

“I Remember Hour” The DeKalb History Center
James Venable
May 28, 1982

Interviewer “Today is August the 28th 1982 and we are videotaping a very well known and outstanding lawyer of our county for the records of the DeKalb historical society. Mr. Howard Whirly, who is making this tape for us. Now, we have a while, and I’m going to present to you here Mr. James Venable, and I want him to range over his whole life and times here in DeKalb county and I think a good beginning point is that since this county is just 160 years old and everybody but the native Indians have come into this county tell me something about the background of your family Mr. Venable and how they happened to come to DeKalb county and where you were born and that sort of thing.”

James Venable

“Well my ancestors settled in Richmond, Virginia in 1683. Captain John Venable and Abraham Venable played a very prominent part in the revolution, the war between England and the colonies. I had a great great uncle who was a professor who taught Greek in the university of Virginia, and uh, during the revolutionary war my ancestors conscripted the arch teams and the neighbors that needed the colonies during the bloody conflict and after the revolution had ceased the war they were sued and Patrick Henry defended that lawsuit and won it.

A few years after five of them settled over in Jefferson, GA. In 1842, James Venable, whom I named after, was the first man in the world to submit himself as a guinea pig without the proper (unintelligible) to eat. There in Jefferson, Georgia in 1942 Jim Farley, PM general dedicated a postage stamp to Dr. Crawford Long and I represented the Venable family and Dr. Frank K Boling represented the medical profession, he’s now dead.

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My grandfather settled in Atlanta when it was Marthasville. He was clerk of the court during the War Between the States. And Venable street out there near Georgia Tech, he owned that property lived there and died there in 1879. My family played a very prominent part in Atlanta there when it was Marthasville. My grandfather and the Venable family, there were 5 sons and three daughters there. My father was named Clarence Venable and many years ago moved to Lithonia lived in Fulton co but moved down to Lithonia there. The Venables own pine mountain (unintelligible) in Lithonia, and they purchased from the southern bandit co Stone Mountain about 1874 for 40,000 dollars. Trading big ledge now known as Davidson Granite Company is a part of payment for stone mount. You’ve heard it said that stone mountain sold for a shot gun or a mule because the Venable brothers paid 40k over a period of years, and now that stone mountain it was in the granite biz from about 1874 right to 1928, they built the Cuban capital was built out of stone mountain granite, the Brooklyn bridge, all over the world and all over this country, granite from Lithonia and pine mountain. (Unintelligible) and he used to pave streets in Atlanta with Belgian blocks long before the days of asphalt and concrete all over the country. They’d name each city in its curban, Cincinnati curban, Cleveland curban, Atlanta curban, Granite Curban.

I would like to say this, that I was born in DeKalb county in Lithonia Georgia. Lithonia Georgia was named after a Greek work that means lithas, meaning rock. My mother was a Reagin, she was born there in Lithonia as well as myself there, my grandfather on her side with four other brothers participated in the war between the states. Three of 'em was killed and two of them survived. My great great uncle was a Sherriff of DeKalb county here he used to live over here on the court house square where the CNS bank building is, the county jail was there when I was a young boy. I remember the old court house, the wooden court house. On Saturday morning used to witness two wagons and buggies there with farmers with their produce who sold it to the natives and people lived in and around Decatur, Georgia there. MY uncle was the Sherriff there for many years. I remember one thing about him, he was a great horseman. They had a fine stallion horse that used to race at Lakewood there, won many medals and honors there named Gold Core, no one would could handle that horse look after him 'cept a black man named, I think, I've forgotten his name there he wouldn't let any body else pet him, wouldn't let anyone fool him. He was a very dangerous horse I remember that real well."

Interviewer: "Where is the house that you were born in, is it still standing?"

Venable: "No the house that I was born in is out near Pine Mountain, what you would now Rockbridge rd set back some a thousand feet east going towards Pine Mountain."

Interviewer: "Did you go to school down there?"

