

HALLIE STREATER
Streater Farm – Black Hawk, MS

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Location: Downtown Greenwood Farmers' Market – Greenwood, MS
Interviewer: Amy Evans Streeter
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[Begin Hallie Streater Interview]

00:00:00

Amy Evans Streater: This is Amy Evans Streater on Saturday, September 24, 2011, in Greenwood, Mississippi, at the Farmers' Market here, and I'm with Mrs. Hallie Streater. And if I—Mrs. Streater, if I could get you to say your name and your occupation for the record, please ma'am—however you might describe that?

00:00:19

Hallie Streater: My name is Hallie Streater. And I just sell produce for my husband. My husband grows it, and I sell it.

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AES: What's your husband's name?

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HS: My husband's name is Walter Streater.

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AES: Okay. And I'm going to ask you to share your birth date for the record, please, ma'am.

00:00:36

HS: I'm sixty-five.

00:00:39

AES: And tell me a little bit about where you're from. We talked a little bit about that a minute ago before we recorded.

00:00:44

HS: I'm from Carroll County, a little old town they call Black Hawk. It's very small.

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AES: Now you—but it's another town, Coila. Is that smaller than Black Hawk?

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HS: Coila is just a little up the road. It's all—it's all from Carroll County. It's right there. It's right there in Carroll County, Coila.

00:01:05

AES: Okay. And you were telling me earlier, too, about your family owning land over that way.

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HS: Yes, my father, he's on—on 460 acres because he done passed away and he left it for his children(s), and we work part of it.

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AES: How far does your family go back in Carroll County?

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HS: Say that again.

00:01:24

AES: How long has your family been in that area?

00:01:27

HS: Oh, well his daddy owned the land, and I guess it goes back generations. It's been in the family for a long time. You know, I don't know how long. Way before I knew anything about it, and I'm 65. *[Laughs]*

00:01:41

AES: How did your family come to own the land, do you know?

00:01:44

HS: You know, I really would like to know myself. *[Laughs]* I hadn't thought about it. I'm going to have to look it up. I don't know.

00:01:55

AES: All right. And so you and your husband just live a few miles from where you grew up?

00:01:59

HS: Yeah, me and my husband, we bought several acres just about three miles from where my father's estate is, and so that's where we live.

00:02:09

AES: Have you always farmed, or have you had other occupations over the years?

00:02:12

HS: Yeah, well I used to work in a factory. I worked in a factory twenty years, and part of those twenty years I was selling produce, too. And so finally the factory went out of business, which I was sorry for the other peoples, but I was glad for myself because all I wanted to do is work in the garden.

00:02:33

AES: So you and your husband have always had a garden?

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HS: Yes, we have always. We started out, we was growing more stuff than we used, and we would give it to peoples. And one day I said, you know, “Walter, we could make a little money off this stuff.” And that’s how I got started selling.

00:02:51

AES: Do you remember what year that was about?

00:02:53

HS: [To customer] Okay, yeah, y’all come back.

00:02:57

AES: About how long ago was that—that you started selling the produce?

00:02:58

HS: I've been selling about twenty years.

00:03:00

AES: Oh, okay. Okay, so tell me where—where were you selling it when you first started out?

00:03:05

HS: I started selling it the place I worked at, Irvin Industries, and then I went—peoples went to calling me and I just sell all over Greenwood. Sold a little in Holmes County. Selling at Carrollton, different places, and then I have a lot of people that just come to my house.

00:03:24

AES: So about how big is this—the garden that y'all keep where you grow?

00:03:27

HS: About two acres—about two acres.

00:03:29

AES: You do a lot with two acres.

00:03:31

HS: Yeah, we do a lot, do a lot—it may be a little bit more.

00:03:38

AES: Okay, so tell me about, you know, we're here at the Farmers' Market and this Market hasn't been opened very long. What did you think about when you heard that this was starting up?

00:03:44

HS: Well, I wouldn't come. I didn't think it was—I didn't think I could make any money here, and then I didn't think it was a good idea. So I thought about it, you know. Half of the season was over with. I said, "I believe I'll go down and try." And that was one of the best things I could have ever did was come to the Farmers' Market, which is a good thing.

00:04:05

AES: So why do you say that? Why is it one of the best things you ever did?

00:04:09

HS: Well you have the people just come to you, and you don't have to worry about running all over town to their houses and things and, mostly, they just come to you.

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AES: But I hear tell that you run to people's houses when the Farmers' Market is out of season.

00:04:23

HS: I do. I do. I do and still have to go. If I don't go, they get mad with me and then they say—you know a lot of them is not able. Old peoples is not able to come up here. And so I have to deliver stuff to them.

00:04:37

AES: And speaking of the older people, tell me about the voucher program. You sell a lot of—a lot of items with the vouchers.

00:04:42

HS: Well it was good for the peoples—a lot of peoples at first, well, they couldn't afford to get what they wanted. And the vouchers really help out a lot of peoples. It really, really helps, really helps.

00:04:55

AES: So those—those are for retirement age people and they get vouchers to spend at the Farmers' Market only or—?

00:05:03

HS: Well no, I believe peoples gets them on low income. I'm not exactly—I don't know exactly how the vouchers come about. But I—I see some peoples, middle-aged peoples have them, too, which I think is good.

00:05:15

AES: Well and I've been sitting here with you a little while, and people are buying you out with those vouchers—those women who came all the way from Tchula [Mississippi] to get those greens.

