KITTY GRANT BATES

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GRANT, FL

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TAPE 1 (Field Recording #47,48 &49)

NANCY YASECKO: To start, to start off tell us who you are and when your relatives first came to the Brevard County area.

KITTY GRANT BATES: All right, my name is Kitty Grant Bates and my grandparents on my mothers side came from Fort Pierce in the early 1860's on a flat boat with a cabin - a house built on it and came up the Sebastian River and homesteaded 683 acres, cleared the land with his bare hands and planted citrus.

O: What was her name?

BATES: The name was Dempsey Kane. Dempsey and Cilia Palaett Pageant Kane.

Q: What was it like to them do you think?

BATES: Well it was ah very bad wilderness I know they had to house their animals at night because there were alot of panthers and um they had deer and turkey come up right in the yard and the old house he put together with wooden pegs and it was singled roof and it had cypress poles in the rafters and the kitchen was built separate, it had a breeze

way in between for air circulation and they had uh a walkway covered and the kitchen was separate because they had a wood stove in case the house caught on fire, I mean the kitchen, the house wouldn't burn down. (Pause) And everything was sail boat, my grandfather was a carpenter and he would go to Titusville by sail boat for supplies and the Indians were not on reservations they were up and down the river and uh I've often heard my mother taking about the alligators and um the river was full of them and um it was...

Q: What would they do about the gators anything? Did they shoot them?

BATES: They, no they left them alone and he was very friendly with the Indians and uh the Indians would camp you know they never stay in one place they would come along and camp and fish and hunt and even stayed sometimes and build a garden and grandfather would let them use his tools and ah he said that they always brought them back clean but I never knew my grandparents, my mother was the smallest - the baby and she was born in 1886 and then I'm her baby of ten and I was born in 1928 so therefore I never knew any of my grandparents because, but I can go back to Civil War.

Q: Well you heard plenty of stories though, you heard the story of them coming up from Fort Pierce on their boat?

BATES: Yes.

Q: Did they live on the boat for a time?

BATES: Till they got their house built and they had to - and then in later years there was a boat would come down

the river a trade boat and they could buy embroidery floss and material and little dolls and things like that off the mail boat, it was a trade a boat and a mail boat. And when the finally decided to found the little town of Roseland, my grandfather named it because grandmother had brought a rose bush, a seven sister rose bush, it was the only flower bush, domesticated, and they named the town of Roseland because of the rose bush. And it was um a very (pause) poor time you know I mean they had plenty to eat but I suppose it was hard on them getting clothes and shoes. One trip he made to Titusville and this one old Indian that knew he was gone and they - grandmother had gone with him for a change on that trip and they had left the kids at home the younger ones with the older ones and I remember my mother telling me that the they had locked up the live stock and the panthers began to yell down in the swamp below the house there was a branch - a creek like a little bayou and the Indian came along and thought they were frighted and he pulled up his canoe on the beach and sat on the porch all night and they were frightened, they were afraid they were going to scalp them, and then the Indian met my grandparents coming down the Sebastian, the Indian river, and he told them he had come by and heard the panthers and stayed on the porch all night to keep the kids from being afraid. (laugh) They had ah grandfather had planted all the fruit trees and sometimes when the weather isn't right, when it's too wet or what have you, the fruit as they're ripening - the fruit will split

and so Dempsey Jr, he decided to help them along because he figured that grandad would give him the fruit if it was split and naturally no one back in those days had citrus. And so grandfather caught Aunt Katie down there inspecting the fruit and he knew what had happened and he thought she had done it a spanked her and she wouldn't tell on her brother that's how honest you know how they protected one another- stuck together if right.

Q: What do you call it when you do that to the fruit? Would you cut it?

BATES: They would just tip it where it would start to crack and then it would split on open but I had several to split here this year on me because of too wet.

Q: Brothers and sisters stuck together.

BATES: Oh yes, and um it was (pause) you can imagine there was nothing to play with you know they had to make up their own thing you know what ever they did, it wasn't like what the kids have today, they had nothing.

Q: Where there other family  $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty}$  around or...

BATES: No, uh finally family s started coming in and uh that's how they got Roseland started after grandad got there and uh at - turn of the century my grandfather Grant, my father's father he was a Civil War soldier with the South and he had rode with Quantral and he had a brother that was a doctor on Saint Simon's Island in Georgia and that his brother had helped him - the Yankees had come in and they had hanged his sister's husband and he was running and his

brother smuggled him down into Florida and uh that's where he met my grandmother they own the fleet of the (stutter) freight boats - sail - freight's boats and they all. And he just kept right on you know moving down (stutter) he went on down into the wilderness of Florida which is now Miami and it was a little place they called Sweetwater which is now the South West section of Miami and um he came back up this way, I guess he figured that it was safe you know that the Northern Army wouldn't finally catch him or whatever and he got as far as um Brevard County (pause) and he was stuck in the, mired down his horse and wagons and my mothers (long pause) my mothers father took his team of oxen and and someone told him that they were mired and he went down and pulled them out and that's when they homesteaded back of Micco, on the old Grant estate and uh that's how my mother and father met.

Q: Mired oxen huh?

BATES: No, the horse and wagon's but the oxen is what pulled them out, so.

Q: Kind of romantic I quess.

BATES: I guess so because there was no one around so I have alot of double first cousins because three on each side, three Kanes and three Grants married you know, sister, brother, sister, brother. So I have three sets of double first cousins, there was no one else, you married who ever was there. (laugh)

Q: The right age and the right sex. Well it must have

been kind of rough now they must have grown a garden.

BATES: Oh yes.

Q: What did they grow?

Well they uh grew corn and uh kolobrua and greens, potatoes, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, cabbages, just what most people even grow today and uh I grew up right there where my grandfather built that house. I was born in that house, same house my mother was born in and it uh we lived pretty much, we had no electricity and uh we would get ice from Sebastian, daddy would come in with a boat and bring in ice and um we had washed, we had a boil pot boil clothes in a boil pot and rubbed them on a rub board, I can remember that and um we had our chickens and hogs and a cow and uh that's, daddy had a big garden, and that's more less how we lived. Now my dad, his people came from South Carolina and he had a very syrupy drawl you know he didn't pronounce the first "R", it was suppa and riva and here but he was gone a lot to make a living you know he was a hunter in the woods with Seminole Indians and um so we more less talked like our mother we didn't pick up too much of the southern, of course we did talk southern but not syrup southern. (laugh)

Q: It sounds like your, your growing up time wasn't a whole lot different than when your grandmother was here.

