane road. When we were going out there in the fifties, and I think I was looking on Google, I think there was a racetrack or raceway or something right here on the corner. And then as you went out, then you had the Rock Chapel, you had the Rock Chapel Methodist Church and a cemetery there.

([20:55](#)):

Well, okay. Okay. So, Rock Chapel Methodist Church, a lot of the Chupps and the people that lived in that community went to. But of course, due to the change in population, Rock Chapel Methodist Church is now predominantly black, probably a hundred percent. And the cemetery, the Rock Chapel's cemetery, just off to the side fairly close. And I was told by a woman that said she was there, that, I mean this, and this is just beyond discourteous, but they had gone some, probably a Civil War reunion type thing had gone out and of course had gone out on a Sunday morning to do some kind of little ceremony at the cemetery. Well, of course this disturbed the congregation during their sermon. So as I understand it now, the cemetery or the church has disowned the cemetery. And so the cemetery is there. I have no idea who it belongs to or whether it just belongs to the county.

Speaker 1 ([22:27](#)):

You're talking about the Chupp Cemetery?

Speaker 2 ([22:29](#)):

No,

Speaker 1 ([22:30](#)):

You're talking about the Methodist Church Cemetery,

Speaker 2 ([22:32](#)):

Right? Well, yeah, this is called,

Speaker 1 ([22:35](#)):

So the church has disowned the cemetery

Speaker 2 ([22:37](#)):

As I understand it. Cause that was most of those, I think my grandfather and his wife who was a Chupp. And there were a lot of Chupps and maybe some more McClendon's buried there. But the Chupp cemetery is way down here.

Speaker 1 ([22:56](#)):

Right.

Speaker 2 ([22:57](#)):

And this is, I think it's called the Rock Chapel Cemetery, but there are a lot of, in many rural areas, well even in DeKalb County, there are a lot of little cemeteries

([23:13](#)):

All over the place. I mean, if you hunt around far, you don't have to hunt very far. We're in Tucker and there's, I think it's called Fellowship Primitive Baptist Cemetery. That's off of a little side street down in Tucker. And I guess it's claimed to fame, it has four Revolutionary War soldiers buried there. But that's been, so we've had some, my wife's in the DAR and I'm in the SAR, and so we've had some interest in that. Okay. So where, okay. And then Mr. Chupp's house was a little further out, a little bit further from, and then there's a Rock Chapel Elementary school here somewhere. Okay, now here's probably think of some, okay, so now this is, there's a woman that lives in Cobb County who was a Chupp and is married. Her husband's currently very ill. And she's been for many years, has been researching the Chupps and had plans to do a book on the Chupp family. But I think her age and his age and his health is probably going to, that may or may not ever happen, but this tells something about the Chupp Cemetery, which is this one, and tells about the Department of Transportation moving it.

([25:20](#)):

And then it goes on and talks about some of the, then she talks about what her descent is. So my kinship to her is pretty far back. It's not, in fact, I don't even recall, I don't even recall how I came to know of her and her sister who lives in Florida, but is nowadays, everything is, everybody has scattered. So that, okay, she has a comment in here. She says, when we moved to, this is her and her parents, when we moved to Hancock County in 56, her dad's first cousin told him that Lithonia had changed and never consider coming back.

([26:29](#)):

So that was even as far back as 56. I didn't realize it was quite that far. And then she says, I gave the DeKalb History Center pictures of businesses in Lithonia said they were just negatives at that point. So whether those anything ever was done with those an item, I'm sure you guys have the same problem everybody does with resources and personnel and so forth, so on. Okay. So I think, I'm sure I'll think of some more things, but the reason I brought my laptop was that there are pictures on small little snapshots of some of the chops, and I didn't know whether you would be interested in those. If so, fine. If not, fine. That's strictly up to you. But then I'll leave this one with you with copy will either catch you at some point and then this one is yours.

Speaker 1 ([27:58](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 2 ([28:00](#)):

So yeah, I don't really know. Yeah, some of these people are, so this guy is named Owens and he said probably everybody on this except maybe the entrance, all the rest of 'em are dead.

Speaker 1 ([28:33](#)):

So your father was born in Lithonia, but you grew up in South Carolina and then Douglas.

Speaker 2 ([28:41](#)):

Douglas

Speaker 1 ([28:41](#)):

County. Douglas County. And then did you ultimately move back to where your father was born? Did he

Speaker 2 ([28:47](#)):

No, I never lived there.

Speaker 1 ([28:49](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 2 ([28:50](#)):

We visited there when, and of course at that point, well when he graduated from college in I think 1922 or something like that. And so maybe part of the deal of him, the grandfather helping him go to college was that he would come back and work for four years on the farm, which he did. And then eventually got up after the depression, I guess got a job and then moved, started moving around, and then eventually ended up in South Carolina where he met my mother and they were married and so forth, so.