Venable: "I went to Lithonia high school and I went to a private school with Ms. Annie Mooney who taught music I was her pet student there I was abut 7th or 8th grade the rest of them were 1st on through the fifth and sixth grade, they had about 40 students. I used ot go to school over the drug store on main street. In the building just west of the city, along the main street, she had a school there a private school. I left Lithonia in bout 1921 started going to school in Atlanta, Georgia at an old tech high school in portable buildings. I finished there then I went to Georgia Tech and studied civil engineering and finished that and then I was with the city as an engineer. I laid out Candler field there when it was only one hanger Beeler Blevins and Doug Davis said that was one of the fastest growing airports in the world. Then I made the geo (unintelligible) survey for the city the government loaned the city the instruments in which to make this survey and put some out on Stone Mountain, Candler Building, we were at 90 pts some 10, 15 20 miles outside the city ninety foot towers hung barbed over a monument planted in concrete, we turned it at angles we'd point a high powered lamp from the top of Stone Mountain to the Candler building and these other points all lamps we'd turn angles at night time between these various points to get the minutes degrees and seconds.

After that survey was finished and I set the sea level elevation of every manhole in Atlanta taking the size of the pipe and the size of the pipe going in and out and the sea level elevation and I set a monument of sea level elevation over here in front of the DeKalb county court house and the end of the steps in a brass tablet. It gives a height...Atlanta ranges from about 1060 top of Stone Mountain about 1665 above sea

level, Atlanta about 1050. Up around Davidson Parks and Stokes there is a marker there I set markers all over the city. In case of a war, or a fire destroying the city or any part of it, we could relocate it by these everlasting monuments there.”

Interviewer: “Well when did you get interested in law?”

Venable: “Well I started studying law when it was the city at night time. I finished law school June the fifth, I got admitted June the fifth 1930 on the diploma you didn’t have standing examinations there.”

Interviewer: “And you have been a working lawyer since 1930?”

Venable: “ Yea I been practicing law, never had a vacation, been in 44 states, learned something every case, a lawyer that lived never lived that knows everything about law I learned something in every case.”

Interviewer: “Do you like the practice, you must like it.”

Venable: “Yea I do, I never sent a client a bill, don’t have time, never had the sense enough to charge much like most lawyers [laughs].

Interviewer: “So how did you happen to practice in so many states?”

Venable: “Well I represented a lot of criminal cases when I first started there, I been in 44 states, some civil and criminal cases, and all of the states are practically the same in their procedure except the state Louisiana it’s Napoleonic or French law. I went down there and defended the Black Muslim and then take that 25,000 dollars and promoted the Klan. [chuckles]”

Interviewer: “Well now that you get into that, you mentioned a while ago that you had belonged to all those secret societies and I realize they are secret, but you might tell us something about them and how strong they are and what their function is.”

Venable: “Well I belonged to the Masonic, I’ve been a Mason. I’ve been an off fellow, junior order red men elks and moose, and I’ve been in the Klan since 1924. When the Klan dominated politically the United States we had governors, a couple [unintelligible] governors of Georgia were on the Imperial Board of the Klan. We had 6 governors of Georgia, six males of the ladder, several presidents, senators and congressmen, males all over the United States. In Fulton county Sheriff James r Larry who was sheriff for 52 years was on the imperial board, Judge Paul Estridge, one of our judges and county commissioner represented the Klan, he was on the imperial board while Governor Walker was on the imperial board. But the world doesn’t record these facts; it don’t tell you that we had presidents, senators, and congressmen.”

Interviewer: “What about your church connection?”

Venable: "I'm a Presbyterian, North Avenue Presbyterian, that's my membership's name. My family gave that grant that built that church the Venables did there, North Avenue and Peachtree."

Interviewer: "Tell me about a little more about Stone Mountain, I've got some [unintelligible] How did he come here, did you work with those people?"

