

Oral Memoirs
of
Odetta Copper

An Interview Conducted by
Bev [Last Name Unknown]

February 25, 2010

Celery Soup

Creative Sanford, Inc.

Creative Sanford, Inc.

Copyright 2010

This material is protected by US copyright. Permission to print, reproduce or distribute copyrighted material is subject to the terms and conditions of fair use as prescribed in the US copyright law. Transmission or reproduction of protected items beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the copyright owners.

Interview Histories

Interviewers: Bev [Last Name Unknown]

Transcriber: Freddie Román-Toro

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the Creative Sanford, Inc., Sanford, Florida.

Project Detail

Creative Sanford, Inc. is a non-profit organization created to manage Celery Soup community theater productions. The original idea for the Celery Soup project came from Jeanine Taylor, the owner of a folk-art gallery on First Street in Sanford, Florida. The first production was *Touch and Go*, a play focusing on the people of Sanford and the town's determination to overcome various obstacles, including the Freeze of 1894-1895, the fall of Sanford's celery industry, and the closing of Naval Air Station (NAS) Sanford in the 1960s. In the process of producing the show, Creative Sanford decided to rehabilitate an historic building, the Princess Theater, which is located on 115 West First Street and owned by Stephen Tibstra. The Creative Sanford offices are housed in the Historic Sanford Welcome Center, located at 203 East First Street.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Odetta Copper is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on February 25, 2010.

Abstract

An oral history of 89-year-old Odetta Copper (b. 1921), who was born on June 26, 1921, in France, Florida. She migrated to Sanford in 1946. Copper tells of her strict upbringing and the hardship she faced when growing up with her parents and nine siblings. In the interview, she also describes what it was like working on the farm, what holidays were like, and how times have changed.

Odetta Copper

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Bev [Last Name Unknown]

February 25, 2010

Sanford, Florida

Bev Mrs. Odetta [Copper], tell me something about yourself. Tell me where you grew up. Anything you want to share with me about yourself.

Copper You grow up in a different way now. I wasn't bad. We wasn't bad, 'cause you couldn't be bad back then, 'cause dey put da whoop on ya, an' well, ain't ever been too much until I got up kind of in my teens. It was kind of rough. I mean, got up grown or about 25-26. I was wild fo' a while, but I finally come here, an' it used to be kind of rough.

Bev Where did you grow up?

Copper I growed[sic] up in West Florida.

Bev Do you remember the name of the town?

Copper Dey call it France, Florida.

Bev What was it like growing up there?

Copper It was all form of work. School, go fo' work, pick cotton, go to school, an' all dat.

Bev When did you come to Sanford?

Copper I come to Sanford in [19]46.

Bev And have you been here since?

Copper Ever since. I think I was 25 or 26 when I come down here.

Bev What are some of the memorable experiences you had growing up?

Copper Nothin', but getting whoopins when I need one, 'cause at dat time, my mutha, right—it be dark when she go to work. It be dark when she come home. And we was home by ourself[sic], and she tell us to don't go out in da yard. We didn't go out in da yard. We had a dog. If da kids try to come in da yard, you put da dogs on da kids, 'cause she said she didn't want da kids there. My mama didn't play. She'd put da whoop on you. You did what she say[sic] to do. If you did sumthin' one time, an' she told you not to do it, you wouldn't do it no mo'. She didn't

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

whoop da clothes. She'd tell you straight, "Come at my clothes. Dey cost too much money. [inaudible] of what God gives you." Yeah. She wasn't playin'.

Bev Are you an only child or do you have brothers and sisters?

Copper Yeah, there was ten of us, but I'm da second oldest. My oldest brother—he died. When Mama told you not to do a thang, she meant for you not to do it, but you didn't get in trouble too much back den at dat time. Children didn't get in trouble too much back den.

Bev Did you know your grandparents when you were growing up?

Copper I know my granmutha, Mary, and I know dat was my mama's mutha, an' I had aunts. My aunts an' my uncles—I know dem, an' some of dem—I know dem. Yeah.

Bev Do you have any memorable experiences with any of them? Any story about your grandmother? Any experiences you had with any of your uncles that you'd like to share? Did you do anything with your grandmother?

Copper Well, not too much. We visited 'er now and den, but my grandmamma was better to me dan my mama was, 'cause my grandmamma didn't ever whoop me, but my mama whoop me. I had a good granmutha. My granmutha lived 'til my first child was born. She died after my first child was born, so I was wit 'er—well, I wasn't wit 'er—but I visited 'er 'til I was about 17 years old. Den I had my first baby. Yeah, it wasn't like it is now. It wasn't wild like it is now. Little girls were somethin' else back then. Dey was somethin' else.

