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B.H. Bur	Jed Priscilla P. Johansen
Interviewee	Director Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin
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Franklin County, MS.	
Subject of	Tape(s)

Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library Oral History Data Sheet

FULL NAME Charles H. Buckels	DUOUR 022 1000
ADDRESS Lucien, MS	PHONE 833-1890
BIRTHPLACE Lucien, MS	DATE OF BIRTH OCCOBER 31, 1883
EDUCATION Eighth grade	
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OCCUPATION Farmer; Railroad hand; She	epherder
TRAVEIC Louisiana: Tennessee: Texas	
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SPOUSE'S FULL NAME Catherine Viola Calcote	Buckels
BIRTHPLACE Vonnolia MS	DATE OF BIRTH January 2, 1886
OCCUPATION Housewife	to the state of th
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NUMBER OF CHILDREN Six (6)	
NAMES OF CHILDREN	
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Georgia Buckels	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Barney Buckels	
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FATHER'S FULL NAME Charles Pinkney Buckels	- DATE OF BIRTH 1849
BIRTHPLACE Black River, MS	
OCCUPATION Farmer	The state of the s
OCCUPATION Farmer MOTHER'S FULL NAME Louvenia Cruise	DATE OF BIRTH 19/0
BIRTHPLACE Amite County, MS	DATE OF BINIE 1049
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INTERVIEWER

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INTERVIEWEE'S NAME

An Interview with

Charles H. Buckels April 9, 1977

Interviewed by Austin D. Bowlin

Mississippi
Department of Archives and History
and the
Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History Project
Meadville and Vicinity

BOWLIN: What is your full name?

BUCKELS: Charles H. Buckels, but there is a "Coot" in there.

BOWLIN: And what year was you born in?

BUCKLES: I was born in 1883. The last day of Halloween, October. §
I was a Halloween baby.

BOWLIN: When was your wife born and what was her name first?

BUCKELS: Her name was Catherine Viola Calcote Buckels.

BOWLIN: And when was she born?

BUCKELS: 1886 - the second day of January.

BOWLIN: And where was she born?

BUCKELS: It was up here. Her post office I think at that time

was at Kennolia. I am not sure.

BOWLIN: Kennolia?

BUCKELS: Yes, she lived up here. We were raised here in five (5) miles of each other and had to be introduced to one another when I got ready to go to seeing her. You see, I was over across the creek; I lived over there and went to school back this away. She lived up there about five (5) miles from here and went to school and associated with the people back that away. When I got ready to go to see her, after seeing her I wanted to get acquainted with her. I went up to old man Red Tom Lofton's. Irvin and Will, you know, is down there in the nursing home. Will is two (2) years older than I am. Me and Irvin was born the same year. Papa

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had sent me to Brookhaven - it was the spring of the year - to get a load of fertilizer. He had tenants he was going to share-crop with and he was getting them some fertilizer and a little groceries, I believe, to start them off with. She was going to school at Kennolia. What's that church's name up there?

BOWLIN: That's all right. How many children do you have?

BUCKELS: Six (6).

BOWLIN: Six (6). And what was their names?

BUCKELS: Well, Ethel is the oldest, Charlie next.

BOWLIN: Miss Ethel: now when was she born?

BUCKELS: She was born in 1903 in July. 2

BOWLIN: When was...

BUCKELS: Charlie next in 1905.3

BOWLIN: Now, what was the next one's name?

BUCKELS: Next one is Vencie.

BOWLIN: When was she born?

BUCKELS: She was born in 1907.4

BOWLIN: Who was the next one?

BUCKELS: Georgia, 1909.

BOWLIN: Is that all of them?

BUCKELS: No.

BOWLIN: All right.

BUCKELS: Then there was Barney and then Winnie. Winnie is the

baby.

BOWLIN: When was Barney born?

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BUCKELS: Barney was born in 1912. Georgia came in there in 1909.

Winnie was born in 1914.

BOWLIN: Now, were they all born in the same community?