Venable: "Yea I knew Gutzon Bolgrum, he's a sculptor, sculptor, while hw was her ein Atlanta he stayed at the Venables home in Oakdale and Ponce de Leon, I knew his wife and his son. He started the carving, first this mountain was given tot the united daughters of the confederacy. Then ww1 come on and they couldn't get it off the ground and eventually they created a Stone Mountain association. The first people to head it was Randolph, I forget he was a brother in law of Ruben [unintelligible], Randolph Smith, Randolph something I've forgotten his name he was the first president of it. I remember when roger winters a published an agent, his wife was connected, they had an office in the Hurt building for a good many of years there, when they eventually got the monument, the coin, the 50 cent coin was minted by the us congress, it said it couldn't be done because the south was traitors to our country, therefore it would be impossible to get a coin minted. The Klan was so powerful politically at the time we were successful in getting the coin the 50 cent coin minted, through congress and a million and a half of them were minted and very few of them was ever spent to carve that mountain, it was squandered otherwise through the association."

Interviewer: "Well you know, I know the circumstances got some of the Boardman in trouble, I know Julius McCurdy said that he was arrested, why was he arrested?"

Venable: "He was arrested because he got mad with the association and destroyed his models down there, and they take that for destruction of those monuments and taken out a warrant for him and he fled into the state of North Carolina and was arrested there .And at that time Bolgrum was closely connected and a member at that time of the Klan and we were so powerful, and my uncle, Samuel Halkner, an old bachelor, my father's brother, was treasurer of the united states and we were so powerfully and politically connected the Klan was that we were successful in getting him released without extradition."

Interviewer: "So in other words he was never tried?"

Venable: "He never was tried."

Interviewer: "Tell me your earliest recollections about the Mountain itself, we've heard stories that there was a hotel down on top of it once, another was it was an Indian fort up there, do you know any of those to be true?"

Venable: "Well I've heard it myself, of course, Cloud street in front [unintelligible] cloud, way before the war had a tower called cloud's tower on top of that mountain there, and a dance hall under it, cause that was the early history, the early, anything known

about the mountain, that's, I've heard about the Indians and I think the Indians long before they were sent west did occupy a portion in and around that mountain. The Venables accumulated the mountain in the earlier 1870s from the southern granite company they traded a quarry, a rock quarry at Lithonia known as Big Ledge now Davidson Granite Company or Southern Granite Company I believe owns it now. And paid 40,000 dollars in the trade over a period of years, that's how the mountain came into their possession."

Interviewer: "How do you feel about what they've done with it? Are you reasonably well satisfied?"

Venable: "Well, I'm not satisfied with the monument, Bulgrom is the only person that could have finished that mountain, it's a disgrace but the public don't know it. It's a roman horse, he's cut his legs off at his knees, it's not a traveler. Bulgrom's monument was a real traveler, the horse was. It is a disgrace to our society, but the public don't understand it, it thinks a great monument there. Bulgrom's monument would have been an everlasting attraction to the world. He was bonded on his horse; he had a real traveler horse, Bulgrom's monument, and his sketches. It would have been a thing that would have attracted the world had he been left alone and aloud to finish the monument there."

Interviewer: "How about telling us some of the most famous crimes or criminal trials you can remember, not necessarily just in DeKalb, but let's start in DeKalb."

Venable: "In DeKalb County, probably the famous trial, I mean they're several of them, one of them was the boy that kidnapped and buried this Michael girl there, Gary Chris, I defended him. And I defended a black man that killed Mr. Henry Heinz, a gentleman that married Mr. Asa G. Candler's daughter Mrs. Owens that lived at Briarcliff and Ponce De Leon, there. Laylock went in there late on Sunday night to rob and kill and steal and killed Mr. Heinz he was arrested shortly thereafter and signed a confession and tried him over here [unintelligible] they had to slate the jurors in the courthouse, we couldn't get facilities for them, I've tired that, it was a hard case, tried it about a week and was successful in saving his life.

Then I defended the Black Muslims in Louisiana they had trouble with the police, the police interfered and invaded their church or temple, that was a terrible and a bad case, that was one of the hardest cases."

Interviewer: "A lawyer that had hired you then had said that you did not have any bias in the courthouse that you would defend anybody that you felt had a cause of action or a right."

Venable: "I have, I've defended, and half of my clients are black people there. I defended the communist homer chase in Atlanta when it was unpopular. When judge duke was prosecuting him I was successful in keeping him out of trouble. I defended, Indians, I've defended communists, black people, people of all nationalities; I hold no ill will against any race, nationality or creed."