Speaker 1 ([29:48](#)):

So he lived in the metro area up through college and some after college and then moved to South Carolina after that.

Speaker 2 ([29:56](#)):

Well, yeah, they lived down on Boulevard off of Boulevard, and I'm sure you're familiar with the great fire of 1917, I think it was. So their house was one of the many that was. And then the mother, his mother died just a couple of years after that.

Speaker 1 ([30:25](#)):

What do you remember, if anything, about the raceway in Lithonia? Did you ever go to races or do you know how

Speaker 2 ([30:31](#)):

Long this was? Racetrack Service Station.

Speaker 1 ([30:35](#)):

I'm sorry?

Speaker 2 ([30:36](#)):

Racetrack Service Station. That's fairly new after they, oh,

Speaker 1 ([30:40](#)):

Because there used to be a racetrack in Lithonia.



Speaker 2 ([30:43](#)):

Okay. No. Oh,

Speaker 1 ([30:45](#)):

You were talking about Raceway Station. I don't

Speaker 2 ([30:46](#)):

Know anything about.

Speaker 1 ([30:47](#)):

Oh, okay. Alright,

Speaker 2 ([30:49](#)):

Fair enough. Well, there's a race on the service stations. There's a racetrack and a race. We primarily deal a quick trip, but I was told that right across the street from right across the street from the Chupp Cemetery, there was a racetrack or a raceway service station.

Speaker 1 ([31:20](#)):

Are your parents buried in Lithonia? Are they in No,

Speaker 2 ([31:25](#)):

No. They're buried in Douglas County. Douglas County. His mom and dad. I'd say buried at Rock Chapel and yeah, we really need to get out to, I would really like to get out there, but honestly Jennifer, as you get, the older you get, the harder it is to find time. And my wife is involved in many activities and now she worked in DeKalb school system. So

Speaker 1 ([32:00](#)):

What did she do?

Speaker 2 ([32:01](#)):

She was a counselor at Stone, mostly at Stone Mountain High School.

Speaker 1 ([32:05](#)):

Is that right?

Speaker 2 ([32:06](#)):

So

Speaker 1 ([32:07](#)):

What years was she there?

Speaker 2 ([32:12](#)):

Well, I think she had 35 years in DeKalb school system, and her name is Dorothy Beers and she taught at Avondale. She was a teacher at Avondale for a while. And

Speaker 1 ([32:35](#)):

Avondale High school or elementary school? Yes.

Speaker 2 ([32:38](#)):

And in fact, we just went to one of their class reunions this past weekend. She was there, this was the class of 74, so they were celebrating their 50th year

Speaker 3 ([32:56](#)):

Anniversary.

Speaker 2 ([32:58](#)):

So there were a lot of people there. And it was at the little clubhouse there by the lake in Avondale, which is a nice little place.

Speaker 1 ([33:12](#)):

I feel like she must have been at Stone Mountain in the eighties when I was

Speaker 2 ([33:17](#)):

There. Probably. She was a counselor. She had the last portion of the alphabet. So, if your name was Blomqvist at that point,

Speaker 1 ([33:30](#)):

No, I was in the front part of the alphabet like I am now, and so I wouldn't have been with her, but that name is familiar.

Speaker 2 ([33:38](#)):

Yeah, she retired probably in early two thousands and at the time she was there, she started off in the Old Stone Mountain High

Speaker 3 ([33:56](#)):

School,

Speaker 2 ([33:57](#)):

Which was a, I don't know that I've ever seen it, but apparent from what she said, it was right across from the Venables house. So, she was at Stone Mountain when it went from basically an all-white school to a mixed-race school. And she said it was really, things were a lot more unsettled when it was mixed that once one, you had one group that there was enough of 'em to be kind of be in charge of the others, then no matter whether you were white or black, then at least you had a big team and a little team. And then of course they started getting so many, they had a lot of kids from Kosovo there. I'm not sure if those, I guess Clarkston was the one that brought in a lot of refugees from Kosovo and so forth. And I'm not really sure why some of 'em ended up at Stone Mountain, but maybe it was just a matter of too

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many numbers. Clarkston High School, I don't know. But yeah, she said there was some very interesting times at Stone Mountain High School and she was there during the Olympics and when Stone Mountain was a training site for some sport, I don't recall which one. Some handball, maybe a team handball.

(35:46):

She of course was right in the middle of that. So she really has a lot more stories to tell than I do. Okay. So as far as your life on your project, other than getting pictures of some of these Chupp people that I know, so do we have a way from that, from the file here? We can either print 'em or we can transfer 'em to another computer.

Speaker 1 (36:37):

If you can email them to me, then I can save them to our database here. If you can do that, that would be the best way.

Speaker 2 (36:47):

Okay. I can certainly do that. Sure. I have.

Transcribed by REV AI

Edited by human J Blomqvist, archivist, DeKalb History Center, January 2025

Mr McLendon was interviewed in June 2024