Bev What are some of the things they would do? What are some of the things teenagers would do when you were a teenager?

Copper When I was a teenager, I went to school. I didn't give da teacha no trouble. I think I got one whoopin' in school one time, 'bout fightin' in da class. I got a whoopin' 'bout dat.

Bev Do you remember why you fought?

Copper Yeah, da boy was named Douglas. He told hisself[sic] he liked me, an' I didn't like 'im, an' we was in a class—in a class standin' up, an' he stepped on my foot, an' when he stepped on my foot, I went upside his head wit my fist, an' I got a whoopin' there. Both of us got a whoopin' in da school fo' fightin', an' she took me home an' told mama what she whoop me fo'. Yeah.

Bev And did your mama beat you again?

Copper No, Mama didn't beat me no more.

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

- Bev** Do you have any pleasant, wonderful experiences from your childhood?
- Copper** No.
- Bev** Nothing was happy about your childhood?
- Copper** No, all I used to do – when I went into school, a lot of white folks back up there at dat time what had babies an’ thangs. I would go out an’ take care of dey[sic] babies fo’ ‘em you know. Tend to dey babies an’ all. I’d go out ‘til it was nightfall, an’ den I’d have to go out there an’ help ‘er when she gettin’ ready to milk the cows. I’d go out there – an’ thangs like dat. It wasn’t like today. I didn’t ever get in no trouble worth nuthin’, but getting’ a whoopin’ from Mama.
- Bev** So you came to Sanford – you said in 1946? Tell me what it was like in Sanford then.
- Copper** It wasn’t like it is now. It was more friendly[sic] then. Da people was[sic] more friendly[sic]. Most of da people den were workin’ on the farm. Dis used to be a farmin’ place. All dis used to be farm. All of it used to be farm mostly.
- Bev** Any other changes from the time you came?
- Copper** It changed a whole lot. It’s not like it had been – like it used to be. Dey didn’t fight an’ kill like dey do now. Dey didn’t do dat. People more friendly[sic], but right now, people walk by you, dey don’t even speak to you. You be sittin’ down right there, an’ dey walk by, dey don’t even speak. If dey see you, dey try to head da other way. People wasn’t makin’ much money back in dem days. I work 50 hours a week fo’ \$22.50 a week. Dat’s all I got, an’ so now people makin’ a lil’ more now. It’s different now.
- Bev** Were things as expensive as they are now? So \$22.50 a week could buy...
- Copper** No, you could get a pair of sock fo’ 15 cent an’ all that, an’ da clothes wasn’t like it is now. You could take \$10 or \$12, an’ go buy enough clothes. Den you had to buy fo’ two weeks without goin’ back to da store, but you can’t do dat now.
- Bev** What was it like working on the farm? You said you came here to work on the celery farm. What was it like? What hours did you do? When did you start work? And how long did you have to work? And what did you have to do on the farm?
- Copper** We’d work from – we start da work – we start at seven fast in da spring, an’ we work ‘til da fall of da year. You had to set da plants, den you had to get a – gather da vegg’bles. And den after dat, it plant sweet corn an’ dat’s da last crop. One year, we planted cotton behind da sweet corn. So we had a year-round job that time. When da cotton come up, we had to thin da cotton out. Den had to keep da grass out da cotton. Den when da cotton got ready to pick. We had to pick da cotton. Work da whole year round. It was a lil’ better den dan it is now. It

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

was nice when we first come[sic] down here. It was nice. Used to have a lot of fun. We'd enjoy ourself[sic] out there on da farm all day long. Nobody wasn't—didn't act like dey was tired, or dey didn't say dey was tired, 'cause more of dem was in dey twenties. Might've been a few maybe thirties. The oldest was over us, so we used to have a lotta fun out there. Nobody ever fighted[sic] out there on the farm.

Bev What did you do on the weekends when you weren't working? What would you do to socialize?

Copper Go fishin'. I take my two children an' go fishin'.

Bev Where did you go?

Copper Sometimes out to da [St. Johns] River. Sometimes out to da lakes an' thangs. Go out.

Bev Did you catch a lot?

Copper Yeah, 'cause a lotta times, when I get out from work on da farm, I had da children meet me down at da [inaudible] of da road, an' my pole it brokek[sic], an' I be done work [inaudible] in da summertime [inaudible]. Then I go on down to da lake—down there an' fish 'til dark.