Interviewer: "What do you think about our court system? Do you think it works pretty well?"

Venable: "Well our system works pretty good but we'll never be able to get justice in our country unless we and I've been advocating educating our jurors. I have requested that we make it mandatory, pass a law that every juror that sits in a case have four hours per month twelve months go through all types of mock trials and let him or her understand and ask questions where they can fully know how they can protect life liberty and the property rights of human beings. Until we can do that I've got very little faith in our jury system in this great country."

Interviewer: "Is that because you have seen juries coming in with verdicts that were well intentioned but wrong?"

Venable: "Yes sir that is one reason, the jurors, and it's no walk of society that you don't have to have expansion, secretaries, typists, brick mason, carpenter; people of all white life have to have some expansion, some teaching and some education in the field in which they are called on to administer justice and I say it's mandatory that we do that so we give people their rights in court."

Interviewer: "You mentioned another famous matter that you knew about, and that was that temple bombing, back there, what connection did you have to that trial?"

Venable: "I defended those boys when they was indicted there, placed George Bright on trial there and had a mistrial in that case, 75 acquittal. That was perhaps one of the hardest cases because the Jewish people spent many thousands of dollars and the news media tried them weeks after weeks after that thing, it was very a hard case, and I was very successful in getting my mistrial."

Interviewer: "They didn't prosecute it beyond that point did they?"

Venable: "Ye they prosecuted, we tried it a second time, but in the mean time, Rue Gollen went down and solicited the case and got this bog in the trial in the case and the third day of the case he tried to get me to participate back in with him and I failed and refused to do so."

Interviewer: "Tell me how old are you now?"

Venable: "I am 77 years old, I'll be 78 January the fifteenth. It's coincident that my birthday is the same as Luther-King and I'm probably in the opposite direction of his thinking."

Interviewer: "Now here I'd like you to comment here, in your age, what do see happening, what trends do you see happening that you think are good and what trends do you think are bad?"

Venable: "Well, our county, I hate to say it and I hate to see it, our country is in bad shape because the morals of our country have failed us, and the religious field has failed us and when those things fail usually the nation usually falls. The United Nations I say, and I'm against it, I think we should get out of the United Nations and the United Nations should get out of this country. It incubates for socialism, communism and it is advocating one world government, it is on the trend for that, and we've adopted three steps in the direction of one world government. We've adopted the metric system, we've adopted the liter system, and I was raised on pints quarts and gallons, the metric system, I mean I know something about the metric system, but the average person don't know anything of that nature of the measurements and I'm against those things."

Interviewer: "Well it's not making much head way as a matter of fact."

Venable: "Well no it hasn't made too much headway, there. Although the one thing that the United Nation has sponsored, 83 countries have adopted Genocide's treaty of a convent which prohibits me if I live in Canada or 82 of the other countries of saying anything detrimental against any race, color or creed by [unintelligible] and I'm against that, I think freedom of speech should always be available, I make a lot of mistakes in criticism sometimes, it makes all of us correct obviously."

Interviewer: "Back on the subject of the Klan, I know that much of the Benson jurisdictional fights and so forth and people disputing who is the leader of the Klan. Do it's well to find out?"

Venable: "Well the Klan today there are about 4 major groups and about 42 smaller groups in the United States. I've been in the Klan since 1924 when we had presidents, governors, mayors, senators people of all walks of life. we reached the stage of approximately nine million we dominated this country politically. During the Alfred smith and Herbert Hoover race the Klan was so powerful we were successful in electing the republican president, Herbert Hoover, because Catholics had always fought the Klan. In order to be Klansman or a Klanslady you had to be a native born white of the Christian faith and owe no allegiance to any foreign country or subject here. I have had the opportunity to be a mason, an odd fellows and other secret fraternities and there is no ogr that I know of America today that the degree work I more deeper and more in the religious field than that of a Klansman. You never become a Klanslady or a Klansman until you take the third degree and it takes about ten and a half hours to confer and about 40,000 dollars worth of paraphernalia. It's much deeper than I have ever witnessed in the Masonic lodge. We've got one degree, the Knights of the Flaming Sword, it takes 23 and a half hours to confer it there. These people running over the country say they know anything about the Klan, a Klansman, the key you know it's a two hour initiation, but really you never become a Klansman till you complete the third degree, the knights of the great forest, named after Nathan Bedford Forest, who was the first Imperial Wizard, and his son was the Grand Dragon of Georgia, lived out there on forest avenue, and black people have been successful in changing that name of that street after Ralph McGill there. He lived the third house, on Forest Avenue. I went to school with Nathan the third