00:05:23

HS: Yeah. [*Laughs*] They love turnip greens. When this—when this time of year comes they—turnip greens go—turnips, mustards, collards. They love turnip greens, number-one seller.

00:05:36

AES: Really?

00:05:38

HS: And sweet potatoes.

00:05:39

AES: Okay. Well tell me about your sweet potatoes because you have a couple different kinds up here today.

00:05:41

HS: Well, I have the white ones that—really they're not white; they're kind of yellow when you cook them. And then I have the—the red sweet potatoes. Now, take my husband to tell you the name of them. I don't know the name of the sweet potatoes, and they really love sweet potato. Sweet potato pie, baked sweet potatoes, candied yams, if you need potatoes see Hallie Streater because I got them. [*Laughs*]

00:06:05

AES: And that gentleman who came and bought some was—y'all were taking about a Nancy sweet potato. What's that?

00:06:11

HS: Nancy Hall. Nancy Hall, it's hard to find. You can't find—I can't find it. So this guy told me, if he finds it, he's going to let me know and I would like to—you know, get hold to them—the slips just to plant it for my customers.

00:06:26

AES: Because it's the best sweet potato, he said.

00:06:28

HS: Yeah, he—they're delicious. He said they're delicious. I really don't know them, so next year I hope I have them.

00:06:36

AES: So tell me all about what you grow out there at your farm.

00:06:38

HS: Oh, a little bit of everything. First, starting out, the first thing I put out—first of February, we have try to have it out before Valentine's Day, would be cabbage greens and onions. I get those out. And then after that, I plant my tomatoes. My husband got a little hothouse for me and peppers. I have to transfer those to the garden. And after I get them transferred to the garden, that's when my butterbeans, string beans, rattlesnake string beans, all that's a number-one seller. Peoples love those.

00:07:15

And then—and all that stuff and corn, watermelons, and we plant a few peanuts, not—just for ourselves, but not a whole lot. I sell a few but not many. And I’m trying to see, what else do we plant? We plant a lot of stuff. I tried some upper ground potatoes [*upper ground sweet potatoes are an heirloom variety of squash*] this year but they didn't do good. Next year I’m going to try to do better with those.

00:07:40

AES: So have you had to change or add new crops to your—what you’re growing with the Farmers’ Market?

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HS: Yes. Yes.

00:07:47

AES: With demand?

00:07:47

HS: Certain time, I say the last of June, you can put out new collards plants or put out your fall tomatoes and stuff like that. You have to—different seasons. Fast as something else—you like—your tomatoes go out, your spring—summer tomatoes, well you get that ground prepared and be ready for your fall tomatoes.

00:08:10

AES: Yeah, you sold out of tomatoes, and you said you were going to have some more coming.

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HS: Yeah, I will have tomatoes until it frosts. I—I will have them until they fall.

00:08:19

AES: What kinds of tomatoes do you like to grow?

00:08:20

HS: I like Better Boys and Big Boys but, you know, this time of year tomatoes grow real fast, and they don't get as big as they do like the first summer tomatoes. They grow real fast; they mature real fast. And they just be kind of small, some of them medium.

00:08:40

AES: Do you save any seeds?

00:08:41

HS: Well I—all my little bitty little tomatoes, little bitty little—I call them almost popcorn tomatoes, I save the seeds only off those, and I save my top-pick peas. I save those seeds, and I was thinking about saving some okra seeds this year.

00:09:03

AES: So tell me about other things that you have on your table here. Tell me about these peanuts.

00:09:09

HS: Uh, I got those peanuts from a friend. He gave us some last year, and I kept the seeds. And my husband planted them. He didn't plant much. But they made about three bushels or something like that. The name of those peanuts, now, I couldn't tell you.

00:09:32

AES: Why, and I remember last time I was here, you had green peanuts and boiled peanuts.

00:09:36

HS: Yeah, I decided I wouldn't boil anymore. I didn't—I decided I would just let the peoples cook them as—the way they want to cook them because I got a big job. [*Laughs*]

00:09:50

AES: Do you sell a lot of peanuts?

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HS: Not a whole lot of them.

00:09:53

AES: And how about your chow-chow that you make?

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HS: Oh that's a number one seller. That's a number one seller but it's work. I do all my—I do all my stuff by hand. I don't do it by machine. I do all the cutting by hand. But to know my

chow-chow is good. I can sit up here all day and tell you how good—but you got to taste it for yourself. Then it goes from there.

00:10:18

AES: Where did the recipe come from?

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HS: Well I got the recipe from a friend, but it wasn't exactly like I wanted. And then I kept doing a taste test and kept adding until I got it like I want.

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AES: How do you like to use your chow-chow?

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HS: Well you use it over turnip greens, peas. A lot of peoples come out here and buy it. See, I just eat it straight out the jar. **[Laughs]** You can eat it with fish. I'll even do you a Polish sausage and do it with that.

00:10:52

AES: And what else do you have over there, pear preserves?

00:10:56

HS: I have preserves. Now those pears came off of my daddy's estate. He got two big pear trees up there, and I canned them. I made pear preserves out of that. And I—sometimes I make pear

marmalade. But it's—it takes a little bit more—take oranges and stuff like that to go in it but I usually just to make that for the family. I don't sell that.

00:11:19

AES: Why not? Because it's so special?

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HS: It's special. *[Laughs]* Also, I got pickled okra. I just—I just added that to it. It's—if you like dill pickles, you will love that—that pickled okra.

00:11:37

AES: And you have some peppers?