Bev So I'm sure you ate some of the fish that you caught. Did you sell any of them or did you give some away?

Copper Said—did I eat 'em? We ate 'em [laughs].

Bev You had fish fries. That's good.

Copper Yeah, so I ate those fish. There was some nice, big fish down—there's da Saint Johns River right down there.

Bev Do you remember what kind of fish you were catching?

Copper Well, it was all kind of fish down there. Dey musta had freshwater muddies¹ down there, but I don't know. Back den dey called it "taste muddy." Dey taste different dan da saltwater muddies, but dey had blue gills. Dey had shell crackles. Dey always had slammed[?] brim, an' big catfish, an' all dat. I enjoyed all of dat, but it's been a long time since I been fishin', 'cause I can't move around no mo'. You know I'm lookin' at 90 years now.

Bev You're going to be 90? Congratulations.

¹ Mudfish.

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

- Copper** The 26th of this June comin' in, an' I'll be 90 years old.
- Bev** And I hope you have many more birthdays, and live to see your great-great-great-great granddaughters and grandsons.
- Copper** [inaudible] is my granddaughter. She's my great-granddaughter, but she look more like she my child, yet she [inaudible] my grandchild. I got six generations. I just give da good Lord thanks every day fo' keepin' me here dis long, 'cause I told 'im I know I was bad a lil' while, but not long.
- Bev** The foods you were eating growing up – was it different from what you're eating now? Do you think that helps you to live long?
- Copper** Yeah, we didn't hardly have to buy nothin', but da flour meal is still called [inaudible]. Always planted a garden, an' we had plenty vegg'bles. Plenty of it. We go fishin' an' catch fish. And we have sweet potatoes – had two bags of sweet potatoes in da backyard, an' had white potatoes stored up under da house – in the dirt up under da house. We had plenty food. Plenty food. When dey'd buy syrup, dey'd buy it in a barrel keg like dat – wood, an' had a sticker on it, but when she get ready fo' us to have syrup, she'd always throw it out da sticker, an' stand up there on the table [inaudible], 'cause she'd be goin' to work. Mama come home one day. My brutha – my oldest brutha – he done told hisself[sic], he gonna get some mo' syrup. It wasn't enough fo' him. When dey open the barrel – dey open da screw on da barrel – he didn't know how to put it back, an' dat was bad. Syrup was everywhere. When Mama come [laughs] an' syrup was everywhere.
- Bev** Did he get a whoopin'?
- Copper** You know, he used to wear a shirt so long, it feel like it was a dress, but it would be [inaudible] pants, but Mama made 'im come out dem thangs – come out dat shirt an' dem pants. [inaudible] den she put 'er foot in his back like dat, an' she had three of dem [inaudible,] an' had dem [inaudible] together, an' she would whoop 'im a while. She'd tell da child'n havin' my [inaudible]. She'd talk to 'im again, an' she start back whoopin' again. *Dat woman gonna kill 'im.* Dat's what I always said to myself, but one day she got me too. Dat woman put a whoopin' on me. Dat woman whoop me. I had blood an' blisters from here all da way down.
- Bev** What did you do to get that whoopin'?
- Copper** Tryin' to think what I had – sumthin' she told me not to do, but I did it anyhow, but I done forgot what it was, but when dat woman [inaudible], you betta not even whimper. Don't you whimper. You betta not whimper. You be hurtin' so bad inside you wanna bust [laughs]. "Mama, mama. Can I – can – can I – go to da bathroom?" She said, "You better not [inaudible]." [laughs].