he finished military college at WestPoint he died in 1946 I was acquainted with his father, who was the grandfather of Georgia and the son of General Nathan Bedford forest. Perhaps the bravest general, he and Stonewall Jackson, he had 29 horses, shot for money Nathan Bedford Forest, history doesn't recall these facts."

Interviewer: "Well now I want to talk to you about some of the most vivid personalities you have known and while we're on this topic, Tom Watson is probably the most colorful politician that has lived in this century, what do you think about --"

Venable: "I would say, I would say I would classify him if I have to, the greatest during our century."

Interviewer: "And you got to hear him speak in Decatur?"

Venable: "Yea I remember when I was a young boy Thomas Watson there he published a Watsonian paper that people would knock you down to get one of them, all what we call the salt of the earth was prescribed as his paper."

Interviewer: "But you were too young to have been around during the Lile Frank Case, weren't you?"

Venable: "Yep, I was too young I remember and read a great deal about it and have used the decision now sometime in court."

Interviewer: "Now, tell us about some other vivid personalities that you associate with DeKalb County in particular. Talk about H. G. Candler, you knew him."

Venable: "Well, I lived for many years next door to Mr. H.G. Candler, they lived in a Candler home they built there The Venable home was next door I knew him real good. He lived there alone for many years except this chauffeur the his daughter Mrs. Owens who married an Owens she lived with him after she separated from her husband and then she married Henry Heinz he was killed by a negro that I defended over here in DeKalb county courthouse in world war two where we had to sleep the jury in the courthouse cause of lack of facilities."

Interviewer: "Can you describe his personality?"

I used to go over close the fence, I hadn't talked to him as a young boy there, I can see him today, he wore, always dressed up, immaculate. He had a Chauffeur named Bill. I can hear him now hollering [in falsetto] "Come on Bill!" [Chuckles]"

Interviewer: "What about Rebecca Feltons, she was before your time, wasn't she?"

Venable: "Well, I knew her, that's all but I was a young boy there I didn't know too much about her."

Interviewer: "I'd like to go back, you mentioned the failure of the religious field, what do you think has happened, how has the church changed since you were a boy?"

Venable: "Well I'd like to say this in reference I know we've got some good ministers but our society has brought it around a minister is almost prohibited, he'd lose his job or be kicked out if his church if he taught from the holy writ there. Very few of them teach from the holy writ. I have recognized and I have used the Bible a great deal, some quotations in trial cases there. It is the law of all laws and the book of all books. Today I am ashamed of it from all of our country that have long had white people holy writ it condemns a man with long hair, it commends a woman. It condemns a woman for wearing any part of a man's wearing apparel And then further over in the holy writ it condemns these gays as if we have so much trouble in this country over today and society is faced with. In the 20th chapter of Leviticus I think it condemns man lying with a man there. But the ministers don't seem to teach from the holy writ as it is written, and that is foolin' around. Then another thing, our young society our government is brought around our change, of the old what we call the old Uncle Tom's, the black people refer to these old that won't accept the civil rights law as it is written because our government has brought it around by taxing us to death and a man's wife is forced to go out into the field and seek employment and the children are left at home and not properly supervised over, that's what we're facing in this country.

Then another bad element that is hid in all of our societies is this drug, I have never seen as many cases of drug all over the nation. I had a first case in 1934 a boy named Howard Curtis in Fulton county, married had a family, and got to smoking cigarettes called 'mugglers', they come from new Orleans, twenty five cents a cigarette, nothing but marijuana he got hopped up on those things got jealous of that girl called out at a café out there on Bankhead Highway and tried to hall out tried to kill himself. I used Doctor Orlen [?] to get on, to be one of the, he went to school with will Rogers, doctor Orlen lived at a Georgian terrace, had this big cemetery at Stone Mountain, he said he first come into contact with Marijuana in world war one, he told the effect of this drug on this boy and said he had the mentality of an eleven or twelve year old child and was able, three trials led to one with the chair, last time that tried him he stayed out the jury there 23 hours and gave life. That was the first case on eleven states in the United States to have a statch[?] in Georgia and ten others. Shortly thereafter some famous aviator killed a multi millionaire hopped up on it and my ended it and all of the states.

This drug is in every school it's in your army; the government turns loose thousands upon thousands of young Vietnam soldiers, black and white, eyes at the back [unintelligible], no institution. It's the worst thing that's hit our country and the Russians brag about taking this country with our finest shot. They've got us drugged to death in this country and society must do something to prohibit. It's in all of our classes, in all of our schools, in all branches of our government, some of our people addicted over drugs, it's a terrible thing and we've got to do something about it."

Interviewer: "Do you imagine the decline in morals as you were concerned about, you touched on some of it there, but you might elaborate on that, do you think we get too greedy, or what?"

Venable: "Well, I am from the old school I probably is narrow minded. My grandmother wore her dresses down to her shoe top. And if we'd ever seen a woman with paint and powder or smoking the cigarettes, she would have been classified as a prostitute during my days there. It hurts me to see our white ladies and even black ones and black men and white men running along the streets with the shorts on, almost if it happened at forty years, forty, fifty years ago, they'da been taken down for public indecency. IT is a disgrace to see our society as it is now dressed on many of our streets all over this country there, I'm against it, we've got to do something about it."

Interviewer: "How do you feel about gambling in our society?"

Venable: "Well, gambling is a bad field. I'm against it. I've never gambled in my life, I've never touched a drop of liquor in my life, beer or wine, I've never smoked a cigarette. I am not a fanatic. Reason I never smoked a cigarette is country people said cigarettes would give you consumption that was TB, I never heard it called until I was twelve, fifteen years old, they called it consumption, there's no cure for it, that scared me to death, the reason I never touched one, and I saw whiskey, my old family, relatives and friends make a fool out of them, so I never touched a drop of it, wine or beer in my life."

Interviewer: "Will you talk to us about some of the judges that you dealt with when you first started practicing law here in DeKalb County."

Venable: "Well Judge John B Hutchison was one of the first judges I remember trying a case, he's from Jonesburg, Georgia. He couldn't drive an automobile, he used to ride the train up to Atlanta and then some of the lawyers would pick him up in a T Model Ford there. Then Judge James C. Davis was one of our judges here for a long time there. And a lot of, ED Thomas, Judge Pulmeroy [?], oh in Fulton county I knew all of them, Judge Berlin More there I tried him there."

Interviewer: "Give us your recollections of Roy Leathers, he was Solicitor General when I found out [unintelligible]."

Venable: "Roy Leathers was prosecutor here he was a lawyer; I believe Leathers and Verna, or Verna and Leathers. John Verna and Roy started practicing law and then he was elected solicitor. He made a good solicitor. Roy fought hard, he went to night school and studied law, I think he was, first he told me he used to drove a milk truck and he saw went on Washington Street in Atlanta, knocked at the door there to collect the bill and the lawyer man come out and told him to come around the back and that turned him and he decided to be a lawyer and he made a good solicitor."

Interviewer: "What about any recollections about William Sly Howard Sr.?"

Venable: "Mr. Howard was, perhaps one of the finest criminal lawyers. The devil lived in Georgia there. I watched him when I was a young boy, he used to come down to fish in the Venable lake, I knew him all my life, I don't think there's ever been a man equal to him since, he was the old time, he was a great orator, he knew how to hand people, he

can talk to simple ever day language to a jury and he was very successful in his law practice.”

Interviewer: “What about Gene Talbots, did you know him well?”

Venable: “Yea, I knew Mr. Talbots real good; I’ve been to his home, when he built his new home there, knew his son Herman, I been associated with him in several cases when he was a young lawyer. He was great orator and he was a great statesman.”