BATES: It wasn't, it wasn't at all and uh we never went to town hardly, Sebastian was town to us. If we went to Melbourne it may have been twice or three times in my

life until we moved from there and uh we moved during World War II.

Q: What would you do for the other kind of supplies that you needed? You couldn't grow everything.

Well, like I said, Sebastian they had uh you know grocery store but granddaddy had to go all the way to Titusville in a sail boat and that's how he got supplies, Titusville was the county seat and that was the only - that was the only store only place to go was Titusville, there was nothing I mean nothing, and now look at what it is today, our paradise is gone. (pause) And it really was because you know uh the river was full of oysters, clams, crabs, fish you name it - it was there and there was no problem to get it you just walked out on the end of you pier and there it was. And daddy fished too we had net racks and boats and (pause) um then the ducks and turkey, deer and believe it or not nobody bothered you back in those days because times were hard, we even killed manatee's and ate them and you get you know their very good you get a like a pork around the ribs and then the tail section is like beef the meat is red and up in the ribs you know it's like the color of pork and fat and momma used to render out the lard over a big kettle outside and I can remember her packing the crackling's and the lard - crackling's and lard you know and um I have a sister that doesn't like to remember all this but I do that was good growing up I mean it was good clean living and it was hard but we were happy and we had all the

love in the world and I know that's what mama's family had too.

Q: What did they do about school then back then?

BATES: Well, my grandfather hired a tutor and he came and lived in the house, he was given a room and he taught the older kids their reading, writing and arithmetic and uh then whenever it was time for him to go Aunt Katie was the smartest one and she taught the younger ones and uh it was just a matter of whether you wanted to learn or whether you didn't and you have seen the writing they had beautiful handwriting and you couldn't cheat them out of a nickel (laugh) they - they grasped it, they had to it wasn't like today where you'd have to beat a kid to make him go to school you know they were anxious to get that learning, so.

BATES: The other thing I wanted to ask you about was what about doctor's. Did they ever have need of...

Q: My grandmother was a nurse and that was the only doctor they had and everyone came to her and the last baby she delivered in Brevard County was Emma Birtleson who is now deceased she lived in Micco and ah she lived to a ripe old age she must have been somewhere around 90 when she died and she used to tell me how proud she was that - she - my grandmother had delivered her and that was it as far as doctoring of course in later years when we were small they had a doctor in Sebastian, Dr. Rose, and ah.

Q: Well back in your grandmother's time what about the Indians, they had their own ...

BATES: Medicine man

Q: Did they ever come to see your grandmother or visa versa.

I don't think so, I don't think that they intermingled their doctoring. The Indians are sort of funny they used a lot of herbs and things - like my hand, I crippled it here three years ago and my little Seminole Indian friend Happy Jones she decided that I had to have because the orthapedic doctor couldn't take care of my hand and make it right (laugh) she got the Seminole Indian medicine man to whip up a bunch of stuff and she brought to me with instructions of how I was to use it and it was leaves and herbs and things and I had to put it on my forehead face on my chest, I had to turn a certain direction when I did it, I had to drink a little bit of it and I did it to please her but I knew it wasn't going to help my hand (laugh) but I didn't want to hurt her feelings because we've been with the Indians since day one. Her dad - my dad spoke fluent Seminole and her dad and my - he was a chief then Sam Jones and her dad and my dad were very good friends and hunted together and um she and I grew up together and I've never let go of my Seminoles.

Q: Tell me a little bit about what that was like.

BATES: Well, when I was real little, Happy and I were just real tiny things and uh her dad used to come they used to have an old cut down truck and he would set up a tent out in our wood pile and they would stay with us and you know

daddy would furnish them food from the garden and all and ah they'd stay and then um when they got ready to go they'd get up and go and Happy and I - she couldn't speak English and I couldn't speak Seminole but we played together had a good time and um (pause) she learned to speak English in the fields, she was picking beans and things like that and uh the pickers taught her how to so she speaks a broken English but ah she has a son twenty-two years old and a handsome devil and he of course you know he has college education so their like everybody else they learned they had to come out of it and ah the old ones are still stick to their methods and their codes but the younger ones you know the younger ones just poo poo at the at the um medicine men, they want regular doctors, but the old ones still stick to their ways and rituals and they still have their green corn dances and like when a boy turns thirteen you know their supposed to go to the green corn dance and they scratch them with eagle claws you know their arms and their back and they become men and their ceremony and all and her son wouldn't go (laugh) he say's I'm a man I don't' have to be scratched up to prove it (laugh) so that's what I mean they - their getting away from their Indian culture and uh.

Q: Did you ever go to a green corn dance?

BATES: Yes.

O: What was it like?

BATES: Well it, alot of them were drunker than all get out and they have these palmetto fans and they dance and

rattle the fans and they do all these ceremonial dances. They have their weddings, they have their divorces and ah everything you know goes on right there and I went with my father. San Jones her father invited us, your very fortunate if your invited, they don't like white people at their religious and ceremonies and things.

Q: How old were you when you went?

BATES: I was probably about fifteen and one Indian came up to me rattling those things and uh Sam Jones put him on his way he wanted me to dance and uh he made him leave.

Q: It must have been very impressive.

BATES: It was.

Q: Was there alot of people there?

BATES: Indians only, we were the only whites there.

Q: I've heard some tails about, I guess they have their judges, do their judicial work and everything.

BATES: Right, and you see the white people make fun of them they go - if they find out where their having it you know some of them would try to slip in there and they giggle and make fun of them and that's why now when they have them they, it's secret they don't let people know where their going and where their having it that year and all because they just, but now they have married you know there's alot of ah white girls and boys that have married into the Indian race now so it's beginning to (pause) beginning to be a kind of mixed thing.

Q: But when you were growing up you know it was kind

of a normal thing to have your friend Happy come. Would they come every year?

BATES: No, it you never knew when they were coming they just drove up and there they were and uh.