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

- Bev** You better hurry up and go.
- Copper** I'd go out to da bathroom, an' I'd crank da door to see, but she comin' toilet. I says, "Lord, I wish dat ol' black woman would die." [*laughs*] Mama didn't play.
- Bev** Did she live very long? How old was she when she died?
- Copper** Mama was 67 to 68 when she died.
- Bev** So she lived long.
- Copper** But I had a good mama. We didn't suffer fo' nuthin.' I had a good mama. She made a life fo' us. She work nights. She work all day long. It be[sic] dark when she go to work. It be dark when she come back, but she didn't go to bed 'til she cooked an' fix us food – 'fore she went to bed. She leave dat food on da stove. She leave bread pack up like dat – cake bread – a pot of beans, a pot of greens, or sumthin' like dat. enough to last us all day long, an' we wasn't hungry, 'cause we [inaudible] just playin' all da time, an' we had a lotta fruit trees around us, an' we'd eat da fruit too you know. So I had a good mom. She whoop me, but I had a good mom.
- Bev** What about your dad? Was he around? Did he go to work?
- Copper** No, he's always camped out. Mama was just home wit us, but he would come home 'bout every week or every two weeks, an' stay da weekend, but he would go back, 'cause he was workin.'
- Bev** Do you know where he went for work? Was it in Florida or was it another state?
- Copper** [inaudible] at dat time, mens[sic] was doin' [inaudible] work. I know you heard the tale of [inaudible] work. He was [inaudible] down there. He was 'bout 10 or 12 miles from when where we was stayin' at, but he whoop my brutha one time. He whoop my brutha – my oldest brutha – but we didn't know we was stealin'. We didn't know dat. He went over in Mr. Lang's[?] field an' got a watermelon – there was a watermelon field, an' he was way out there da way he was at. My dad – Mr. Lang's[?] house was way over there. You just could see it. Papa come over there, an' cut da watermelon, an' ate it, an' da seeds an' thangs. He seen dem, an' ask us where we get it from, an' [inaudible] I said, "[inaudible] went over there in dat field an' got us a watermelon." He said, "[inaudible], don't you know Mr. Lang[?] woulda come by there an' find you in dat field, he'da shot ya? He'da kill'd ya." So he put a whoopin' on my brutha. Den my mama happen to come down there to get us, an' my brutha was still sick. He was throwin' up blood, an' den my mutha had it, and we didn't ever stay wit him no more. Never.
- Bev** Now, you came here in 1946. And since then, your family has been here, like you and your two kids. And all your other generations were born and raised in

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

Sanford, right? When you came here, did you have your two kids with you or you had them here?

Copper No, I had 'em from when I come here.

Bev So all their kids were born here? Okay, so you started a trend here in Sanford.

Copper Yeah, all of 'em were born here.

Bev As a family, did you talk about things like ghost stories? Did you tell ghost stories growing up?

Copper No.

Bev What did you do for Halloween?

Copper I ain't do nuthin' for Halloween. Da only thing we know about holidays is Christmas an' Easter.

Bev Tell us about Christmas and Easter when you were growing up.

Copper Dey would dress us up fo' Easter, but Christmas – we didn't get toys like child'n get 'em now, but we would have more fruit dan we would have anythin' else. Apples, an' oranges, an' stuff like dat, candy, but we didn't have da toys. Every now and den, you might get a doll. Da first doll I got – my baby brutha throwed[sic] my doll in da fireplace an' burnt dat one up [laughs]. Den da next one I got – not da same baby, but anotha one of da babies – tore da head off my baby. Course, we didn't get toys like dey get 'em now. You didn't even see 'em den.

Bev What kind of preparations did your parents make for Christmas? Did you do anything special? Did you go to church?

Copper Dey cooked. Dat's all. Yeah, cooked cake, [inaudible,] make some kinda meat. Kill goats, kill cows, kill hogs, an' I couldn't stand to see it. I'd have to go wit 'em to kill da hogs – killin' 'em thangs. Dey'd shoot da hogs. I'd be runnin' around da house to hide. I couldn't stand to see it. The goats – dey'd kill 'em. My stepdaddy [inaudible] the knife right in front of da goat – da knife dey'd cut da goat's throat, an' da goat was so pitiful, an' he's cussin', an' goin' after 'em, 'fore dey even go [inaudible]. I couldn't stand it. I couldn't see 'em kill dat goat. Dey'd hang da goat up there on da thang up there, an' dey cut da goat up. I wouldn't eat it. I didn't eat da goat meat. I didn't eat da cow meat, an' I mighta had some hog meat, but dat cow an' dat goat – I couldn't eat it to save my life. Mama said, "Well, if you can't eat dis, you must be goin' eat some dry bread." and I said, "Well, I'll just get my dry bread." And what's da otha one she had? Some kinda vegg'ble. I'd get dat, but I couldn't eat dat stuff. I couldn't even cook it [inaudible]. I couldn't smell it cookin'. My husband would always have to put da

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

beef meat on and cook it. I couldn't stand da scent of it. made me sick. And right now, I don't eat it. I have never had da goat. Never.

Bev What are some of the things you like to eat?

Copper I tell you da truth. It ain't very much I like right now. Nuthin', but I got to eat sumthin', 'cause I got to take my 10 pills a day. So I have to eat sumthin.' because it ain't got no taste to me now. Can't tell exactly what I'm eatin,' but I know I'm eatin.' I have to eat a lil' mouthful of sumthin.'

Bev I want to go back a little to when you came with your kids. You would go to the plantation, and you would work on the farm. And then after work and on the weekends, you'd go fishing. What kind of activities did you do with your kids outside of fishing? Did you go to church on Sundays? What was school like for them?

Copper Yeah, my child'n went to school. When a movie come in, right—a show come, I take 'em myself to da show. I'd be tired, but I would take 'em to da show. [inaudible] I'd be there wit 'em 'til da show was over. I would let 'em go to da movies, but I would tell 'em what time. I would know what time da movies turn out, an' I'd be sittin' there waitin' on 'em, 'cause dey used to catch da bus to go to da movie, an' catch da bus to come back. So da oldest girl catch da bus to come on home, but my baby girl, she was so grown. She caught da bus and went Midway—back there. I think she was 'bout 12 or 13—sumthin' like dat, but when she come home, I was standin' there behind da door waitin' on her. I was fussin' at da oldest girl, 'cause she didn't make 'er—'cause she said she wouldn't mind 'er, but when she walk through dat door, I grab 'er, an' I put sumthin' on her behind, an' I betcha she ain't ever tried it no mo.'

Bev You became your mother.

Copper Dat's da truth. I ain't ever had no mo' trouble wit 'er. No mo.' Now when I tell 'em what time to be back—'cause da show's over by [inaudible] o'clock—the bus comin' back down First Street. Dey get off the bus right there on da houses right there off [inaudible] da street. [inaudible] come in the door, and I said, "Where is [inaudible]?" "'Cause I tried to make 'er come home wit me, but she went off an' got out at Midway." I said, "Okay." I stopped dat right there.

Bev Where was the show held? Was it in Sanford also?

Copper Off on Sanford Avenue [inaudible]. They had a show on Stanford Avenue then—a movie show. I felt bad goin.' I would go wit 'em, but I was tired. You get out there and do 10 hours on that farm, you'd be tired. I told myself, "I'm gonna trust 'em." 'Cause [inaudible] was pretty big. She was 14 or 15, an' I ain't ever had no trouble outta 'em, until dat night when Miss Lady caught da bus an' went

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

to Midway. Dat was da first trouble I had ever had outta 'er, an' I ain't had no more outta 'er.

Bev You made sure you stopped it.

Copper Dey said I did 'em wrong, 'cause I didn't let dem go when dey wanted to go, but I made ladies outta 'em.

Bev Where are they now? Where are your girls?

Copper Both of 'em – they're here in Sanford. Baby girl live not too far from here. And my oldest live on the otha side ova there.

Bev Is there any particular person you admire most out of all the people you know, whether it be a relative, or someone you worked with, or someone you know from socializing at church or anywhere? Who is the person you admire the most and why?

Copper I tell you da truth, my child'n. I don't know. People done got so funny now. People don't have nuthin' too much to say to nobody. I guess. I don't know why. I ain't ever did nuthin' to nobody, but dey won't speak to you. Dey black, just like you is. I guess 'cause dey got big cars now, an' dey got money, an' all dat kind of stuff. Maybe dey think – I don't know what dey think. What dey got in dey mind, but I don't care what you got. God helped you to get it, an' he'll help you to lose it. You don't ever just walk by a person, an', you know – dey ain't ever did nuthin' to you, an' can't say, "Well, how you do today?" Or "Good mornin'," or "good evenin'." Da time o' day belongs to everybody. I just don't know what's wrong wit dem. I sit out there sometimes, and I be sittin' on da end of da porch there, an' da neighbors just be goin' to da mailbox, an' when dey glance. See me sittin' on da porch, dey turn dey head da other way until dey pass by, an' I say, "Now, I don't even wanna know dem peoples. I ain't did nuthin' to dem. Dey can't say "Good mornin'" or "Good evenin'?" I been here goin' on 15 years, an' I can't tell you da name of 'em but one, an' dat one stay on da end down there. In all 15 years.

Bev Do you have any other stories about anything in your life that you would like to share with me? Anything about your six generations?

Copper Well, I tell you da truth. Dis ol' lady here done forgotten 'bout everythin' she ever knowed[sic]. Ya don' think like ya think now. Ya mind don't be rigid like you used to be. Thangs right now – when I wake up to fix me some breakfast, I be thinkin' 'bout what I'm gonna fix, an' it'll come to me here, but when I get in da kitchen, I forget what I go in there at. I set dat in there, an' I say, *Well, anyway, I needed to walk. I'll come back an' sit down and it'll come back to me,* but when I get in there and start tryin' to fix my breakfast, I forget still. It take me an hour just to

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

make some oatmeal or coffee, 'cause by me havin' roaches, I gotta wash everythin' I use 'fore I can cook it, an' I sit there until it can come back to me.

Bev But it's good that you can do all these things by yourself.

Copper But I cook my lil' food, an' I buy a lot already in cans. so when I do get home an' don't feel like tryna get up an' cook sumthin', I just go in there an' open some o' dat up an' warm it up an' eat it, an' sometime I open a can o' soup, an' if I got a biscuit, I break da biscuit up in da soup, an' dat's da meal fo' me. I hardly ever eat about once a day, but I got plenty o' food in there. I just ain't got da energy to move around an' try to do like I used to do. Now I used to cook fo' my family – fo' my child'n – an' invite dem fo' Christmas. Dat I used to do all o' dat.

Bev Now they cook for you. They cook for you for Christmas.

Copper No, dey bring it ova.

Bev Good. The party's still here.

Copper Yeah, 'cause dey know I can't move ova there, so dey bring it ova an' put it up there.

Bev Now two different questions. The first one is: what was your biggest pleasure in life? If you were to think about your entire life – almost 90 years – what memory do you have that was most pleasing to you? And which one is most disappointing to you?

Copper Child'n. Dis one right here.

Bev Tell me about her. Tell me about that one right there.

Copper I raised her up from a baby up until she about 13.

Bev Valencia [Larue], right?

Copper Her mama found out she could cook and could wash my clothes, an' I was sick at dat time, an' she used to go to da laundromat an' wash my clothes like a lady, an' bring 'em back, an' her mama come one day an' ask me what we had fo' dinner. I say, "We have sumthin'." I forgot what it was, but she said, "I'll be out there. I'm gonna eat." so she come out there an' fix da plate, an' I said, "I thought you had already eaten." she was talkin' 'bout how good it was, an' I say, "Well, yo' daughter cooked it." She said, "My daughter cooked dis?" I said, "She sho' did." She said, "If my daughter cooked dis, I'ma take her home so she could cook and wash my clothes."

Bev Are you kidding?

*A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences,
and Stories of Central Florida*

University of Central Florida

Copper She took 'er. Yeah, she took 'er. I had had a stroke at dat time an' I had a— dis big here— an' I couldn't do nuthin' wit dis hand. So I had her an' she tried to cook, an' dat girl had a head on her right there. She ain't ever stumble. She keep goin'.

Bev All right. So Valencia's your greatest joy? What's your greatest disappointment?

Copper My grandchildren, yeah. When I was raisin' 'em up, I was not happy 'bout nuthin.'

Bev Oh, you were happy about everything? Great.

Copper I remember one time, after I got grown, I got fast at my mama, an' I was so hurted[sic]. Afta I got to thinkin' 'bout it dat, I went back an' went to beg her pardon, an', at dat time, my mama was in her prime. She didn't go out nowhere to party, but she liked to drink. Dat day—I don't know. I forgot what it was dat come up 'bout, an' I tried to walk away from da house without saying nuthin' to her, an' I went down da road, an' she was following me, an' she caught up wit me, an' caught my clothes, an' snatched on my clothes. I said, "I'ma tell you da truth. If you wasn't my mama, dis is one day I would whoop yo' so and so." [laughs].

Bev About how old were you then?

Copper I was grown then. I was grown, an' my child'n were grown. I tried to get away from 'em, but I guess da Devil was there anyway, but I tell you da truth, she was snatchin' on my clothes an' shakin' me. She said, "Act like I ain't yo' mama. Whoop me." I went to cryin'. I turned around an' went on my way. She turned around—she was drinkin' at dat time, but I tell you da truth, I was sorry fo' many a days I said dat to her. Talkin' 'bout whoopin' on my mama, but she upsetted[sic] me. I had a good mom. She would do things that aggravate me. She'd go an' put on two or three dresses. One [inaudible], put on an old coat, some old shoes, an old hat, an' go walkin' down da streets an' all dat. Then I'd know people be laughin' at her, an' I think she was doin' dat to aggravate me, an' dat would hurt me. So I said, "Well, she should come to my house an' do it." Sometime I'd ease on out an' go on down da back way an' be right there in da house. When I'd come back, she' be long gone [laughs]. That would aggravate me, but I had a sweet mom.

End of Interview