00:11:37

HS: I got pepper sauce, too. I got that. I got pepper sauce. And that's about the onliest something I can. I can pear preserves, chow-chow, pickled okra, and I do pepper sauce. That's all I do in the jars. I don't do nothing else in the jars.

00:11:54

AES: Have you always canned, or is it something that you just did for this Market?

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HS: Oh, I've been canning a long time, a long—a long time. [*Emphasis Added*] I used to help my mother peel and help my mother can when I was a little bitty little girl. I been doing it a long time.

00:12:09

AES: Do you have children?

00:12:09

HS: I have three children(s). I got my son. He is living in Detroit. His wife is in the Army. And I got a daughter live out in Texas. She works for Dell Computer. And I got a—my baby daughter live in Alabama and she retired out the Army, and she works for the government.

00:12:34

AES: Okay, do any of—

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HS: I got seven grandchildren(s).

00:12:36

AES: Oh, that's exciting. Do any of your children like to garden?

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HS: My baby daughter, she got a raised garden in her backyard. We talks about gardening, and she just loves tomatoes and all this fresh stuff—okra, cucumbers. She had a beautiful garden in her backyard, but the rest of them don't have a garden.

00:12:55

AES: What do you think about that today with people gardening and gardening becoming popular again? Do you hear tell about people wanting to get back into it?

00:13:03

HS: Well, it is. It's a lot of peoples having gardens in their yard. You know, this year you pass along, they got a ton of greens planted out there. They done started back because that going to be the way to live. And the cheapest way to live is out your garden.

00:13:20

AES: Do you know of anybody who has been inspired by what you do here to go home and garden on their own?

00:13:24

HS: Oh, yeah. I done inspired a lot of peoples. A lot of peoples like what I do, and a lot of peoples start out and they come—have to come back and say, “Miss Streater, how did you grow that? How did you do that?” And so I have to tell them all over again, so I don't got a lot of peoples started doing just what I'm doing.

00:13:43

AES: That's great. So you've had a lot of regulars come up and visit with you today and buy from you. Can you tell me about some of your customers?

00:13:51

HS: Let's see what I'll say about that. Well a lot of them I been knowing for a long time. I been knowing them for a long time, and a lot of them is just like friends. And a lot of them just got this in their head, which is not—I don't think it's true—if it grewed out in the Carroll County hills that the vegetables are better. Of course the sweet potatoes are sweeter. [*Laughs*]

00:14:18

AES: So what—what year did the factory close? And what factory was it where you worked?

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HS: Two thousand and two; two thousand and two—that's when it left here, March of two thousand and two.

00:14:31

AES: What was the factory, if I may ask?

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HS: Irvin Industry.

00:14:34

AES: So since 2002 you've been gardening and selling produce. Has that been a good living for you?

00:14:39

HS: It's been a pretty good living. It's been good and then I—you know, just by me gardening, I don't work all the time, I have time to do other things. And you get a lot of rest still. It ain't just like you got to stand in a factory all day. I can go in the living room and watch TV now.

[Laughs] It's been good financial—and rest.

00:15:03

AES: So how long do you think you'll stay at it?

00:15:05

HS: I don't know. My husband, he is—my husband, he is 71. As long as he's able to get out there and plant it. But right now, he's really doing good. He's really doing good with it. So we'll be there until—.

00:15:24

AES: So I also hear tell that after this Market closes on a Saturday, that—do you go around in your truck to people's houses with what you have left?

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HS: Yeah, I go. I got peoples that live here in Greenwood. I take them some and a lot of peoples find me right there from Delta Feed. I sell right there under a tree at Delta Feed. That's where they'll find me.

00:15:45

AES: Which is right across the street here from where we are now.

00:15:47

HS: That's right.

00:15:48

AES: And you and Spooney [Kenter of Spooney's Bar-Be-Que] were talking earlier about when the season for the Farmers' Market ends that y'all still come out here on the weekends.

00:15:54

HS: Yeah, Spooney going to join me. He going to join me with his barbecue. He usually do. And so we still have a crowd.

00:16:02

AES: So will there—will be a time of year that you—that people can't find you out here?

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HS: More likely after December. After December they probably won't find me. And I have them sold January and February, as long as the greens are doing good.

00:16:19

AES: And so tell me about, too, the changes with the—the regulations of selling these canned goods and how that might affect you for next year.

00:16:30

HS: Well, on the canned goods, I just kind of got big in that last year. But if I don't get my kitchen fixed and up like it's supposed to be, it won't affect me. I'll still sell the stuff, and they would have to do their own at home. I'll still sell the okras. I'll sell pears. I'll sell everything. They would have to do it at home. But I know some peoples going to have a fit if I don't sell it.

[Laughs]

00:17:02

AES: People are going to come after you for that chow-chow.

00:17:06

HS: Yes, they will—really will.

00:17:07

AES: So what's your favorite thing about selling here at the Farmers' Market?

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HS: Well you get to meet a lot of peoples. It's really—you know, since I don't have my children(s) with me right now, it seems like I'm going to see my family when I come to the Farmers' Market. They all really done became a good friend.

00:17:26

AES: And your other vendors here—have you made good relationships with them?

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HS: Yes, I miss them. And—and right now it done got fewer, you know. It got fewer but, you know, we talk, so we meet up the first thing in the morning and talk before we get busy.

[Laughs]

00:17:45

AES: Do y'all do—every do any trade or anything for something that—?

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HS: Oh, yeah. Some of them come over and want eggs, and they'll trade me some for something. And I really do so good, and sometimes they come over and say, "Miss Streater, could we trade you something." If they ain't got nothing, I say, "You can have it." See, God has blessed me, and so I can afford to give a little bit.

00:18:10

AES: Yeah, I saw you adding a little bit to some people's orders today.

00:18:13

HS: Yeah, I try to help them. That's encouraging them to come back. *[Laughs]*

00:18:15

AES: Good business. And tell me, I forgot to ask you about your eggs. Tell me again about those—those hens that lay the eggs that I got from you earlier.

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HS: Where did you get them?

00:18:26

AES: The eggs, the—the hens that lay those blue eggs.

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HS: Oh, those—those are—the blue eggs. Those are Araucana chickens. You can get the chickens that lay the blue eggs, yellow, and pink. And so I—I only have about eight of those chickens, but I just got one color and that's the blue ones. They're a little different looking from any other of the chickens. They look more like a hawk to me than they do a chicken. And they got little like—on side of their head it looks like they're wearing—I would say little earrings, but it's just some fur that sits out from the head. They're very cute.

00:19:05

AES: How many chickens do you have in total?

00:19:06

HS: I got about—I got about forty. Forty-some hens. I had eighty, but the fox got busy eating them in the spring. *[Laughs]*

00:19:18

AES: Oh, no. My goodness.

00:19:19

HS: So we finally caught the fox. And we gave the fox to our neighbor because he is a fox hunter. And so we got him until another one come.

00:19:30

AES: Goodness. So do you raise the hens for meat also, or are you just raising eggs?

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HS: Well we didn't raise any this year, but we usually do. We usually do raise some, and we use it. We—we use the meat for ourselves because I love country chickens. I love them.

00:19:48

AES: How do you like to cook them?

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HS: Well, if they're real tender, I like to fry them, and I like to make dumplings, all kind of chicken spaghetti, a lot of stuff—even make dressing. It's good.

00:20:01

AES: Do you have any other animals out at your place?

00:20:02

HS: No, we just got some dogs. My husband got some rabbit dogs.

00:20:11

AES: Do you do some other—your husband does some other hunting around the place?

00:20:14

HS: He hunt deer(s). He hunt deer(s), and them deer(s) is a problem on our garden, too. We have to spend a lot of time trying to keep them out. So we did a pretty good job this year.

00:20:27

AES: Can you describe your garden for me, like what it looks like and how you lay things out, if there's a—a process to that or a look to it?

00:20:36

HS: Let me see.

00:20:38

AES: How you string up your beans or—?

00:20:42

HS: My tomatoes, let me see how can I tell you how I do those tomatoes. My husband runs some wire over the top of them like I think this is how wide [*Gestures*], but he have to first build

a foundation. It's—just like those table legs right there, and put a T across it and run that wire straight down the top of those tomatoes before they get big, and tomatoes grow up through the wire and they lay down on the wire in runs, so the tomatoes will always be straight, and you don't have to worry about them falling over or nothing. So I got a good way—way of I handle those tomatoes.

00:21:29

And my pole beans, I stick those with fishing canes. Well I run a straight string of barbed-wire down through the middle of them and tie those fishing canes onto them, and they runs up and they make them very easy to pick.

00:21:49

AES: Are there some things that you learned as a child growing up and working in the garden that you still use today?

00:21:54

HS: A lot of stuff. A whole lot—just about everything. Just about everything I know about a garden my daddy taught me, just about everything. Now some things I done learn since he left, but the most important things I learned from him. And plus my husband knows a lot about a garden. He knows.

00:22:16

AES: Is your husband from Carroll County?

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HS: He is. He's right out there, too.

00:22:22

AES: So how do y'all deal with bugs and pests and things in your garden?

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HS: I don't know what he do, but what he put on them or what he do to get rid of them, but he take care of all of that. My husband takes care of that. And a lot of stuff, like on my collards, I usually use—sprinkle just like you barbecue, you can take the ashes from that and sprinkle on a lot of stuff. Ashes is good. **[To customer]** Can I help you, sir? Oh you're looking for some jam? That—pear preserves are right there because you'll see.

00:22:59

AES: All right. We just—you just sold some pear jam. We were talking about throwing ashes on collard greens to get rid of some pests.

00:23:05

HS: Yeah, you can take ashes and take them when they just kind of dust and soft and not wet or nothing and sprinkle them all over your collards. The bugs won't bother them as bad because ashes got some type of lye in it. And it's also good for to put around the root of your peach trees. We—we got a peach orchard, too.

00:23:25

AES: How many—.

00:23:25

HS: It's going to do good this year.

00:23:27

AES: How many trees are in the orchard?

00:23:30

HS: We ain't got a whole lot of them. We got about, maybe twenty, twenty in all.

00:23:36

AES: Sounds like a lot to me. We got some more customers here.

00:23:38

HS: [To customer] What can I do for y'all?

00:23:42

AES: All right. So you just sold some more greens and some eggs.

00:23:45

HS: Yes, I did. Number-one seller. [*Laughs*] Everybody loves turnip greens.

00:23:50

AES: And you're hiding them in your truck, though. You almost forgot about them.

00:23:53

HS: I do. That way they'll stay pretty. I keep them covered. I got them in water in there; that way they'll look fresh. If I bring them out here and put them in the sun, they're going to wilt, so therefore I have to tell every—try to think and tell everybody I got turnip greens on the truck. You don't have to do but say the word.

00:24:11

AES: You said the word earlier to those ladies, and they started jumping up and down practically. [*Laughs*]

00:24:14

HS: [*Laughs*] Yeah, I got it—I got it, and you know what's going to happen? They going back to Tchula and tell all their friends about these turnip greens. And next weekend I'm going to be flooded. I ain't going to have enough greens to supply them.

00:24:28

AES: Good. That's good for you—good business.

00:24:31

HS: It really is. It is. Turnip greens is good business. Good. It's a lot of work in it, but it's good business.

00:24:38

AES: And you're selling them for \$2 a bunch?

00:24:39

HS: Two dollars a bunch—two dollars. You buy two bunches, you got a great big pot full. Most, if it's a single person, they don't buy but one bunch. Plus I got some of these ladies that buy five and six bunches. "We going to put it in the freezer." That's what they say. **[Laughs]**

00:24:57

AES: Then they have them. So do people recognize your truck driving through town?

00:25:00

HS: They know the truck. I need another truck, but I'm scared to get rid of this one because nobody ain't going to know me. **[Laughs]** I got to wait a while. I think I'll just put a motor in this one and keep going.

00:25:10

AES: There you go. Do people flag you down when they see your truck?

00:25:13

HS: They do. They do. We got another truck we use if we're just coming to town for other business. We don't come in this truck because we get flagged down too much. We have to come in the other truck. **[Laughs]**

00:25:24

AES: Are there things that people request you to grow that you haven't grown before?

00:25:28

HS: Yeah, turnip greens for one and tomatoes is a number-one seller, okra, just about everything in vegetables. Some of it sells better than others, but they love tomatoes. You have tomatoes this time of year—oh, you won't have a chance to sell nothing but tomatoes. They love those tomatoes just as good as they love them turnip greens. And so all of it's good.

00:25:54

AES: Are there things that you want to try and do that you haven't done before either with canning or growing something new?

00:26:01

HS: Well, I don't know nothing else I want to try into growing. I think—I think I got about enough now. I don't believe I want nothing else. [*Laughs*]

00:26:15

AES: You don't want to take any chances with trying something new?

00:26:17

HS: I can grow anything, but I grow the things that peoples want. Some stuff don't sell good. Just like, for instance, those peanuts, peoples buying by spells. Last week was a good week for peanuts. This week's not. And so I would hate to grow a lot of peanuts. So. Okra is really good. Okra is good. Because it's a lot of ways you can cook okra. You can fry it; you can boil it and eat it, or you can make soup. They—okra is good, too. But it's time—getting time out for okra.

00:27:03

AES: So what do you think this Farmers' Market has meant for the community of Greenwood here?

00:27:07

HS: Well a lot of them get to get this fresh, really fresh produce. And they—a lot of peoples right here and if it ain't no store close around, this would be the closest they could come and pick their stuff up, especially the ones that I take it to their house is really convenient.

00:27:30

AES: Now I'm noticing that most of the customers here that come through are of an older generation. Do you have many young people who come and buy produce from you?

00:27:38

HS: Not many. Not a whole lot of young—young peoples come out, not a whole lot.

00:27:43

AES: Do you think it's they don't have a taste for it or they don't cook or—?

00:27:46

HS: Well, I'll tell you. They love turnip greens. Most—their mothers cooks for them and some of them they just—. I don't know. A lot of them won't take time to wash it or learn how to cook

them. But they don't—young peoples don't come out and buy that much, but we do have some young peoples come out.

00:28:08

AES: Do you think it would be possible to turn people—young people on to coming out here and—and buying food and starting to cook it themselves?

00:28:14

HS: I'll tell you. If we're—could get a little activity to go along with the Farmers' Market, I believe the young peoples would come out. I believe they would. It needs some addition for the Farmers' Market, besides selling produce, to get them out here, some kind of something to encourage them.

00:28:40

AES: Yeah, we've been—everybody I've talked to has talked about the Farmers' Market kind of dwindling a little bit. What do you think will happen if it's not here in the future?

00:28:48

HS: Well it's going—it's going to be sad if the Farmers' Market would leave. It—it just would be said for me and for a lot of peoples because a lot of peoples like come from Itta Bena, Tchula, and different places, and they comes to the Farmers' Market. They coming direct here, so you going to lose—I'm going to lose a lot of them because they ain't going to know where I'm at. That's the reason right now I'm trying to tell everybody where I'm going—where I'm going to be at once the Farmers' Market is over. And a lot of them ain't going to come down here just for

me because a lot of most of other peoples got they want, you know. And we could keep it going and get more vendors, activity to go along with it. Get us some music out here while peoples can walk to the music and enjoy their selves.

00:29:38

AES: Have you visited any other Farmers' Markets in the area?

00:29:39

HS: Well I went over in and did a little bit over at Vaiden [Mississippi] but not much. Now they got it going on over there. But I like back this way.

00:29:52

AES: Why is that?

00:29:53

HS: I don't know. I couldn't really tell, but I sell more back this way, for one thing. I wasn't known good enough over at Vaiden. I'm closer to Vaiden, but I still wasn't known good enough. They tried to get me to come to Lexington, but I never gave that a try.

00:30:12

AES: How far is Black Hawk from Greenwood?

00:30:13

HS: About nineteen miles. Vaiden about seventeen.

00:30:19

AES: Not a bad trip.

00:30:21

HS: No, it's not bad at all.

00:30:23

AES: Actually, not a bad trip home when you have a lighter load.

00:30:24

HS: Yeah, you got a lot of joy riding, thinking, knowing you're going to get a lot of peoples.

You going to say something to somebody before the day gone. You're going to get a good laugh out of somebody, and that's the joy of it.

00:30:38

AES: So the stuff you don't sell here today, will you try and sell it by going around to other parts of Greenwood?

00:30:44

HS: Well today I ain't going to have too much left. I ain't going to have no turnip greens left.

That's for sure. And if I don't sell all the stuff in the jars, it don't make no difference. I just take it back and put in the pantry. But I usually, when we get through selling at the Farmers' Market, I usually go and set up under a tree. And a lot of people pass right along the streets, and they'll

stop over there under the tree, and they won't come over here at the Farmers' Market. And I sell there.

00:31:14

AES: Well is there anything that we haven't talked about that you want to make sure to add?

00:31:22

HS: No, you probably would have to ask me—it's a lot to talk about but, you know, if anything you want to know I just about can tell you about it.

00:31:31

AES: What do you like to cook at home? You told me about how you cook your chickens, but what else do you like to cook?

00:31:35

HS: Well I cook just about anything. Last night we had fried catfish. I made homemade hushpuppies and—and had a salad last night. And I—I cook turnip greens. I got two deep freezers, and I fill them up with vegetables. And I have sold out of my freezer. And I—I cook mostly out of my freezer. I buy very little stuff. I grow my stuff.

00:32:06

AES: Do you ever bake? Do you like to bake?

00:32:08

HS: I like baking. I liked baked chicken. If I eat any pork chop, it'll be baked. It'll be baked. I cook cakes. I can just about cook anything you want. **[Laughs]**

00:32:19

AES: What kind of cakes do you bake?

00:32:21

HS: I—my favorite cake is a—is a pineapple coconut. I cook caramel. I cook potato pies, egg pies, name it.

00:32:31

AES: Have you ever brought any of that up here?

00:32:33

HS: No, uh-uh.

00:32:34

AES: And you don't plan on it, it looks like?

00:32:36

HS: It would be too inconvenient because you need to be careful of handling those cakes. I would not—I wouldn't bring none of that. I have asked peoples to ask me to cook them a cake, but I don't have the time. If I'm not in my garden, I'm in my flower yard. I love my flowers, too.

00:32:54

AES: What kinds of flowers do you grow?

00:32:57

HS: Well, I got mostly roses and I got around—I got a flower they call the moonflowers. I got lots of day lilies and lantanas. I got all—I got flowers I don't even know the name of them—hibiscus. I got a lot of flowers, a whole lot of flowers.

00:33:17

AES: Do you have brothers and sisters?

00:33:18

HS: Well it was twelve of us. It was eight sisters and four brothers. I got one sister dead and one brother.

00:33:28

AES: Did they all stay around Carroll County or in the Delta?

00:33:30

HS: I got one sister stay out there and three brothers. They don't do nothing like this. [*Laughs*] I'm the only one. They all tell me, "You just—you got ways like Daddy. You took after Daddy." And so they don't do it. They like to eat it, but they don't do it.

00:33:51

AES: Did your daddy get to see you selling your produce?

00:33:55

HS: No, I tell you. My brother was doing it in—in his lifetime, and he said, “Hallie, I’m doing real good with produce.” I said, “That boy ain’t doing nothing.” I said, “I ain’t got time to fool with that stuff.” And he died. The same year he died, that’s the year I started. I started selling. I said, “I’m going to take up where my brother left off.” And that’s where I got started at.

00:34:27

AES: What do you think that your brother and your father would think about the success that you’ve made?

00:34:32

HS: Oh, I think we would have plenty for them. We would run into each other now, and then he would do things to inspire me, and I would do something to inspire him. And plus, I think we would have more fun. I wished he could see it. I wished he could. I wish Daddy could see it.

00:34:50

We grew stuff back at that time. Like I said, we gave it away. I used to go up there and take my daddy watermelons and took—just give it to different peoples but we didn’t sell it because I didn’t think it wasn’t nothing in it. A lot of stuff we let go to waste in the field that we didn’t give, you know, when I could have just got something out of it. You get older, and you learn better. *[Laughs]*

00:35:19

AES: Well then when y'all were growing up, all those 400 acres, what did y'all farm on the acreage?

00:35:25

HS: Oh, we planted cotton. My daddy planted cotton—planted cotton. I used to pick cotton. I thought that was hard back then—hard. [*Emphasis Added*] We used to pull our own corn. Daddy would make the molasses, and we would make so many peanuts and sweet potatoes. We lived out of it. My daddy had to have something to feed twelve children(s), and we milked our own cows. We even had goats. We raised our own hogs. We killed them, killed them to eat, and we lived off that stuff the whole winter.

00:36:07

I can even remember when we didn't have a deepfreeze. Most of the people—most everything, my Mama canned it. I dried it. And that's—we had plenty to eat. I never—we never went hungry because we had plenty.

00:36:22

AES: Tell me about the things she would dry.

00:36:23

HS: Well like dried peas and stuff like that—dried apples, peaches, and stuff. Now I don't know how she did it, but she did it. And we would just help her peel and can, uh-hmm.

00:36:38

AES: And you mentioned earlier that Black Hawk was an Indian name.

00:36:40

HS: Way back in the day, you know, they tells me that was an Indian town. Indian—it's got an Indian name.

00:36:48

AES: And is it—historically, has it been an African American community or is it still today?

00:36:53

HS: It's a lot of black—it's a lot of blacks that live out there. A lot of blacks left there and went north. They either—they lost their land or they sold it. A lot of them would like to come back, but they don't have no land to come back to.

00:37:08

AES: So tell me about being an African American family owning land for all these generations.

00:37:16

HS: Well, I'll tell you. If you own some land, you know, to me, you're really worth something. You know, you can get what you want. If you don't own your own land, you're just living and—and you ain't accomplishing much in life. You need to at least own your own land, if you can. I feel that way.

00:37:44

AES: Now the land that was your father's and is still in your family, is that still being farmed—the row crops?

00:37:49

HS: No, it done grew up. My daddy had cows on it for a while. It done grewed all up, and we got most set out in pine trees. We didn't put no hardwood on it, but we put pine.

00:38:03

AES: So—so would you say that's how you've been able to keep your family land? You were saying about people losing land. How have you been able to keep yours?

00:38:10

HS: Yes, I had one sister. She lived in Waterloo, Iowa. She wanted to sell hers, and she did sell it. And my sister in Texas bought it. Usually, if one sells out, the other one buys. That's the way we do it. Well we got some sisters that's not interested in it back then now, but as they get older, they going to want it.

00:38:33

AES: So that's a legacy and your family's legacy, definitely.

00:38:35

HS: Yes. If they want to sell out, we buys it. I got one right now, she's tempted to sell. My brother wants that. So that's the way we keep it together.

00:38:49

AES: Great. That's wonderful. You don't hear a lot about that these days.

00:38:54

HS: Yes, need to keep the home place, and I hope the younger generation will do just like we're doing.

00:39:02

AES: Do you feel like that's coming back around, that young people are wanting to own land and farm?

00:39:06

HS: Yeah, you sometime have to talk to your children(s) and—and tell them how important it is to have some land and have your own garden. And, you know, while they're real young, they may not be interested in it and my daughter—my daughter, I didn't think she ever would want a garden. And now she wants to get her house. She wants a small house and a—and a big yard and garden where she can have gardens and things. That's what she wants now. And so she would come home and live but ain't no jobs in this area for her. And she wants to work a little while.

00:39:43

AES: Hmm. So when—since the children are moving away, but you still have this land in the family, what do you think the future of that—the family land is?

00:39:51

HS: It kind of scares you because, you know, if they ain't interested in coming home, the first thing pops in your mind—they going to sell it. It kind of scare you and—because I really want my son to come back. But his wife don't want to come back and, see, that's what scares you.

00:40:10

AES: Now your father did—he—did family own the land before he had it or did your family—did your father acquire the land?

00:40:16

HS: I don't know exactly. My granddaddy—who owned it before my granddaddy, I don't know, exactly. I'm going to have to—you know, once I get that information, I'm going to write it down because you really done put it in my head now. I'm going—I want to know how many generations because I can go to the courthouse and pick that up, too—this land went back. I don't have that right now.

00:40:50

AES: Well that's a wonderful legacy. Like I said, that's a great story. Well I don't want to keep you. It is kind of dying down here at the Farmers' Market but—.

00:40:56

HS: Well, if you don't see nobody around, so everybody done left. It dies down and picks back up.

00:41:04

AES: Well you've been generous with your time, and I don't want to keep you.

00:41:05

HS: Oh, yeah, I told you I didn't mind doing it. Really, I like to talk about my farm, and I like to talk about the older generation. I just love old stuff. Like some of the—like I got a plow in my yard. Well peoples used to walk behind it, and a mule used to pull it. And I got a rose in it. It's very pretty. I picks up stuff like that and put it in my yard and make decorations out of it.

00:41:40

AES: Does it connect you to the past?

00:41:40

HS: Yes. You want to know how old it is, and nobody can't tell you. It's very old.

00:41:48

AES: Do you have some—some family stories that have been passed on that you hold onto?

00:41:54

HS: Right now I can't think of none right off the bat, but it's a lot of stories. It's a whole lot of good ones, a lot of stories. That's all they used—they used to sit around the fire and talk, tell stories to the children(s) and then most—best time we ever had would be Christmas. That's when mother would cook all the cakes, and they fooled us a long time. It was Santa Claus and I thought it was the worst thing in the world when I found out it wasn't no Santa Claus. [*Laughs*]

That hurt(ed) me right there, so I grew out of it. But I—I thought it was a Santa Claus until I got about twelve years old. I thought it was real, St. Nick.

00:42:43

We would clean the yard. Wouldn't nothing be in the yard because we didn't want Santa to step on nothing. And it would hurt us so bad that Daddy would make a big fire in the chimney because we thought Santa was coming down the chimney, and we thought Santa was going to get burned up, and we don't get nothing. So I believed that for a long time. So I told my children(s) before they got that old it wasn't no St. Nick. And they would say, "Mama, don't tell us that. It's a St. Nick." So I had to pretend it was a Santa for a while, so but they knowed before they got twelve years old, it wasn't no Santa. *[Laughs]*

00:43:21

AES: Yeah, twelve is a long time, and it's old enough to be really disappointed. *[Laughs]*

00:43:24

HS: Yeah, back—back at that day, they could fool you. They kept you fooled about Easter and all that stuff. And really, they would get more work out of the children, and the children would clean the house and sweep the yard out. There wouldn't be a stick in the yard—nothing, feather or nothing. You know chickens use to run—run in the yard, plenty of feathers was around. You would pick up all that stuff, getting ready for Santa Claus, and it wasn't no Santa. You know, that hurt. *[Laughs]*

00:43:55

AES: Did you go to school down in Black Hawk?

00:43:56

HS: Yes, I did. I went to school—started down there and I left there and I went to Vaiden. And I was going to be promoted to the twelfth grade and I—I met this man I married and fell in love, and we got married.

00:44:12

AES: So you married young.

00:44:14

HS: Well at least—you wouldn't believe I was thirteen, and he waited until I got seventeen, and we got married.

00:44:26

AES: And he's—if I remember you saying his age, he's about six years older than you.

00:44:28

HS: Yes, about six—. He don't look it.

00:44:34

AES: How did he court you?

00:44:35

HS: Well, you said, “How did he court me?” Well, when we first met, we met at a funeral and—and we talked a little there. I don't know what we talked about because I didn't know nothing to

talk about. And we used to walk to Sunday school every Sunday. And so when Sunday school was over with that Sunday, he was going to walk me part of the way back home. He still didn't ask to be my boyfriend. So I had to—went by this little old store and bought a candy bar. So he took my candy bar, and I kept reaching for my candy bar because I didn't—I thought he was going to keep my candy bar. I was more interested in the candy bar [*Laughs*] than I was him.

00:45:17

But he was trying to play with me. And so after that, we got serious and serious. And so I met him.

00:45:26

AES: Did you know when you got married that y'all were going to stay in that area?

00:45:29

HS: Yes, I knew. We stayed with his daddy. Yeah, we moved there with his daddy. As a matter of fact, his daddy stayed with us until he died. Now, they didn't own any land. They didn't own any land. He said his daddy had an opportunity to buy some, but he never would buy none.

00:45:52

AES: So were you a real catch?

00:45:54

HS: He got one brother. He ain't got no brothers that own land either. They come from a big family.

00:46:01

AES: So were you a real catch because your family owned land?

00:46:03

HS: Say what?

00:46:04

AES: Were you a real catch because your family owned land?

00:46:08

HS: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Back at that day, you know, they used to call anybody that owned anything—Daddy had all those cows, you know. They said everybody looked up to Daddy for something. Daddy had lots of timber on that place. If a lot of peoples needed to build a house, Daddy would let them cut timber off the place to build a house. My daddy did a lot for peoples.

00:46:29

AES: Was he the—did he have about the most land in that area or were there other people?

00:46:35

HS: Well, we got a few more peoples. My mama's folks owned a good bit of land. My mama's people owned a good bit of land. It's a few more peoples that own. Most of her peoples—most all of my—on my mama's side they own—own land, all of them.

00:46:52

AES: So never—there was never a—an itch that you had to scratch to get out of the Delta? You always wanted to stay right here?

00:46:57

HS: I wanted—I was going to go to Chicago and live with my aunt, and my mama blocked it. And I'm kind of glad I didn't go and get stuck in Chicago. I had one sister go up there and get stuck. And to me, she didn't do as good, so—. I would have missed my husband, and still I probably would have been lost. I'm glad I didn't go. It hurt me at the time, but it turned out good.

00:47:28

AES: Well I know a lot of people here would have missed you if you had gone to Chicago.

[Laughs]

00:47:31

HS: **[Laughs]** They would have never got to know me. Never would have got to know me, if I had of went to Chicago.

00:47:39

AES: So how—how—how much of a—a part of this business is coming out and being with the people?

00:47:53

HS: Let me see how to put this. How much—what you mean?

00:47:56

AES: Well is—is coming out and selling vegetables, is—is that as important as coming out and being with the people, the customers?

00:48:05

HS: Selling of the vegetables? I tell you, both of them is important. You got to have both of them to get anything out of it. I mean, if you ain't got peoples, you can't sell nothing. And so you got to kind of be nice to the people. You've got—it's just got some got to blend in and the peoples will be nice to you, too, you know. You just—I have peoples come out here, and they just hug me. I have peoples come here and actually give me tips. And so you got to have that spiritual love thing for them. And they coming to you anyway, if you be nice to them. It's just—it's just one of them things. And so I been out here a long time, and I know a lot of peoples, and I like a lot of peoples and they like—I feel like they like me. I never had nobody to really do nothing or say nothing out the way to me.

00:49:01

AES: Well and all the times I've visited the Market, it's a real diverse crowd that you have here with the vendors and the—the customers.

00:49:09

HS: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, a lot of—lots of peoples come over there—here and don't buy anything. They just come over to talk to me; they just come over to talk to me.

00:49:19

AES: Yeah. Like the woman who came here earlier, you asked if you were—she was going to sit with you or if she was going to buy something?

00:49:24

HS: Yeah. Yeah, she said, “I’m going to buy something.” *[Laughs]* I have them come up here and sit with me. Miss Gray—Mrs. Gray, I don’t know whether you met her, the old lady. She’s eighty-three years old. She told me she’ll be late today. She comes every Saturday and be with me. She been sick when she ain’t here. Every Saturday, if I go up here under the tree, Mrs. Gray, right there with me. She is a good friend of mine.

00:49:51

AES: Is she the woman who was here the last time that I was here, and we spoke for a little bit?

00:49:54

HS: Yeah, Mrs. Gray, she is a nice lady—very nice, very nice and intelligent. She said she used to do this, her and her husband back in the years.

00:50:09

AES: Here in Greenwood?

00:50:10

HS: I believe Detroit. I believe Detroit, I believe.

00:50:15

AES: Yeah, I know I remember talking to her about Michigan.

00:50:18

HS: I'm looking for her to come up any minute, but she haven't made it.

00:50:21

AES: I think we've lost some people, since we've been sitting here. Well Mrs. Streater, I really appreciate your time and sharing all these stories. So thank you for sitting with me.

00:50:29

HS: You're welcome, any time. Any time. It ain't that bad—bad at all.

00:50:35

[End Hallie Streater Interview]