Q: Were you glad when they came?

BATES: Oh, yes - yes I really was and uh Happy she she still only cooks Indian food she won't try and cook
white persons food and her son he likes the white person's
food and he come and stayed with me a year ago this past
summer and uh she was having her house renovated and when
ever she came to get him he said mom I don't know if I want
to go home he said I like Aunt Kitty's food and she's a good
cook and Happy looked at him and says "Me know it, that's
why John catch hum." (laugh) She's real cute, you'd just
have to be around her to appreciate her.

Q: I guess so well, lets see - um we've gone through a lot of this stuff but you mentioned at one point that your grandfather Dempsey came grew some citrus down here. Now what was that like, how did he start that, where did he find the starts?

BATES: I do not know where he got his original seed or plants from, but he was very smart and he was very early in the years of budding, you know he would bud ah, - different you know like they do today, they get a navel orange by budding it into a wild sour root you know, and he did all that. uh Years and years ago and uh I guess that God must have given people the initiative the brain or what

ever to think these things out and if they have had the choice of education and what not they have today that there would have been alot of more brilliant things going on back in those days.

Q: I don't know I mean it seems to me like starting up a citrus grove would be a pretty difficult thing to do, trees don't grow by themselves too well. (laugh)

BATES: No, well he had to give them the care and you know who bought his fruit? Blue Goose they came by boat to his dock his landing, and uh loaded the fruit and then after he died grandmother sold to them.

Q: And they put it under that label.

BATES: Blue Goose was the name of the company and mama used to still have one of their old boxes and it used to have a big old blue goose on the side of the wooden box.

Q: Lets see, what about ranches? We've touched on citrus but there were a couple of other things you could do around here.

BATES: Well um they didn't have you know the type of land on the river there for ranching but they had their cattle and their and they had their brands and their ear marks and they kept enough to take care of them you know like when the cold weather come they would butcher a cow and we had a big old smoke house and ah they smoked meat, they salted meat down and ah (pause) it (pause) in later years my dad - that's what he did - he ran a ranch in Okeechobee County and I was over there the biggest part of

my younger years, if you want the honest truth I was the cow hand and I rode with dad and I had my own string of horses and uh I have a cousin over in Fort Drum and he tells the Platt kids today - here in Melbourne he said uh - cause he used to ride for my daddy and he said, "Boy she was tough," he said, "Anything we old cowboys could do she could do better." We raced our horses we chased cows you know we round up and worked the cattle that's how I got two false teeth here. (laugh) We were marking and branding and I went to jerk - we were - had little calves and I was legging them and the cowboy was throwing them, addy branded and Mr. Homes ear marked and we had about I quess about fifteen or twenty cow hands working, you worked in pairs and there was a big old yearling that had missed the spring round up and I had a bad habit of putting my hands on the little calf's hips and grabbing it and I made the mistake of putting my hand on the yearling's hip and he kicked me in the face and broke both front teeth off and daddy had to rush me to a dentist in Fort Pierce and then eventually I lost them and I had to have false, two false front teeth. (laugh) So that - but it was a lot of fun and I wouldn't give that up for all the tea in China that was my life on the ranch with daddy and working cattle and riding out and he taught me to use my eyes you know he would say and he taught me direction you know he would ride me into a big old hammock on a black cloudy day and go around and around and come out on another side and say now which ways home you know and um he would um say, "Well do you see it?" It might be a feather where a turkey had dusted or a hog track or something but I had to learn to use my eyes, you know, as we were riding. You didn't look at your horse, you looked out over and you saw what you had to learn to look, and um It was just a lot of, it was hard work but it was alot of fun, it made me tough and uh I wish I was as tough now as I was then.

Q: Did your other brothers and sisters work the cattle too?

BATES: No, well, my brothers did, two brothers, only two brothers there was ten of us, five boys and five girls and uh the two younger ones uh they were a lot older than me but they were the two youngest brothers they worked cattle but I'm the only girl that (pause) my other sister's a little prissy (laugh) she's three years older than I and she doesn't like to remember those days you know and I do, that's life and I - I'd give anything to really to go back you know.

Q: Were going to cut, I think we're at the end of this tape.

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Q: Yeah, I was going to ask you uh speaking of ranches there was another family around here that did a lot ranching. Have any truck with them.

BATES: Oh yes, the Platts, we were real good friends and daddy was always having fish fries and they'd come down and of course uh my Minor and Roy and Judge and all of them used to you know my older sister's they used to come down and they'd bring their sister Clara Bow and and uh Lilian and uh they would ah go out to movies to see Hoot Nix and Tom Nix, I think that was about who was playing then (laugh) and um daddy always had these big fish fries and it was where the old wooden bridge went across the Sebastian River and ah we'd have swamp cabbage and fish and hush puppies and In fact Judgas, Flatt's the Platt's would always come down. daddy was the first man in Brevard County to own a car. had a model A, it came down on the train and ah and I know when Captain Johnny Jorgensen over here next door he his - he got one and he had to get Mr.  $\overset{r}{\cancel{x}}$  latt to teach him how to drive it (laugh) and um then of course right there where they had their parties is were the Ashley gang was killed or murdered and uh we lived just down the river you know and daddy heard to shots and he got on his horse and went down there and would you believe the Ashleys were hand cuffed to trees, they were shot handcuffed to trees, but they were a bad gang.

Q: Tell us a little about that gang I don't think everybody knows.

BATES: Well I don't know that much about the Ashley gang because it was before I was born but um I have heard

daddy tell about the night that the law murdered them down there and they had them, they had them handcuffed and everything and they still shot them and they were robbers and bank robbers and you know I guess they were murders and what ever, they probably deserved what they got but still that was pretty hard, killing them in handcuffs. So, I know they didn't handcuff them after they killed them, right? (laugh) And daddy told me time and again they were handcuffed but that's - they - old bridge was still there and when they build the new US1, why they tore the old bridge out. It used to be good fishing there, boy you could catch fish that weigh seventy or eighty pounds in around those old pilings and uh, Jew fish, you can't catch them They've about fished the river out, you know they've - they've just raped it, there's nothing left, fish, clams, oysters, you name it it's gone, it's not like - we'd just walk out anywhere along there and pick up a big old single oysters, now you can't find a barnacle (pause) It's sad.

Q: Fishing was quite an occupation too. You mentioned the Jorgenson's. There were a number of fishing family's.

BATES: Uh huh, right and um daddy used to ride with the Flatt's and I remember Mr. Daniels, he was a big cattleman down in Okeechobee County and he used to come here, he used to tell me, he'd say Kitty I'd rather put my feet under your table than sit at the Waldorf Astoria and he was a wealthy man and he said that he dad raised horses

and they would sell them to the flatts and they would drive those horses all the way from Okeechobee, drive them, not in trucks, drive them like herds all the way to Melbourne, now that was something wasn't it?

Q: Were wild horses or ...

RATES: Well they were un horses they had raised you know, I don't know if they had broken, no they just heard them and drive them up and um so that's - and daddy he worked with the flatt's - I remember him telling me one time Judges daddy, Cab flatt, to show you how conservative they were he said that they were sitting around the camp fire they'd worked cattle all day and they were sitting around the camp fire and one of the boys, I don't know if it was Carson or Marian or Judge or which one it was but they lit a cigarette and they struck a match and their daddy jumped all over them said boy don't waste those matches he said get you a twig out of the fire and light your cigarette (laugh) they were very conservative and you had to be back in those days things didn't just come that easy.

Q: A match was a special thing?

BATES: Right

Q: Forget sometimes, little things can make a big difference on a cold night when your trying to light a fire. (laugh)

BATES: You didn't have any flint. (laugh) Flint rocks.

Q: Did you ever go out on any of the cattle drives or did you pretty much work around the ranch?

Oh, we drove cattle um the Chip and Margaret Stewart from Eau Gallie they came out to the ranch and they wanted to buy a herd and um we had, they went with us and we herded the cattle and they chose what they wanted you know and then we drove them back to the ranch to load them and we always was driving cattle when were marking brands you have to gather a herd and uh Mr. Holmes who owned it all he was the only man I'd ever know that could mammy calf's. You get a heard up of a couple of thousand head and then he had five brands and um so you - the cowboys - we would all get around the heard and uh you'd let the cattle mill and find their calf and then he and daddy would part the steers and the dry cows and what you didn't want out of the herd and um then he would ride through and he would look at the cow and the calf and we'd drive those, he'd look at every one and we'd drive that heard into the pens when sometimes you'd have to drive them ten miles and maybe it would be the next day before we'd mark and brand we'd start about five thirty in the morning and when ever we'd catch a calf and throw it, he would come to ear mark it and he would call the brand and my daddy would come and brand it and when ever those calves were turned loose and eventually found their mother they had the same brand their mama had, now that is a brain and that's the only man I've ever known that could do it with that many cows, he was - he really had it you know and we drove but that bunch we brought in for the Stewarts in Eau Gallie that was the proudest day of my life. I loved my daddy and he was six foot one and about this big around and he always rode point and he was seventy-five years old and his back was just like a board straight and Margaret Stewart rode up beside me where we were herding the cattle along and daddy was riding point up there, she said look at old man Jim Grant, your daddy, she said he looks as salwart as an old Indian, said his back is straight and I said yes and he's seventy-five years old and that's how he died, working the cattle, fell off his horse with a heart attack and died right there on the spot, so you know people back in those days didn't give up, or give in, just kept going. I begged him many a time daddy why don't you retire and he said, Baby if I retired, I would die, you know he says you have to keep going", he couldn't sit still.

Q: There were plenty aggravation but I've heard some tales about mosquitoes.

BATES: Oh, mosquitoes (laugh) it was just like a black funnel cloud coming behind you and they would be all over you and uh we would have mosquitoes brush you made it out of the buds on the cabbage tree, big cabbage palm and ah you would take the knife and you know and strip it and make it real soft and fluffy and you would tie the top. And at your front and back door hung a brush and before you went in the house, open that screen door, you took that brush and you brushed all the mosquitoes off and then at night time they would build a big smug pot, it was not a fire, it was smoke and uh around the doors you know so as if you had to go in

and out at night time well it would - the smoke would drive the mosquitoes away and (pause). That's how you handle the mosquitoes there wasn't any thing else you could do and I have ridden with my daddy in the woods when ever the horses - their belly, you know they can take their tails and swish their backs and I would keep their neck clean, I would look over at my daddy's horse and under the belly there would be mosquitoes an inch deep almost but underneath their belly and the only way you could get rid of it was to ride them through a pond of water you know that would come up to the belly, it's terrible but we didn't any of us die with what's that disease.

Q: Malaria

BATES: No, they claimed the ...

Q: Encephalitis

BATES: Encephalitis, no none of the horses had it, we didn't have it I don't know how that come to be .

Q: They just weren't carrying that germ, I guess.

BATES: I guess not.

Q: There were plenty of pretty big nuisance was that year round or just in the summer?

BATES: That was mostly in the summer the very heat of summer but we would in the warm winter you would have them but not like in the summer you know, my goodness it was terrible and we had to walk to school, my dad gave the property for the school house, in fact it was the Flemming Grant School out on the Micco grade which is now called

Flemming Grant Road and it was named after my daddy because he gave the land for the school and um we had to walk through the woods to school and it was a good mile and a half, two miles and as little bitty fellows we had to fight those misquotes and we learned early in life. We killed rattle snakes going to school you know we just, going right through the woods and there'd be you know you'd just pick up lighter knots and throw them at them until you killed them and um.

Q: You killed snakes with sticks?

BATES: Big old uh fat, you know what a pine tree is well they call it light wood because it is full of tar and it will light up real quick and burn just like to poured gas on it and it's real heavy and when a tree falls, a limb you know or something they called them lighter knots, they didn't say light wood knots, they said lighter knots and we would pick up those and uh beat them to death you know, stun them then beat them to death when we were just little fellows we didn't, we were taught and we could build, we were allowed to build fires because we knew how to do it you know and how to control it and it was so beautiful going through those woods because it was just in the spring time, it would be solid with buttercups, violets and larkspur (?) just purple, yellow and blue all over and uh and you just don't see it anymore and that's what I loved riding with dad we would ride out way before daylight and uh when the sun would come up I would always turn my horse, I was

always singing and I'd turn my horse and look back and through the grass, the dew you know where each horse had walked and the sun glistening on it and all those beautiful flowers, tiger lilies, it was just, I'm a nature person I quess and uh to me that was just beautiful and we were coming home from Alabama the other day and we stopped by the side of the road to let the puppy walk and believe it or not I saw some violets and they were blooming and I had a old plastic fork and they were just growing wild on the side of the road you know there in north Florida and my husband said what on earth are you doing, I said I'm digging up violets (laugh) I dug me up I think I got five, I got them out there in a pot, they still have the blooms on them but you know I just hadn't seen a wild violet, you can buy African violets but you can't buy wild violets from the woods and uh it was so poor that little old country school and daddy always got the wood for the heater you know to keep us warm and my mother had a letter from my old school teacher when dad died and she referred to all of that you know. So she would - it was just a one room school house and it was from one thru six and we - she would let us out in the afternoons on a Friday and we would go pick those violets they were white ones and blue ones and uh she would buy paper dollies and cut them and she would make little bouquets and stand on the street corner in Melbourne and sell them so as we would have money for different little things at the school you know that she could provide us with to, because so many kids you

know there was one family that was awfully poor and they never had anything and so she would do that to buy things for that the County wouldn't furnish you know like crayons, pencils, and things. Her name was originally was Maude Beakhan and well she was Med Swearinger then she was Mod Beakhan and uh you know the Pollok in Palm Bay, well Harry Pollok used to be the Mayor of Palm Bay, there's a park there named after him and she married Fred Pollok and she lived there in Palm Bay right across the railroad from my mother.

Q: How many kids was at that school?

BATES: Well there was probably about fifteen, sixteen.

Q: And she taught all the grades?

BATES: Um hum, yeah she taught them all.

Q: What happened where you were ready to go on to high school?

BATES: Well they closed the school when I was in the sixth grade and we had to ride the bus all the way from the end of the County. Mr. Richards who was my neighbor's father, he drove the bus and um we had to go to Melbourne and I went to Melbourne for that one year in the sixth grade under Miss. Macanelli in Melbourne and then I moved right on over into the old Melbourne High School where I graduated from but we moved to Palm Bay I guess when I was about thirteen or fourteen and um mama bought a house up there so I only had to go from Palm Bay to Melbourne but it was so funny we still didn't have transportation there was no bus

lines or anything until the war and we used to get out there and flag the (pause) the train down and we would ride the train into Melbourne and the conductor would tease us poor little old things and tell us that they didn't stop in Melbourne you know and uh - but the - of course they did and we learned the first time you know that he was just kidding us but we were scared to death the first time we ever rode it and then when ever the movie was out the old Van Groy. theater and uh when my brother and his wife lived up the street from mama and they would come to town grocery shopping Saturday afternoon and we would have our ride home.

Q: Oh the train?

BATES: No, we rode home with them, there was only the one train we could catch and that was the old package train, old number four and we'd ride it into - it had to slow down you know if she had big packages and things to go on the train and she'd flag them down for us and we'd ride into Melbourne. Things have changed.

Q: You'd have to flag the Engineer?

BATES: Oh no, no they had a - a passenger car on it.

It was a - they had passengers and mail car and uh caboose and an engine (laugh) those were the days.

Q: What were the roads like?

BATES: Well it was just ah two lane highway and uh they were not very good and I can remember when ever the hurricane washed the road out down, right here in Grant and we had a bad hurricane and it and uh boy I'm telling you

that was really something else.

Q: Well tell me about it.

BATES: Well (laugh) they had to put uh boards like across the ditch you know on the west side of the road and um naturally when you know cars come along but of course back in those days you maybe had a car one car maybe every half hour (laugh) or so. So you didn't have to worry about any pile up or anyone getting killed and then they finally got the road filled in and patched up. Everybody was surely happy when they four laned it and I can remember when Babcock up here in Melbourne was nothing but just an old dirt cow pad you know and then it became two old dirt ruts and grass growing up in the middle and um they didn't, they finally paved it as far as the railroad and it was still just a that was it you know and then they finally opened it on out.

Q: That kind of explains why it kind of wanders.

BATES: Um hum, that's right.

Q: Did you ever thought the hurricane, do you remember when the hurricane came through, what it was like?

BATES: Oh, I remember a lot hurricanes but we were never afraid and uh my mother was a very brave little lady and uh she would say, when my house goes there won't be anything left standing so there's no need in going anywhere else, and the people believed her so strongly when a hurricane came our house would be full they would be laying on the floor wall to wall you know they would come to our

little old house because mama was not afraid, we never locked the door or anything and uh we had a real bad one in forty-nine and that - not here it was down - I was living that's the year I got married and I was living in Stuart they called it the grandad of them all and uh it just tore Stuart and Fort Pierce all to pieces, I mean it just took buildings and smashed everything you know but it - up here we don't ever get a bad one uh I went through I guess the last one that we had here that was of any effect at all was David and uh my next door neighbors over here they insisted that I go over and stay with them and why that two story house over there was shaking this house wasn't and uh everybody's tool sheds were rolling out back. We went upstairs and was watching and mine was bolted down to the concrete floor out here so it didn't go and uh so when the eye of the storm came over, I came over to see how everything was and I just went back over and told them shoot I'm staying home, let her blow I said it went through the first half you know it's gonna make it so I just stayed right here and uh I know my kids wouldn't stay here, they went up and got into the freezer, cooler at the fish house because it's eight feet thick concrete (laugh) now I wasn't about to be jammed up in there with all those people and dogs and everything else I stayed right here.

Q: Where is that freezer, cooler at?

Bates: Well it's no longer a fish house, it was
Carver's up here in Malabar on ah US1, Carver and Sons and

uh they're both dead and the fish house I think the kids lost it anyway.

Q: It had big thick walls?

Just the cooler where they stored the fish you BATES: know, iced them down and stored them, they were eight feet thick (laugh) and but I've seen a lot of um the storms don't worry me you know you got plenty of notice they're coming but the thing that bothers me is the tornados, we had one come here right by the side of the house and uh we still had a antenna then it was before our days of cable and it just bent it right over, it tore up two or three big pine trees right there, tore big flower bushes like this, just jerked them up by the roots but it didn't hit the house, it just went right by the side of it, took part of the roof you know on that side and I watched it just clear a path and it went right - jumped across the river hit that island over there and just cleared a complete path right through the middle of that island, now that's the things that scare's me I don't worry about a hurricane, a little wind blowing but (laugh) my sister-in-law went through Andrew and she lost her house and I know that was devastating but really in Brevard County we have never had you know, devastation, we never have, we may have had something blow over or a little erosion on the beach or something like that but I don't.

Q: I think you right because tornadoes have been the worse of it. Well we've gotten through page one pretty well um what about the postal history, do you remember

anything about the way the mail used to be delivered?

BATES: Other than the boat that came by boat and I know my grandfather, they had come here originally from Georgia and uh I can remember mama saying that he always waited for the mail boat to bring him his the Atlanta Constitution that was the paper he ordered and had brought in and the boat same you know it was like a - they didn't have any such thing as a you know as a horse and wagon or stage coach or anything bring it in, it came in on boat everything until the trains when the trains came then they...

Q: More regular.

BATES: Right and then they opened...

Q: Kind of regular, did they have a schedule?

BATES: They must have had some kind of schedule. (cough)

Q: Do you want to stop and get a drink of water?

BATES: No, I'll be alright.

Q: Um, what about the early churches there were a few down here for a long time there weren't any.

BATES: No, there there was not any there was nothing and when they finally did uh there was only in the area where we were there was Baptist and Methodist and Holiness they didn't even have Catholic and that was the only three churches that I can even remember as a child now they may have had had them in Melbourne but I was isolated down there on the Sebastian River (laugh) no way to go. I didn't see a

movie until and it was a Tom Mix I think until I was probably ten or eleven years old when I saw my first movie.

Q: You went up to the Van Croy?

**BATES:** No, uh my brother took us one of my older brothers took us to Vero. (laugh)

Q: But there was, wasn't there a big hotel on the Sebastian?

BATES: Yes, the Bay Crest. there was a big hotel right there on the where you turn to go down, you know, through there uh on the Brevard County side, it was called the Bay Crest, great big Hotel and my cousin has a picture of it and um she's dead now, she died last November and I'm going to ask her son if I may have that picture.

Q: You remember that?

BATES: Oh yes, uh huh.

Q: Well what, was it for tourists that came through here?

RATES: Yeah, it was for anyone that needed a room. You know uh, we really and truly didn't have all that many winter visitor's back in those days, really, but there were a few. I can remember my uncle lived in Micco and he was paralyzed he'd had a stroke and we used to go up to see him, my brother had a automobile and he would take mama and dad and all of us up there and we would sit out by the gate and count the cars and some days there wouldn't even be five or six and we'd sit there for hours. I am not kidding you.

Q: That is on US1?

BATES: Um hum, and they had a old gas station and I can remember they had to pump the gas up in a glass thing you know and then fill your tank and it was right there close to the Bay Crest, it was right there on the corner.

BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION ORAL HISTORY VIDEO PROJECT. INTERVIEW WITH KITTY GRANT BATES, GRANT, FLORIDA. FEBRUARY 5, 1994. INTERVIEWER NANCY YASECKO, CAMERAMAN ROBERT GILBERT, EQUIPMENT SONY DXCM7, RECORDER SONY BVW35. COPYRIGHT: BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION 1994.

Q: Tell us what you can remember of stories that you've heard about the depression times.

BATES: Well all I can say is uh I don't think that it hurt us as badly as it did people that lived in the cities, because we did have our animals and our gardens and I um can remember you know the latter end of it, ou know things were not all that great as far as clothing and shoes, we had to, well, we had shoes for winter, but we mostly went to school barefooted in the Spring and all you saved you shoes and you got a lot of hand me downs but um I think that's why we were so healthy was because we did have the food, the gardens and we had chickens and hogs and cows so therefore we did eat and that's the main thing, you can do without material things, just eat good (laugh) and uh so that's what I feel strongly more about. I think when you're on a farm or country that you fare better than the poor people in the cities.

Q: Um, doing the time of World War II there were so rationing, things like that.

BATES: I still have my ration book, I still have it, I don't throw nothing away (laugh) yes we had sugar and meat,

gasoline, shoes everything was rationed and uh each member of the family had a ration book and that time it was kind of hard you know because you couldn't um I mean you had enough to get by on but you couldn't splurge you had to live within the means of that ration book.

Q: There were other things happening around here during World War II. In terms of watching the beach.

Um hum, they had towers and we had - they even had a airplane tower right here in Grant you know and everybody maned it, you took a turn you reported all the planes you saw pause and no when ever that was going on I was in Palm Bay you know I wasn't living here, I moved here in "49" and uh this was you know like in "42", three, four and uh but the kids I went to school with they talked about it you know and I was very envious because we didn't have a tower (laugh) and I quess the reason we didn't was because Melbourne had the Navel Air Base and uh so they probably did their own monitoring and they had uh one over on the beach and I spent the night in that one on the beach. We were turtle - looking for turtles and that was before they put the whammy on before people started you know people really mess up everything and we used to go over there and we would watch the turtles and then when ever they would lay their eggs we would brush over their nest so as these people used to come from Orlando they were they had a bakery and people would come over here a rob the nest you know and get the eggs and so a bunch of us made it our business to go watch

the beach and when the turtles laid their eggs we would hide their tracks back to the ocean and that way they couldn't rob the nest and we used to get up on that tower and um my brother had a beach buggy and he was running up and down the beach finding where they had crawled so he could hide their crawl and the tide got him (laugh) and we had to stay up on that tower where we would be in plenty of air because the sand flies were about to eat us up and my other brother come with block and tackle and pulled us out so that used to be our main concern was saving those turtles and that's people do that and then you know it's cruel and we have even found where they would butcher a turtle they wouldn't butcher they would just cut out a flipper and leave the whole thing there you know and we used to report it you know and uh but that's just the way some people are.

Q: I never heard that about a bakery, you mean you knew who it was?

BATES: We knew it was bakeries, the law knew it was bakeries and uh they appreciated us hiding the crawls you know but of course you can't cover the whole miles and miles of beach.

Q: Problem was too many sheriffs or... (?)

BATES: No.

Q: Police anyway.

BATES: No, there wasn't, there wasn't enough to cover the areas but back then everybody you know you knew everybody and uh our little town was Melbourne was only a

population of about four to five hundred, five thousand and you knew everyone now you know no one.

Q: If you know everybody you know where the trouble might be.

BATES: That's right and we knew it wasn't local people doing it you know and we found out you know we checked out a license plate and it was from Orlando.

Q: Tell me about the black community here?

BATES: It - it was over where it is now they called it Hopkins and um they you know you just didn't go over there and we had um (pause) you know they went to their schools we went to ours, when we had grades and things they were in it and uh (cough) but they never um played them as to football, basketball or anything like that and I guess they played the other black schools and uh but it there was not the friction that there, is now ever you know, and um it was just like we had a - we never been our family has never been prejudiced and there was this one old black lady her name was Jane McCluchin she lived at Micco and she thought the world and all of my family and she used to come and stay with us you know and she'd help mama can and um the nearest my sister ever got to getting a licking was we call her Aunt Jane and my sister Lolly just spoke right up, she was six years older than I am and one day she called her Jane and boy daddy grabbed her up and he told her you respect both gray hair that's your Aunt Jane and I never forgot that and um and it's the same with all the people you know just like

my children were taught that's there not their Aunt Tommy and Uncle Marshal but that's what they call them and everybody around here I called the older people, their dead and gone now but they were aunt they were uncle and that's the way you were trained if you knew people well enough that you didn't want to say Mr. or Mrs. it was aunt and uncle for um respect not today you know kids just blurt out people's names and uh it just kind of upsets me the respect that has gone.

I got in trouble - I didn't get in trouble but I went up to the school (pause) uh his daddy - my son had a little old teacher and she was - he'd come home and she - he told me says mama she won't let me say yes, mam or no, mam she said she was no old lady and I said you just go back and you say yes, mam and no, mam because that's the way you were raised and uh So he'd come home and he was crying she had really gotten on to him so I went up to the school and I told her I said look I don't know you may think you're to young to be said mam to but my children were raised to show respect and you will be mam to him until he is out of your class and I don't want you haggling him anymore. And that was that. just believe in the old time - that's what's the matter it's just like the kids can't even have prayer in school and I heard a man on the TV the other day and they were - the kids were talking about the killings in the school and nobody's safe you know and the kids killing kids and he said that uh what do you expect you know when the respect is gone you can't even have a prayer you know what's the world coming

to.

Q: It was different then nobody locked the door.

BATES: No, we never did, never locked the door in our lives boy I do now.

Q: Well lets see, talking a little bit more about the social life and entertainment, you mentioned parades, I quess every once in a while.

BATES: Oh yes, we had parades and we always had dances and the dances they would be like square dances or barn dances and uh somethings there would be a place you know to go a big place or if it wasn't boy you just rolled back the rugs and had it at your house and I remember one time we had one at our house and I was I think about sixteen and uh we had a country western band and uh I danced until the next morning and took a bath and caught the school bus and went to school, didn't bother me at all now that's the way we used to be and uh you didn't miss school because you danced all night and everybody, every family had a musician they either could play a violin or we called it a fiddle or you could they played a guitar or a piano, an organ, my mother could play just about any instrument there was, she played the accordion, piano, guitar the only thing she never could play was the violin and that upset her because she wanted to but uh we everybody you know it was no problem getting music because everyone had someone that could knock out a tune on something and that was entertainment you know back in old days but in later years you know of course we had school

dances and during World War II I know we used to have little recreation centers where we could the teenagers could go dance and uh.

Q: Where there, were there parades at particular times of year or...

know and uh there was several other occasions and uh it always headed out with the band you know and I was a cheerleader. I've got pictures of me somewhere in one big parade at the cheerleaders followed the band and uh we used to make quite a to do out of it and you know they had floats and um then after I was Miss Melbourne I went over to Orlando I was entered as Miss Melbourne in the Merry Christmas contest and they couldn't find my ribbon as Miss Melbourne and of course Melbourne had sponsored me and uh you know what they tacked on my evening gown, Miss Sabastian Inlet that's the only thing they could find from Brevard County (laugh) they couldn't find the Miss Melbourne (laugh) ribbon at all and I got a picture of me in that (laugh) and the City of Melbourne didn't think top highly of Orlando.

O: Tell us the rest.

BATES: Well I was Miss Melbourne on 1948 and so Melbourne, they were having a Miss Merry Christmas contest in Orlando Florida and uh so Melbourne sponsored me to go as Ms. Melbourne and uh there was a big hotel on the beach that sponsored Pat Pull well she was uh Mullens then her dad was a dentist in town and (cough) we get over there and Pat

didn't ride with the rest of us and we wondered where she was and uh so she showed up and she had her mother's car but she didn't say mother I want the car and Earnest Leggy he works in Orlando now too he was with her and uh so the next thing we knew our room is invaded by the Highway Patrol (laugh) and boy was Pat Poolt embarrassed she had her mothers car she didn't tell her mother she was taking it and the Highway Patrol they then they called and Mrs. Mullen said well you know let it go it's ok and but I think Patricia caught it when she got home but I was to be Miss. Melbourne and Orlando I don't know even remember now uh what part of Orlando was sponsoring it we were all put up at a beautiful hotel and they couldn't find my Miss. Melbourne ribbon and they found Pat's, I think it was the Pand's or something like that and so they apparently they had planned on having someone there as Miss. Sebastian Inlet that didn't show and they slapped that Miss. Sebastian Inlet across my chest (laugh) and I walked out on the stage (laugh) with that and I don't think when I got back that the City of Melbourne appreciated Orlando too much and - All right this is a picture of my grandfather Grant uh Thomas Gwen Grant he's a rebel southern Civil War Veteran and he rode with Quontral and he was not very happy about it at the end, he thought Quontral had turned into a demon and uh he read his bible till his dying days for forgiveness you know for the things they had done and this is the old log cabin (cough) that's where they settled back of Micco at the turn of the

century the 1900's he moved (cough) from the swamps in south the south west section of Miami is what it is right now but he moved from there up to Micco, Breyard County and they built that log house and homesteaded out there, if you look close you can see the old wash stand and the mirror and the towel and that's my father there with the big long rifle and grandad over here on the end in the chair, that's the hunting camp my dad used to take people hunting all the time they, he was a very good hunter and in this shot he had killed this humongous rattle snake.

O: Point at it.

BATES: It's right here my father's holding it (pause) and this is the same hunting camp and you can see how much hunting they did if you look at all these demi-johns (laugh).

Q: I don't know what a deme johns is.

BATES: Well that's what they had their liquor in and uh daddy used to take Dr. Hay and uh a bunch of the people out of Melbourne on these hunting trips and uh one time they come back in and Dr. Hay was so polluted and he they didn't catch anything and he wanted to buy a turkey from my mother to take home to make them think he had caught turkey's and so Cecil Powell was holding me and singing spring time in the fockies and I can he was looped too and I can remember the whole episode and mama said Dr. Hay she said won't they know it isn't a wild turkey because wild turkey meat is dark and he said no they'll never know the difference and he

started plucking the turkey and he'd sing turkey pull your tail out and I thought that was so funny you know because I

was only five or six years old but (cough) this is uh another hunting party, that's my dad here on the end, as usual he's got that long rifle in his hands and the hooked up to the old horse and wagon they went in the woods with the, it isn't like today where they go in with jeeps and blazers. They went in in horse and wagon and this is my dad over here on the left the tall gentleman and that's Mr. Hatmen, a northern man used to come down every year, and you can see all the quail that they got there looks like they might have seventy or eighty strung up and this is the Sebastian River before all the pollution and the ruination of it, that's up where we lived, that's my brother on the bow of my cousin's boat, sail boat. This is the Sebastian Inlet when they were cutting it through you could jump across it that's Mr. Couch right here in Grant he'd dead and gone now but if he was the biggest pusher for the cutting of the Inlet. (pause) This is the little country school, Flemming Grant School out on the Flemming Grant Road, my father gave the property for the school and um it was just a little one room deal and this is the bell pole and this was our teacher Maud Pollolc and this was our - our four H club and this was Unis Gay, she was our four H teacher and the rest is just us poor little wood sprites (pause) This is the old cow hand (pause). This is me I used to ride and work

cattle with my daddy, we were marking and branding that's me there and this is the gentleman that owned it he did the ear marking, and this is another one this is my dad over here going with the branding iron and that's me over here. This is me and grandma Sally Savages poke bonnet and her slip she dressed like that till the day she died, she wore, she made her own clothes, her slips, dresses and her sun bonnets (pause). That's my father again believe it or not he finally got a automobile. (laugh) It eliminated the horse and wagon and you can see I can remember that old car and it had celluloid windows that come down you know they weren't glass they were celluloid and they turned yellow and with drying his socks up on the roof of it. (pause) And this is the new railroad bridge across from our old home place across the Sebastian River to Roseland, this is Roseland and this is where the old wooden bridge was these staubs, they tore it out after they got the steel bridge in. (cough) (pause) This is a parade and um (pause) that's (cough) lets see where am I, think that's me there I was a cheerleader and um we were coming behind the band and we we had a big fair too we used have a you know and ah our four H club you know we had exhibitions and cattle and all and where the civic auditorium is now, where the land is the pond we had a race track around it, we had horse races, we had the parade and we had the fair, we had horse races and um a rodeo and big rodeo. (pause) Their getting kind of slippery aren't they. (pause) This is Ms. Kroegel and her (pause) kids, my aunt

sent her some ducks and she had a picture made and this is (pause) yeah and um I don't know if it's his mother or who all I know, they were my Aunt Caroline's friends, my mother's sister's friends and she gave her those ducks and that was, she took a picture and sent the card thanking her for the ducks. (pause) That's my father look at that coffee pot and um their fixing to go on a party on a - on one of the fish fry's and he's down on the pier their getting ready to load the boat.

Q: They think they'll catch the fish for the fish fry?

BATES: Un huh, oh yes, with the nets. If dad took

Seth Rhodes and Baba Rhodes for a on a turkey hunt and
that's what they come up with five big wild turkeys.

O: How does that work?

BATES: Well you can tell from their dress that it had to of been you know in the twenty's and Seth Rhodes he always thought the world and all of me and he called me little Jim after my daddy because I was always tagging after daddy and going hunting and riding. and That's my oldest brother Carol Grant and uh he was born I think in 1905 and he was killed when he was fifteen years old on that same railroad I just showed you a picture of uh the train was supposed to stop on both sides of the track, it had to stop on one side just for the bridge tender to tell him it was ok it was still a wooden bridge and uh then it had to stop on the other side to get water for the engine and my uh aunt and uncle had the post office, they had a post office by

then and they were the post master and post mistress and they had - he'd been playing baseball with their children and the train was coming and he said he was going to catch it and ride it across and they told him he was coming too fast he wasn't going to stop and he just looked back at them and laughed and he tried to swing up on it and it pulled him under and killed him. (pause) and This is old man five cents, that's how they fished back in those days look how course that net is, this is my father right here and uh they called him old man five cents because everything he went to buy he asked if it's just five cents and he got the name. That is my mother when I quess she was probably sixteen or seventeen years old, she had a eighteen inch waist and uh that was there on the Sebastian River. That's my grandparents, Dempsy Kane and uh Celie Padgent Kane, he's the one that homesteaded in the eight early eighteen sixty's on the banks of the Sebastian River. (pause) This is their second daughter Caroline Kane. (pause) This is the third daughter Irene Kane (pause) I don't have any pictures, well I do have of Aunt Katie but I don't (pause) not that's daddy's sister.

Q: Well lets go on to some more modern pictures.

BATES: Allright, you think we can get this one in here.

Q: We'll try it and see what happens.

BATES: That's when I was a cheerleader in Melbourne, right here (long pause) Judge Platt made this for me he had

the picture the negative or what ever and this is (cough)
Ben Canada and um Ike Herdon, Judge Platt on the Harmonica
and Geeche Johns and my brother Button Grant and um Red
Preset and me Kitty. This is me Kitty Grant I was Miss
Melbourne of 1948 and this is Pat Pool and uh I don't even
remember who was runner up (laugh) whether it was Pat or
Caroline, but uh I won the honors.