Interviewer: “Did you ever know any real Native Indians in this county?”

Venable: “No, I never did know any Native Indians in this county.”

Interviewer: “Have you represented Indians?”

Venable: “I represent the Creek Indianans east of the Mississippi; they got a reservation in Caro, Georgia. Neil McCormick and Peggy McCormick, they play gospel music, the most beautiful gospel music I’ve ever heard, they played in Nashville, Tennessee for fourteen years and all over the country there.”

Interviewer: “Thinking back about the Europeans came in here and dealt with the Indians, in retrospect do you have any opinions about that?”

Venable: “Well I think it was s sad thing that we had to take the country and push the Indians west, they been mistreated, and I am very sympathetic with them knowing that it was their country and we come over here and pushed them west out there and just taking all of their land and pushed them and many of them died during that bloody struggle, that war between the natives and the colonies, here.”

Interviewer: “Now I’d like you to describe the DeKalb County of your boyhood, what, it certainly wasn’t anything like it is today.”

Venable: “No, it was thinly populated when I was born; I was born at Lithonia, Georgia there. We didn’t have but one paved road. I remember when they made a million dollar bond issue to put Ponce De Leon from Decatur to Stone Mountain they had some money left over there that road Ponce de Leon Avenue, when they paved that. I remember R. LTY Nash he lived over round a chapel in Lithonia country fellow I used to ride in a buggy and horse with him when I was a child out to Lithonia there, I knew him. Our county, I remember when Covington Road was just a dirt road you’d get stuck if you had a T Model, down about Snap Finger creek, you couldn’t travel a lot, we didn’t have any paved roads.

Thinly populated, I remember when this old court house burned down as a young boy there, the building there burnt they built a new one over there.”

Interviewer: "The news reports say they believe that that was burned by the crowd that got beat on that particular day."

Venable: "Well I heard it, and I believe it was burned deliberately burnt by some people of various political factions, there were two there, defeated one faction."

Interviewer: "Did you ever go up to Camp Gordon during World War One?"

Venable: "Yea I went up there as young boy out of high school trying to get a job."

Interviewer: "Describe it."

Venable: "DeKalb water; they had hundreds of cotters [?] there paying water boys to carry water round in a tin bucket there for seven dollars a day. I tried to get one, but I failed and didn't get it."

Interviewer: "Describe what was actually up there."

Venable: "Well there was wooden buildings up there for army barracks, and everything up there, it was a big movement there they had hundreds of people working there, some work day and night to get the thing our army off the ground and trained."

Interviewer: "You know our historical society reckons to say Sergeant York trained there."

Venable: "Yeah I've heard it that York did train up there, I remember when they gave him all the publicity many years ago."

Interviewer: "Now I want you to talk a little bit about state government. You've seen that change a great deal."

Venable: "Yeah, I've seen our state government change."

Interviewer: "You think it's gotten too big, too?"

Venable: "It's gotten too big, our whole government system, all over our country is over crowded, even my educational field, I remember when they ran this county with a superintendent and two women, Mr. Rainy I guess you remember him, now they got two big office buildings, a hundred, we over loaded with worthless employees all over our government. State, County and cities, and we've got to do something about it. It's got too big to choose, and we got to do and our government the United States government that the thing where every walk of society must bring some pressure on the congress and senate of the United States to do something about our indebtedness. Lack laws in DeKalb County, and you know it, probably seventy percent of our taxes go for our educational field, retired moms for their educational field, about 25 percent is sued for the public use. I have to commend the Catholics, they have their own schools, they pay taxes toward the

schools and if we did it we'd be growling about it, I have to commend them. Unless we do something to curb our powers in our government, our public officials, president of the united states by executive order can give away a million ten million dollars, we are doing too much for the other world, we today owe trillions and trillions of dollars we give to foreign countries in the last ten years that figures almost impossible to write we owe trillions and trillions of dollars, and we more money our government does, and we're printing useless certificates everyday that you and I, I'm trying to get to figure to see what our government owes in interest and principal and [unintelligible] and take the population and see by the population of what we owe in interest and debts today that each child two days old or two hours old woes ten to fifteen or twenty million dollars. How we gonna live and exist in that situation in this country. The congress has gone crazy the government has gone crazy there, squandering money. I remember when you could buy three pounds of ground coffee for a quarter, five pound of sugar, two pounds of round steak for a quart, nickel loaf of bread, and look what you pay for it today. I work for three people, taxes, insurance companies and grocers and I'm sick and tire d of it. Taxes I my main take away in this country."

Interviewer: "Do you have any views about the high interest rates we pay now? Younger person can't really get going in business anymore."

Venable: "No society can live under ten percent. Here you got fifteen to 20 percent, a young couple can't pay six or seven hundred dollars for a house and a car, and they can't buy one."

Interviewer: "The banker say that they are charging such high prices cause they are fighting inflation, do you believe that?"

Venable: "No I don't believe that. The world bankers, the international every president you'll have to commend the Jewish people they're dominating and in control of world money there. Every president elected he has full power of the cabinet because they are in position to loan money to our nation there."

Interviewer: "You know when I was in legislature there was a legal ceiling on interest."

Venable: "Yes I remember that."

Interviewer: "Don't you think there ought to be a cap put on interest, by law?"

Venable: "I certainly agree with you they ought to put it and it ought to stay there, a poor person, all of us have to borrow money sometime. And interest, it ought to stay at 9 cent to the dime. I'm in favor of putting a cap on it."

Interviewer: "Now you have a reputation of being generous with your legal services, I want to ask you to asses our legal system now in term so of the poor person, do you feel a poor person can get justice in this legal system?"

Venable: "I don't feel that our poor people can get legal service or legal justice in our system as it now exists."

Interviewer: "What can we do about that?"

Venable: "As I said, the first problem that we face in this country is the jury system, selecting jurors that are not qualified, as I said they ought to have that training, that education. And I know we got legal help for these unfortunate people but most of them are young lawyers and most of them leave the defendant up in front of the court for a trade, and trade 'em off there. I watch them a great deal, and many of these poor devils are innocent and maybe many of them guilty, I don't think they take the time to give him or her that day in court."

Interviewer: "Would you be willing to give up that jury system to the extent they have in England in which the judge is passing on taxes as well as law?"

Venable: "Well I would myself, yes."

Interviewer: "You think we'd get better results?"

Venable: "I think we'd get better results, yes."

Interviewer: "Alright let's talk about the selection of judges, I been disappointed to see the newspaper criticize the result of the supreme court race in which Richard Bell and Jack Dorcy came out on top they talk like the voters don't know how to pick candidates I don't know of any other scheme that I would favor and I want to know if you would be in willing to getting away from the election of judges."

Venable: "Well I think all public officials should be elected by the ballot box and what hurts me, that our white people, this nation of ours state and our candidate the negroes have learned the black people have learned two things, they have learned the ballot box and the boycott. I looked out my window in front of the court house for 42 years in Atlanta. 1959 the national election arrived Fulton county court house four or five thousand black people four blocks around that court house 40 lines and 150 whites, I knew we's gone, our white people won't register to vote cause black people have learned to register to vote and we've got to exercise that or else our country is going to be dominated by the inferior race of black people."

Interviewer: "I want to thank you for this interview you've got two minutes, and you'll be talking to young people maybe twenty years from now who will be looking a this tape Jimmy, have you got any final advice or comment you would like to make to the young people who are moving out into the world?"

Venable: "I would like to say this to the young people of the world today that you better do something to help your government, you better advocate or use the ballot box as I have aforementioned because that is your own salvation. The people of our nation and the

people that are qualified wont get into to politics. The public of our nation will not select a person at the ballot box that is qualified. They usually on e is more popular, one can speak the most beautiful English, one has the most money, one occupies the biggest political job he or she is elected instead of someone qualified. And my advice is for all young people to use the ballot box to vote and register from dog catcher on up else we're going to lose our way of life in this great country."

Interviewer: "Well I certainly do thank you and thank you Howard Worthy for this tape."