BUCKELS: Yes. All were born here in the McCall district then.

It was afterwards, Lucien come in, you know, after the railroad came through.

BOWLIN: Your father's full name?

BUCKELS: Charles Pinkney Buckels.

BOWLIN: And when was he born?

BUCKELS: What date we got there?

BOWLIN: 1849.

BUCKELS: 1849.

BOWLIN: And where was he born?

BUCKELS: What?

BOWLIN: Where was he born?

BUCKELS: He was born up on Big Black.

BOWLIN: Big Black River?

BUCKELS: Yes.

BOWLIN: Is that in Mississippi?

BUCKELS: Yes, on a big plantation that a merchant had in Natchez by the name of Earhart.

BOWLIN: And what was his occupation?

BUCKELS: What?

BOWLIN: What was his occupation?

BUCKELS: You mean whose occupation?

BOWLIN: Your father's. What did he do?

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BUCKELS: Well, after he got grown, he went and helped settle his Grandpa Herring's Negroes up there for three (3) years when he was seventeen (17). Then he met Ma about when he was twenty (20) or twenty-one (21) (something like that) and got married. He came back over here where Calcote lived to oversee for him; the overseer was out. When Calcote died, Grandpa they said had done bought a little land from him and when he died, Judge Magee was his administrator, and Grandpa bought, well, he had five hundred (500) and some odd acres of that land.

BOWLIN: All right now, when was your mother born?

BUCKELS: When was she born? We would have to catch it like we did...

BOWLIN: Was it 1847?

BUCKELS: Yes, that must be about right, anyhow.

BOWLIN: And where was she born?

BUCKELS: She was born down in Amite County; I can't tell.

BOWLIN: What town was it close to?

BUCKELS: It was close to Mt. Zion Church, in that community.

BOWLIN: In Amite County?

BUCKELS: Yes. She was a Cruise, you know. Do you know where old Bill Cruise used to live? Well, it was right back in that community. I think, I ain't certain, but I think Grandpa Cruise is buried at Mt. Zion. I was about six (6) years old, I believe, when he got killed.

BOWLIN: Now, when you grew up, Mr. Coot, when you started growing up, what was your first occupation? What kind of work did you do?

BUCKELS: Well, I started farming. After a few years, I got married in 1902 and I was farming then. My daddy gave me eighty (80)

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acres of land. Old man Lee Parker, he employed me in 1906. I bought sheep all over these counties here. Well, he had another representative from up above Union Church that bought sheep back that way and I went this way south into all these counties. I was due to have gone into Walthall down there when I quit. I had bought every herd of sheep that could be found back in this country and all through Amite County and I found a good bit, big lot of sheep down in those woods, down in there towards well, the other side of Tylertown and all back in there. I drove them on dirt roads to Natchez until 1909. On account of one of my children's health, I had to quit and stay at home. They were about to take her to Natchez to have her operated on. They, Dr. Butler and Dr. Hudson, said it was the only chance. Well, I had always and my daddy did for bad and extreme cases in my family had old Dr. John P. Butler from Brookhaven. Well, this Dr. Dodds and Dr. Butram and Dr. Hudson were all right until somebody had to have something done, Papa thought, and then he would get old Dr. John Butler. Well, in 1909 it was in September. I quit him because Vencie had sucked some watermelon seed in her windpipe and they were giving her so much trouble. She was having pneumonia one time after another in a few weeks and I just told Mr. Lee I would have to go home and see about my family.

BOWLIN: Why was you buying those sheep? How many sheep did you have to buy before you could drive them to Natchez?

BUCKELS: He never wanted us to start with less than about a hundred and fifteen (115) head and from that up to a hundred and fifty (150) head to drive.

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BOWLIN: How many of you went along to drive those sheep?

BUCKELS: Well, the first bunch that we found out in here to buy, old man Lee came himself. He had gotten contracts from these breweries up north there, up in the mountains and places. They had that brewery grain and they did not know what to do with it. They came upon the idea that they could get sheep on those mountains and places and run them in there and feed them that brewer's grain. Old man Lee got the contract from the breweries up there to furnish them sheep and he put me out at it. How come him to? Now, back in those days you had to pay taxes on all over twenty (20) head of sheep you had. I think goats were under the same law, I'm not certain, but sheep were. If you had over twenty (20) head, you had to have them assessed. You could go to the court house and you could look over the rolls and see who had sheep. I think he did have about two hundred (200) head. But anyhow, I had minded sheep for him from the time I got up any size. My mother could shear more sheep than any man we could hire.

BOWLIN: You all would shear the sheep before you drove them to Natchez?

BUCKELS: No. When we bought the sheep, they belonged to Lee Parker.

BOWLIN: I see.

BUCKELS: There wasn't but one time we had any trouble. If you remember the railroad the other side of Leesdale, the dirt road went across here and up there about a couple of hundred yards it crossed it again. The road on down further had a bridge and the road went under the railroad.

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Well, we were going with that bunch. We crossed both of these places here and here comes an old freight train steam a-flying and scared those sheep to death. They just piled over us. They killed six (6). When they got to the crossing up there they went to jumping, but the train ran in between part of the bunch and the other bunch got across and there wasn't but just six (6) head killed.

BOWLIN: You were lucky.

BUCKELS: What?

BOWLIN: You were lucky.

BUCKELS: Yes, I reckon. None of them were badly torn up. You could get plenty of good meat out of every one of them. He told me to dress them and send them express. Sent two (2) of them to Passback - I mean half, three (3) of them to Passback, and the other three (3) here to my market. He had made arrangement with Passback to pick some up.

BOWLIN: Now, when you got those sheep to Natchez, how were they carried out of there?

BUCKELS: What?

BOWLIN: How were the sheep carried out of Natchez after you got them to Natchez?

BUCKELS: Carried out of there?

BOWLIN: Yes.

BUCKELS: You drove them there, if he was ready to send a boatload. If he wasn't, you drove them to old man Nat Ratcliff who owned the old Abe Buckels place. There used to be a pond they called the Buckels Pond.

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They found so many folks after the war was over there, bodies in that pond, until they went to calling it the "Eleventon Pond." You might have heard of it as the "Eleventon Pond." That was Abe Buckels' place. I drove sheep the old road, just where — well, the new road doesn't go by it — and we watered our sheep at the old Abe Buckels pond. Nat Ratcliff, back there next to where the railroad and everything else goes now, just after you passed over St. Catherine, owned a big pasture over there where all them mills and paper mills and things are now. We would bunch them in there until we got a boatload. We would send about five hundred (500) head on a boat.

BOWLIN: Five hundred (500) head on a boat?

BUCKELS: Yes.

BOWLIN: Now, did they all go all the way by boat to their destination?

BUCKELS: The boat went to a certain town up there and they would be unloaded there. He had his crew up there to get them to the different men he billed them to. I mean you shipped them up there to his man. He would change men sometimes. He did the billing of them out, not me. All I had to do was to get them down there to the boat and get them loaded. They went up the river, some to St. Louis, but mostly up in the mountains, up in Kentucky and places like that. They had places he was delivering them to these folks, big brewers. You know, they were the folks that had the money in those days.

BOWLIN: Yes.

BUCKELS: He was delivering them to them and they had these mountain

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ranges and they would get them up there and turn them loose. They would go to feeding them that grain and they would come for it.

BOWLIN: What was the price at that time?

BUCKELS: Well, the most I think I ever paid for a prize bunch of sheep - and old man Parker told me when I got over there with them, "Boy, where in the world did you get them sheep? Them are the finest sheep I ever seen in a hill country," - I paid three (3) dollars for them.

BOWLIN: Three (3) dollars a head?

BUCKELS: What?

BOWLIN: Three (3) dollars a head?

BUCKELS: Yes, they were. The breed was Shropshire sheep. They had a black head and nose and the markings were a little bit different from Southdown. Now, old man Lee Bowlin down there and Willie Cain, they had the Southdown. They were a kind of a tan bodied sheep. You might have seen them.

BOWLIN: I have seen them.

BUCKELS: Yes, well, those Shropshire sheep, there was one man that lived about three (3) miles down from - what do you call it? Liberty, about three (3) miles down the Gloster Road there. A fellow by the name of Dixon. I rode into Liberty and went to the County Clerk and looked to see who all had sheep and where all they were situated. Both of these fellows that had these sheep, one of them was the other one's uncle and both of them were named Charlie Dixon. The first one, the young Charlie, was a nephew of the other Charlie. I do not remember exactly how many head I got from him. I don't think I got but about thirty (30) head, but I wanted to see his uncle. He said his uncle had over a hundred (100) head of them.

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I got sixty (60) head there. Then there was a big old man that lived down there. His name was Webb Jones. We had another Webb Jones up here too, but this old man Webb Jones would have weighed three hundred (300) pounds, I reckon. He didn't have that kind of sheep, but I got, I finished a load there, ready to drive them. I bought sheep all the way from a dollar and a quarter (\$1.25) to a third - some small sheep and runts they wanted to let go and things and all the way up from a dollar and a quarter (\$1.25) a head to three (3) dollars. That was the most I ever paid for any sheep.

BOWLIN: Now, when you got a drove of sheep up together to drive to Natchez, how many men did it take to drive those sheep to Natchez?

BUCKELS: That was owing to what you knew about handling sheep. I had handled sheep from a boy on up until I was grown. Now, when he bought that sixty (60) head of sheep from my daddy, he hadn't had any sheep drove from back in this county. He had been buying back in there, but now he was going out into broad business he told my daddy. Now, my daddy had me to go and get them sheep up. That was as far as I was going with it. I got the sheep up and he looked them over and I went on up to my house. I hadn't had dinner. He bought the sheep and he said, "How am I going to get these sheep to Natchez? It will be a long haul and I want to have more sheep in a drove to drive that far." He had bought some down there from the Coxes. They lived right where back in there right where F. G. Smith's widow lives.

BOWLIN: Mrs. Farmer?

BUCKELS: Who?

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BOWLIN: Mrs. Farmer.

BUCKELS: Farmer - yes, Vera. That's it. Well, he had enough to finish me a drive there and he asked my daddy, "Now, how am I going to get them away from here? I may have to have a big team. I'd like to have a full load." And he got sixty (60) head of these and the ones we were going to pick the others up down at the Cox place next to the river. He asked my daddy if there was anybody that he knew of that had ever handled sheep enough to make a drive of that kind; "Do you know anybody I could get?" Pa told him, he said, "If that boy of mine up there can't drive them, they won't never be driven anywhere. He has been handling my sheep and Judge Magee's sheep and old man Zack Butler's." He was down there where August Laird and them lived. They had a big bunch and they would come up and get together with ours. He says, "If that boy of mine can't drive them, they can't be driven." He came up there to see me and asked me about it. I said, "Well, they are your sheep now. You bought them and maybe you had better send your herdsman out here and I'll go with him to carry them." Well, Papa had a big peach orchard place and an apple orchard and then fenced in around there. He said he could send a man up there that night and drive tomorrow. Well, I was giving them the right-of-way and well, let's turn them out and let them go. I told him, I says, "Now if it was me, I wouldn't turn these sheep out until I got a man to run them around until they were so hot until they wouldn't run off." Some of them might run half a quarter and some just get sort of away from me, but they will stop when they get to where they can hardly run anymore or get a good breath. We drove them down to McCall's Creek. You know sheep, they do

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not go in the water. You can't drive them in there. You can drag him in there, but you can't drive him. He was the boss, you know. I told the Negro boys we had there, I said, "You all come and go with us to where we crossed the creek down here." When we got down to the creek of course the sheep run up and down and he finally began to yell, "Run, run," and the sheep went to going this way and sheep went to going that way. They did not go in the water, so we had to get them back up there and get them together again. It was old man Alfred Field. I said, "Look, Mr. Fields, let me manage this crossing of this creek with these sheep." I said, "We can get them back there but you can't get them in the water unless you drag them in." "Well," he said, "how are you going to do it?" I told him to keep those boys there and don't let the sheep scatter until I get into the creek. I rode by the head of the bunch and picked one out and put a rope over its head. I told those boys, I said, "Now, whenever I rope one and get it in the creek, then you holler 'sheep' and start to run." They didn't hardly have to do it. When I jerked that one in, they liked to have drowned it before I could get it up.

BOWLIN: Was the idea to get one of them and the rest would follow?

BUCKELS: Yes. Whenever one goes the rest will go. I jerked one
in there. We had to go across the Homochitto River - no bridges, you know.

We got down there and got the Cox sheep in with the bunch. I had got
Abe Buckels to get on one of his mules and one of our mules and go with
us until we got to the Homochitto River and then he could come on back.

Well, we got there and got the sheep in a lot and all bunched together.
I started and I told Mr. Fields, "Now, I ain't figuring on letting these

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sheep stop." I said, "I am going to pitch a rope on one and you all drive them up to the creek and I will have it in there and going and they'll follow." That's the way we put it. Abe went with us to the Homochitto River and we made it all right from there on. Of course, when you got down there around Roxie and Natchez, most of the streams had bridges back in there.

BOWLIN: Did you make that drive all in one day?

BUCKELS: What?

BOWLIN: Did you ever make that drive all in one day?

BUCKELS: No, sir. If we were starting here, we could make it in two (2) days. If we were fifteen (15) or twenty (20) miles from here with a bunch and had to come through here, we would take three (3) days.

BOWLIN: Where would you spend the night?

BUCKELS: Well, at old man Jim Whitehead's generally, down there about Roxie. That was Mack Whitehead's daddy. I said Jim Whitehead; I meant John Whitehead. Mack was just a yearling boy at that time. You knew Mack, didn't you? He was a big cattle shipper, but this was before that. He was about fifteen (15) years old. I had a few sheep in that bunch that had got sore and give out so bad that they were going to be too badly in the way. I would like to sell them, so I'd talked to old man Fields about it. He told me to be the boss, just give an account to them. Mack wanted fifteen (15) head; wanted more than that if I could let him have them. I told him they didn't belong to me. I could just possibly get leave to sell these that had got sore and couldn't travel. That was just before we crossed the railroad there at Roxie. Now, we

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stayed at Meadville, down below Meadville; we stayed at old man Tom Sullivan's place. Then on up to Whitehead's place and we generally made it fairly easily the third day into Natchez, sometimes. And if we didn't get there before night, we would get there afterward.

BOWLIN: Did you spend the night on the outside somewhere or did you stay in anybody's houses?

BUCKELS: Stayed in their houses. Went there and slept in their beds.

BOWLIN: Where did you keep your sheep at during the night?

BUCKELS: These places that we picked out had small patches that you could run them where they would graze. Of course old man Parker was responsible for the expenses. Now, I thought I was going to get rich, you know. He said he would give me twenty (20) dollars a week. In that day and time, twenty (20) dollars was a pretty big thing.

BOWLIN: How much did the man where you kept the sheep at night, how much did he charge you for a hundred (100) head?

BUCKELS: Their charges was pretty low, never excessive. Did you ever know old man Hugh Barnes down there close to Auburn? I used to pen sheep there at Hugh Barnes'; just above two (2) miles back kind of going toward Liberty. Was right there close to where them stores is there at that crossroads. That was old man Hugh's place. Then there was Vic Woodall on out further. I got them there. You could always get a man that would treat you right.

BOWLIN: Mr. Buckels, when did they start building the I. C., the Central Railroad from Brookhaven?

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BUCKELS: They began buying the right-of-way in about 1903 and 1904. Then they were clearing the right-of-way in 1905 and along then. I don't remember just when; I think it was 1908 when the first passenger train run into Natchez.

BOWLIN: Now, who was the head of building the railroad?

BUCKELS: Well, just exactly now I can't tell you until I see

Mose. You know Mose worked for the railroad all of his life.

BOWLIN: Now, who is Mose?

BUCKELS: That is Ethel's husband. That is where she met him - on the train. He was the butcher boy on the train then.

BOWLIN: Now, how did they get their cross-ties and their rails to the railroad?

BUCKELS: Well, I drove. I had a pair of mules and a mule wagon.

I began driving about the time they got up two (2) or three (3) miles above here.

BOWLIN: That is above Lucien?

BUCKELS: Yes. They had an engine and they laid the ties. We put them on our wagons. They had the ties on a flat and the railing on another flat behind it. Two or three of us with wagons would go back there to the tie car and they would put us a load on. We would go down and lay them and they would lay a track on it and come on down further. I helped them with it until I began - well, they was through, I expect, before I started with Parker. I forget now, but I think they run their first passenger train they had. The road had connected in Natchez, but they hadn't started no business. It was just the work crew until they got it all laid and

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founded it. It settled down and was ready to go. I know that when they got out this far, the engineer was boarding here with my daddy. He had a great big old house out there. I tore it down and built this one. But, we got in to go - Drop Parsons was starting us a pretty big store up there - we got him to... It was me, Tom Wooten and Eustis Wooten and Tom Byrd and I can't name all of them. Parsons had a lot of - they weren't taking no freight, bringing out no freight, you know. Parsons had a carload or two of stuff. They had a good yard out there across the I.C. there where they could store things until they could get them going out. We all went out there and packed that stuff from one car to the other one until we got a carload to come out and they brought it on out. The company didn't know nothing about that.

BOWLIN: In other words, that was the first carload of freight that was brought?

BUCKELS: Yes, and it just came to Lucien.

BOWLIN: Now, what year was that?

BUCKELS: Now, I just can't be positive about them dates. It was a part of my life and I just don't remember, but it was just a part of my life.

BOWLIN: Well, it must have been before 1908, because they had the railroad finished by 1908.

BUCKELS: Oh, yes, it was bound to have been before 1906. I went to work for Parker then.

BOWLIN: Now, when did they start using the railroad for passengers and freight?

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BUCKELS: Well, by 1908. I can remember that, but they could have been doing business before that. My time was away from here, not enough for me to keep up with. Just came in home on weekends most of the times. Just what they were doing, I wasn't paying much attention to that.

BOWLIN: Did you ride the passenger train much after they got it running?

BUCKELS: Yes, I'd go to Natchez when I got ready to and fill up on beer.

BOWLIN: What was the fare from Lucien to Natchez? Remember?

BUCKELS: No, I can't. It wasn't much. Probably a dollar or two, wasn't much.

BOWLIN: When the first train started running - passenger train - did they have many passengers?

BUCKELS: Well, yes. A lot of sightseers wanted to come in and see the new railroad and train. I'll tell you somebody, but no, I don't know who they... Now, Mrs. Mallory down here, her first husband was a Stamps.

BOWLIN: She lives at Quentin now?

BUCKELS: Yes, and Stamps was the first depot agent here.

BOWLIN: At Lucien?

BUCKELS: Yes, and Mrs. Stamps (Mrs. Mallory) came by here the other day and was asking me about the old house and I just stood out there and I told her, I said, "You see that pecan tree yonder?" I said, "Your daddy-in-law sold that plant to my daddy in 1912." It was her daddy-in-law and that was in 1912. I did not remember when Stamps first came here,

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but he went to boarding with my daddy.

BOWLIN: In other words, that tree is just about sixty-five (65) years old?

BUCKELS: It was put there just a sprig. I can't think of what they called it, but anyhow it was nursery stock. He was peddling them around here.

BOWLIN: Now, Mr. