

Oral Memoirs

of

Mart Tucker

An Interview Conducted by

Stephanie Youngers

November 19, 2010

Museum of Seminole County History

Museum of Seminole County History

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Mart and Cecil Tucker

Interviewers: Stephanie Youngers

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the Museum of Seminole County History, Sanford, Florida.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Mart Tucker is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on November 19, 2010.

Abstract

Oral history of Mart Tucker, conducted by Stephanie Youngers on November 10, 2010. In the interview, Tucker discusses the various towns and cities that she resided in, her college education, her career as a typist, her family history, her children and grandchildren, her husband's career, her involvement in the Seminole County Farm Bureau and the 4-H program, and opening a family store. The interview also includes commentary from her husband, Cecil Tucker.

Mart Tucker

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Stephanie Youngers

November 19, 2010

Sanford, Florida

0:00:00

Introduction

Youngers My name is Stephanie Youngers. Today is November 19, 2010 and I am interviewing Mrs. Mart Tucker and Mr. Cecil Tucker here at the Museum of the Seminole County History. How are we all today?

Cecil We're doing great.

Mart Just fine [*laughs*].

0:00:18

Biographical information

Youngers Good. Well, we're going to start where and when you were born.

Mart Okay. I was born in Fort Pierce. January 19th, 1932.

Youngers And when did you come to the area here?

Mart Well—here?

Youngers Did you move around a lot before you moved to the Seminole/Orange County area?

Mart No. I remember—the thing that I remember first was when we moved to the two-story house on Lake Barton—Little Lake Barton Road¹—out just outside of Orlando. And we lived there for about 12 years, I think. And then Daddy, of course—he was going up and down the state when the tick eradication was on. And when that was over, he then became a foreman of the ranch south of Christmas. And, so when he was in the tick eradication, he never knew where he would be moved to another place. And so we rented the house that we lived in for about 10 or 12 years.

Youngers Wow.

Mart But, this[sic] was[sic] the [World] War [II] years, and you couldn't find housing in Orlando. And somebody found that house, and bought it, so we had to find another place. And couldn't go out to the ranch, because there was no school bus going there.

¹ Correction: Barton Road.

Cecil How far was the ranch from civilization?

Mart Well, it was 18 miles south of the main highway.

Youngers Oh, wow.

Cecil That was 18 miles south of Christmas. And Christmas was 20 miles from Orlando.

0:02:33

Living in Holopaw

Youngers Wow. And you went to school in Orlando?

Mart Yes. Well, when that house was bought. If you worked for the company, they would give you housing in Holopaw. And the ranch was – that he was foreman of – was...

Cecil Osceola County.

Mart Well, it was in Osceola County, but it was owned by the Holopaw outfit. And therefore, we went to Holopaw. And we lived there. Best year of my life – well, not really.

Youngers [*laughs*].

Mart But I had lots of fun out there in Holopaw. Mother was – helped to do out the – what is it?

Cecil The commissary. Food stamps.

Mart No, the – food stamps and things. Still the war – we still had that. And that was in the commissary. So I'd come to the commissary and I'd help the guys put cans up in that grocery department, and then I'd go to a guy that cuts up all the meat, and I'd do help there. And then at the end of the week, they would do their hand in their pocket and give me out some change. And I still have the .22 rifle that I bought with that money.

Youngers Oh, my goodness. So, the commissary – that was like the grocery store?

Mart Yeah.

Youngers That was out in Holopaw.

Mart Yes. Because you didn't have to go to town if you need clothes or, if you need...

Cecil That was P. V. Wilson Lumber Company. Big outfit.

Youngers Oh, okay. Yeah.

Mart And they're not there anymore. Not at all.

Youngers No. they're not. Do you know – what is the school that you attended?

Mart Well, I went to the school in – what is it? I had it down here. The city that was...

Cecil Holopaw.

Mart No, no, no. They had to go out.

Youngers Fort Pierce?

Cecil St. Cloud?

Mart St. Cloud. St. Cloud. Rode into there.

Youngers That's still quite a drive. I've been down that road.

Mart Yes. It was.

Youngers And they had a grammar school there, or...

Mart No. I don't think so.

Cecil What – in St. Cloud?

Mart No. in Holopaw they did.

Youngers But in St. Cloud? Did you attend grammar school? Or was it a large school? Or was it a small place?

Mart Just regular. St. Cloud.

Cecil It wasn't that large.

Mart Wasn't anything like Orlando. But it was bigger than Holopaw.

Youngers And you all lived in Holopaw for a year?

Mart Just a year.

0:05:51

Family life

Youngers When did you – where did you go after you left there?

Mart Well, when we left there, the ranch was just officially our home. But Mom and us – well, there's[sic] four girls at the time – had not yet finished all high school. So we went into Orlando and rented in Orlando until my twin sister and I...

Youngers Oh, you're a twin, too? Wow.

Mart Yeah.

Cecil Tell us about your brothers and sisters.

Mart Oh, hm. Well, Sally [Albritton] and Betty [Albritton]. Helen [Albritton] was the oldest. And then I had a brother, Boots [Albritton], that[sic] was about, I guess, four years younger than she. And then there was two sets of – Sally and Betty. And then there was Miriam [Albritton] and Margaret [Albritton].

Youngers So two sets of twins? Goodness.

Mart Two sets of twins. Twenty months apart.

Youngers Oh, my goodness.

Mart You can figure why I guess she had her tubes tied. Didn't need any more kids. And what else did you...

Cecil Well, just tell us about your brothers and sisters, because that...

Youngers Did you all help out at home a lot on the ranch?

Mart Well, see, we didn't live on the ranch. I was privy to be able to – well, in the sixth and seventh grade, Daddy would go out for two weeks in the summer. And even then, on Wednesday, he would let me ride. I'd cow-hunt with him. I sat up on horse, and all that. He was my dad, but you took care of whatever you was supposed to do. So I loved to cow-hunt. We'd ride all day. We'd ride all morning and then have lunch and take a snooze before we rode some more. So you could get tired of it, but I didn't.

Cecil How about your brother?

Mart Well, my brother, Boots – he was out at the ranch. He married and was out at the ranch. But he – he didn't stay there very long. Thing of it is, you have to not let hollerin' at you bother you, because when you're having to do something, or things are quick – and Daddy hollers at you to do something – you don't get out of sorts, because that's just the way it is. But he couldn't take it. And so he went into Orlando there.

Youngers Now, did your other sisters do this with you too?

Mart No.

Cecil She was, um – Mart² was the only boy.

Mart They didn't. They didn't never come out to the ranch when for – you know, like I did.

² Correction: Boots.

Cecil Her dad said that he had a pretty good cowhand in her until I came along and started courting her and messed it up [*laughs*].

Mart [*laughs*] Oh, well, you could have jumped in and helped us. No.

0:09:22

Attending high school in Orlando

Youngers When you went to the high school in Orlando, were you part of any groups or anything there? Did you have any kind of social functions that you attended?

Mart Well, I was athletic. So we had a group—a club—that I was head of. And as far as us girls that were athletic were concerned, we stayed after school and played the different sports that were available at that part of the year.

Cecil What were some of the sports that y'all played?

Mart Speedball was one. Of course, basketball. Volleyball.

Cecil Softball?

Mart Yeah, yeah. Softball. I was pitcher. But my main thing in high school was sports. And that and makin' honor society.

Cecil What about rifle team?

Mart Oh, I forgot about the rifle team.

Youngers You were on the rifle team too?

Mart Well, we had a rifle club. I got a picture home, shows this old, oh, eight or ten boys and girls up there with their rifles, out from the school building there. Now, can you imagine? They're letting people bring rifles to school today? [*laughs*]

Youngers Oh, yeah. Were the boys a little put off by the fact that you could shoot a rifle?

Mart Oh, no. No.

Youngers No? They liked that? They weren't afraid?

Mart I still have the rifle. Oh, when I was in Holopaw, and the guys—well, did I say that? And the guys, when they would give me money...

Youngers And you bought your .22.

Mart Yeah, that's when I bought that .22. When I was in the eighth grade. So...

Youngers Oh, wow. And they let you buy it all by yourself?

Mart Oh, yeah.

Youngers See, can't do that anymore either.

Mart [inaudible] Right, yeah. That was better days.

0:11:58 **College education and career as a typist**

Youngers Yeah. And from high school, you went to University of Florida. Did you do that right out of high school, or did you take some time in between?

Mart No, I went right out of high school and I was going to major in animal husbandry. And, when did I see you first?

Cecil The summer before you went up there.

Mart Well, I can't...

Youngers You saw him here back home?

Mart When my sister and I graduated from high school, then the ranch was our home. And that's where I lived. And our post office was in Christmas. We'd go into Orlando to get groceries and stuff, and so one of those days before I went off to college, got the mail, came out and told Mom, "Oh, I saw the postmaster's son. He was waiting—in there waiting on customers." She said, "Oh, you should have told him you're one of the lucky ones. You're going to be in Reid Hall." And I was really surprised that Mother would want me to—but I knew what—she was afraid I was going to get homesick at university and didn't know anybody, and at least I would know one person. Of course, since I was a beginner there, I had to go a week early for the week of orientation. Well, it just so happens there's this guy sitting on the steps of the big building we were waiting for something, the next thing to be done. But because he was a transfer student...

Cecil I had to go to orientation too.

Mart He had to do the same. And so that's where I really met him. And, of course, we went to the frat[ernity] house and met all those guys.

Youngers Yeah. He said he used to invite you to dinner every week to come have dinner with him and all the boys there.

Mart Of course, he made sure to tell everyone one of them—oh, man. Whole house full of guys, you know. He told every one of them, "Hands off." Never did give—well, he was out of town, he had to go home for his teeth or something, and old McGregor—tall, lanky fellow—asked me out. And I had already planned to do ironing and what not, but I said, "No." That was the only...

Cecil The only opportunity you had. He hadn't gotten a word yet at that point.

Mart Yeah. He hadn't gotten to the frat house yet. But that was great. And I went that one year. But if I really wanted to go again back, I'm sure money would have been able to be found. Mother had an operation that took what normally would have sent me, but by then, I was...

Cecil Sidetracked.

Mart Well, yeah. I was wanting to get a job and save up money so that whenever we were – we were getting pretty close, and so I didn't mind not going back to work there. I worked there and I forget where it was in Orlando, but then we were married.

Cecil Jacob's Packing House.

Mart Yeah. That's it.

Youngers So when he finished out his education up there...

Mart No, when he finished his – see, he had his first year in Orlando. Second year when I was up there too, and then the third year before – which way was it? We got married before he was graduated from college.

Youngers So, did you stay down here?

Mart No.

Cecil Yeah. You did. You stayed one year working at Jacob's.

Mart After we were married?

Cecil No. not after we were married, before we were married.

Mart Well, the next year, then what?

Cecil Then we got married and you moved to Gainesville with me.

Mart And I got a job in the animal husbandry department at Typhus. I was supposed to type this book they were wanting to have. And they ended up finally making it not a book, but something else. And they – do you remember?

Cecil It was a book, but go ahead.

Mart Well, anyway. That was – we had a lot of fun up there. One professor's – of course I was a typist. They would give their handwritten stuff, and I would type it up. So I typed up this test that was going to be given out. And I went back to the fellow and I handed him the typed thing. And I had his handwritten, I says[sic], "Do you want this? I usually give it to Cecil." He says, "Don't." [laughs]

Cecil At that point, I was working on my Master's [Degree].

Youngers Oh. They didn't want him having the test questions.

Cecil Of course, she was teasing, but...

Youngers Aww.

Mart Those were good men in the ag[riculture] – animal husbandry. Until I was pregnant with Miriam [Tucker].

Cecil They weren't good after that?

Mart Yeah. They were, but – then I was no longer working. So, what else is there to be said?

0:18:21 Children

Youngers When you all had twins too, right?

Mart Mm-hm.

Youngers Goodness gracious.

Mart We had a little girl first. Then had twins. And Dr. Hoffman from Orlando – he saw to things. I mean, here I was pregnant, but in Gainesville, and we'd come home for, you know – back and forth. And in Thanksgiving – I think it was – came home and stayed.

Cecil But now the twins were born in Ocala. They were born in Orlando, while we were living in Ocala.

Mart True, true. Okay, so, it's Ocala still. And he informed me that he'd tied my tubes. He contended with three on the ground, and coming in two's, I didn't need – and his financial status at the time, we couldn't afford to have any more. To me, that was the best thing. That just made life so much easier, to not worry about getting pregnant.

Youngers Right.

Mart Good deal.

0:19:44 Living in Marion, Seminole, and Orange counties

Youngers Right. And when you all moved back to this area, it was so that Mr. Tucker could take his job at the Extension Office?

Cecil Right.

Mart Yeah, when we were first in Ocala, and then...

Cecil We were in Ocala for two years. I was Assistant County Agent in Marion County. And then we came here. I was [Seminole] County Agent and we came — I think it was in 1957.

Youngers Okay.

Mart What else we got here?

Youngers What else did you do back here? Did you go back to work, or did you stay home?

Mart Oh, what did I do? Cecil?

Cecil You had three children. What do you think you did? [*laughs*]

Mart Alright. We were living out by...

Youngers Christmas.

Cecil Well, first we lived in Rosalia Drive.

Mart Yeah.

Cecil In Sanford. In about 1960, we moved out on old Orlando Highway.

Mart We had acreage there — oranges and pasture. Well, that was one. And we had cattle. Cecil was workin' at the dairy and he — they had calves that weren't going to be dairy cattle. And we started building up a herd there.

Cecil It was 1956 that we came here.

Mart But whatever had to be done with cattle and whatnot around the place, I usually did it. Because he had to go to work. We were feeding out — how many? Seven steer? That year?

Cecil Well, y'all raised a bunch of heifer yearlings first. And later on it was about 10 steers that y'all fattened up.

Mart What do you mean, "Y'all?"

Cecil You [*laughs*].

Youngers In other words, the kids didn't help out.

Mart Well, they probably had to go to school or something. It was probably wasn't in the summertime or not. But that's...

Youngers So, you did a lot of work.

Mart Oh, and also, we had some cattle...

Cecil Lake Osprey[sp]. North of Osteen.

Mart And so I primarily would go out there and check the cows or take them feeding. And he wasn't always with me.

Youngers Right.

Mart We'd do it real nice [*laughs*].

Cecil About 1960, we moved out to Citrus Heights – Ginderville[sp] [Heights], or near Ginderville[sp]. And that's when we were able to have a lot more cattle she could look after, and the kids could have 4-H projects.

Mart And really, what was really nice was there was an old house down the way, and Mom and Dad were able to – he kept the livestock market in Orlando. They lived there until finally when he retired. And this little house – with Daddy's expertise on carpentry and stuff, they made the house a nice little place and lived there.

Youngers So you were close to your Mom and Dad. Oh, good.

Mart Mm-hm.

0:23:36 **Seminole County Farm Bureau and 4-H**

Youngers And you were – when you were part of the women's club for the [Seminole County] Farm Bureau, was that while Mr. Tucker was working at the Extension Office?

Cecil It was after that, when we started a store in 1972. And at that point, I became president of Seminole County Farm Bureau. And it was a law in there that she became chairman of the women's – deal.

Youngers What did you do while you were on that board there?

Mart I knew that would be asked. I don't know. Well, when we would have the whole group would have an annual meeting, and supper, and whatnot. Of course, I was involved in getting all that prepared. Getting tables right and things like that.

Youngers Did you help set, like, regulations? Or were the ladies involved in that way?

Mart No.

Cecil Not much. Not much. It was primarily just providing information of programs of what was available to them and what was going on.

Youngers Okay. Very good.

Cecil But also, when we moved out to Citrus Heights area, you became more active in 4-H. Because the boys became active in 4-H.

Youngers And did they raise heifers?

Mart No, they raised chickens.

Cecil Chickens and pigs.

Youngers Oh.

Cecil And they did raise heifers, but they never did raise any to show.

Youngers Oh, okay.

Cecil At one point, they won all of the trophies [*laughs*]. With the chickens at the show.

Mart Oh, yeah. They felt kind of bad, I guess. Or we did [*laughs*].

Youngers They raised all the best chickens.

Mart I can see why. They had the best of help.

Youngers They had the best parents. That's right.

Mart Help 'em learn.

Youngers Good.

Mart Oh, goodness.

Cecil But when we'd have our annual 4-H contest and things, she was in involved in helping us judge things like the lamp contest and making lamps.

Youngers They make lamps? Really?

Cecil Yeah, and electrical, you know – learn things about electricity. And she also judged these speaking contests.

Mart The what?

Cecil Speaking contests.

Mart Oh, yeah. Okay. A lot of this I don't remember [*laughs*].

Youngers That's okay.

Mart I remember him, so far [*laughs*].

Youngers That's important.

Mart But it's been really, really great being involved in those kind of things. Being around with the kids, and...

0:27:21 **Opening a store and Mart's pet pig**

Cecil We—we started the store in 1972. Were you involved in that?

Mart Slightly. I always brought the main attraction of the store. And where did we find that little pig?

Cecil My son-in-law found him. He was a little wild pig. And he was so young that he still had, you know, fawn with half-spots on it. Wild pigs have similar spots as well.

Mart So he became mine. And did he have a collar on?

Cecil Yes.

Mart A leash. Because when he was littler, if I was going to go mail something...

Cecil Or deposit something. Make a deposit at the bank.

Mart I would take him along down the streets of Sanford and take him in on a leash and finally he got bigger and bigger and bigger. And he'd come up on the porch. I'd chain him up there out of the sun.

Cecil At the store?

Mart Yeah. At the store. But he would come in, I'd bring him in to the store in the car. And he would be in the front seat. And one day I went there, heard someone said, "Hey!" I saw somebody on the corner there with a friend, who went on to work. She told me later she said, "The person said, 'Was that a pig?'" And she said, "Oh, that's Mart Tucker. That's all she can get to ride with her." *[laughs]* What a good friend. So a car would stop in the middle of the street from the store and the lady would get out, come up the steps, and give something to Pete right there, and go down, get in her car, and go off.

Cecil It was a daily ritual with her to give him some piece of candy. Something.

Mart Some edible thing.

Youngers So they would just come up and give him treats then.

Cecil Yeah *[laughs]*.

Youngers So how long did you have him for?

Mart Until we finally, I quit bringing him in to the...

Cecil He got to be about 700-800 pounds.

Youngers Wow. Yeah. You wouldn't be toting him around too much.

Mart So he had a place there, at the barn at the house, and I guess...

Cecil He got an infection. Yeah.

Youngers Well, he got to be an awfully big boy, so...

Cecil Yeah. He did. [*phone rings*].

Youngers He must have been a happy boy.

Mart He had lots of friends. Lots of attention.

Cecil Excuse me. I forgot to turn this thing off.

Youngers That's alright.

Mart Let's see. That was at the store.

Youngers So, you helped with the store, doing like all the stock. And, like, when the customers would come in, you'd help them?

Mart Yeah. It's Cecil and I. we did it all. It was a real enjoyable, and funny. Um, Horstmeyers?

Youngers Horstmeyer [Farm and Garden].

Mart Yeah. They have it now. Of course, we come in and get our feed there. And we came in and Miss Horstmeyer was behind the counter, and she made some comment about, "There's the Tuckers." And her telephone rang and she said, "Tuckers?" Instead of "Horstmeyer's." We had the biggest laughs over that. Her calling her own store by the wrong name. Oh, goodness.

Youngers And you sold the store to your son first, right? And he just took it over, and did you retire, or did you move on to different things?

Mart Well, we didn't do any—I don't know. You'd have to ask Cecil.

Youngers Okay.

Mart Um, I don't—I haven't been—I haven't thought of that in a while. Oh, goodness. So...

0:32:05 **Grandchildren**

Youngers Do you have grandchildren?

Mart Yep. We got great-grandchildren. We had Miriam, and then Cecil and John. Miriam is in – still in Christmas. She’s in Christmas. And Cecil III – he lives in a house that was ours in Sanford. And John is on the coast.

Youngers Daytona [Beach]?

Mart No. closer by.

Youngers Melbourne?

Mart That’s south. What is it, right down Cheney Highway? Um, Titusville.

Youngers Titusville?

Mart Titusville. When, let’s see. I was trying to think, I guess Drew, his son, one of his sons, moved up to Titusville and he wasn’t going to be left behind from being around his grandchildren. And so they moved up. And they live in that area. So it’s real nice. Drew has four children – two boys and two girls. So John and Pam just make do over there profusely. [*laughs*] Which is really nice. So, we’ve spent time over there ourselves.

Youngers You like it over there on the coast?

Mart Yeah. It’s nice. Yeah. We were talking about John and Pam and the kids there.

0:34:17

Family history

Youngers I had asked Mrs. Tucker what she did once the store closed. If y’all retired, or if you just kind of – what you did.

Cecil Well, we sold the store to my son. And when we moved out to Christmas, we just spent more time working on the ranch. So. And that went on, we were pretty much full time on that until Mother – well, my dad passed away in ’95, and in the next couple years Mother came to live with us. And Mart looked after her for the next 10 or 12 years.

Youngers Wow.

Cecil Mother lived to be 101, one month, one week, and one day old.

Mart She was the one. She was quite a lady.

Youngers And how about your parents?

Mart Well, my dad passed away. I don’t know when.

Cecil Well, he was in his late 80s. And then later, your mother came to live with us, and she was in her 90s when she passed away.

Mart She was living the little house, where she did when we were in Sanford. And my sister Betty was living with her when, after Daddy died. And keeping care of her. And it was getting to be a burden for her. So I just had her and Mother to come on over to our house and she would be looking after Mother, but she wouldn't have that, you know, burden of having to do all the shots of making decisions that she had us to be able to do that too. And...

Youngers Well, I was going to take you back a little bit, because Mr. Tucker told me your maiden name was Albritton. And I know that's real prominent down in the South Florida area. I know that the families would run cattle and different things. Was your family involved in that kind of thing as well?

Mart Oh, yeah. And, of course, Daddy – he was – how long was he foreman of the ranch south of Christmas?

Cecil 15-20 years.

Mart The thing of it is, he was involved in the tick eradication, and then whenever that was over, then he got the job of being foreman of that ranch. And so...

Cecil But his family, the Albrittons, were raised around Polk County/Hillsborough County area.

Mart Well, I was thinking of another – I can't think of it. Where the Albrittons came from, I mean most of them were...

Cecil Well, some came from that area.

Mart Okay. What's the name of the area you're talking about? *[laughs]*

Cecil Pine Level in Pine Crest. Plant City.

Mart Oh, okay.

Cecil Arcadia. By the way, Arcadia was named after Arcadia Albritton.

Mart Yeah.

Youngers That's really neat *[laughs]*.

Mart *[laughs]* Oh, something came on my mind.

Cecil But Mart's family came from – there's two lines of Albrittons. There's fence-cutting Albrittons and hog-stealing Albrittons. She's from the fence-cutting Albrittons. *[laughs]* That's another story.

Mart Yeah. Yeah. Because cattle people move their cattle up and down the state of Florida, according to the weather. Weren't any fences anywhere. People fenced

their yard in, and things. And then whenever the — what is it? The people that put the fence across?

Cecil Oh, the, uh...

Mart Phosphate...

Cecil Phosphate mining.

Mart That came in. And so they didn't want cattle going through, and they put a fence over, and so a group of men went and tore the fence down. And there was a big shootout there.

Cecil Well, the second or third time that they tore the fence down was when the shootout happened [*laughs*].

Youngers I think we talked about that too.

Mart Oh, did you? What else?

0:40:07 **Closing remarks**

Youngers Do you have anything else that we didn't talk about that you want to talk about?

Mart Don't know. No, I don't guess so.

Youngers Okay.

Mart Guess we've got everything.

Youngers How about you, Mr. Tucker? You want to add anything?

Cecil No. I think we did pretty good[sic].

Youngers Alright, then. Thank you very much, Mrs. Tucker.

Mart Well, you're welcome.

Youngers And Mr. Tucker.

Mart I hope it'll be worth having [*laughs*].

Cecil [*laughs*]

Youngers Oh, it will. Yes, ma'am.

End of Interview