

2012.3.36

JOHN RIDLEY AND CAROLINE RIDLEY HOWARD
(brother and sister)

CAROLINE RIDLEY HOWARD is the daughter-in-law of William Schley Howard, the wife of Pierre Howard, Sr., and the mother of Pierre Howard.

MR. RIDLEY: Caroline and I were both—this being Caroline—Caroline and I were both born in that house on Mead Road, at 123 Mead.

MRS. HOWARD: And John, I need to remember—he doesn't know that I'm going to tell this. I didn't understand about having a little baby in the family; but my grandmother called me one morning, and she said, "We have something to show you." And I walked in—I thought it was going to be something to eat or [inaudible] preserves or something, and here is this baby in a basket [*points to MR. RIDLEY*], and it was John. And I remember exactly how he looked. *And then when my sister came home from Oakhurst School, I [inaudible] was sitting on the front porch, and I said, "Marty! Guess what we have!" We had an aunt who was always coming to see us, and she'd bring a treat. And Marty said, "Peppermint candy from Aunt Claire!" [Audience laughter]* And I said, "No, we have a baby brother."

MR. RIDLEY: Well, I think they were disappointed from that day on that it wasn't peppermint candy [*audience laughter*]. Aunt Claire—she [MRS. HOWARD] mentioned Aunt Claire that used to come to see us. And Aunt Claire is the woman for whom Clairemont [Avenue] was named. And you probably heard the story of old Dr. Ridley, had a place down here on Clairemont; and they wanted to pave the road coming into Decatur and asked him for some land. And he said, "Yeah, I'll give you the land if you'll name it, name the street, after my oldest daughter." And that was Claire Ridley. And that's where Clairemont comes from. [6:33 on DVD]

[At 1:03:02 on DVD]: Question from audience member: I'd like to know why they dropped the *e* out of the other end [of the name] of Clairmont [Avenue].

MR. RIDLEY: That will always remain an unsolved mystery. I do know—now, I belong to the bunch that likes C-l-a-i-r-m-o-n-t; and I think Caroline is of the persuasion

that likes the e. But I do know that in 1900 and—eight, [to audience member, off-camera; probably a family member] was it, when Mother and Dad were married?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, off-camera: Yes.

MR. RIDLEY: I have at home in both the scrapbook on my father's life and on my mother's life a clipping from the newspaper, one of the parties that were given for the bride- and groom-to-be. And one of the parties was at Clairmont, which was the summer home of old Dr. Ridley. It was C-l-a-i-r-m-o-n-t. Now, somebody very—somebody I think with a diplomatic turn realized that you could spell it both ways, and so it is spelled both ways frequently, as you know: C-l-a-i-r, C-l-a-i-r-e, m-o-n-t. Claire—Aunt Claire—was C-l-a-i-r-e-m-o-n-t [sic].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, on front row, with back to camera: The 1912 atlas has it both ways.

MR. RIDLEY: Sir?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, on front row, with back to camera: The 1912 atlas has it both ways.

MR. RIDLEY: Oh, is that right?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, on front row, with back to camera makes inaudible comment.

MR. RIDLEY: That's interesting. She used to live on a high bank about where the Fidelity Bank is now.

MRS. HOWARD: By Decatur Federal.

MR. RIDLEY: Huh?

MRS. HOWARD: By Decatur Federal.

MR. RIDLEY: Decatur Federal?

MRS. HOWARD makes an inaudible comment.

MR. RIDLEY: She lived there. I have pictures of my sister [inaudible—sounds like "long girls"] taken on the front steps of that house.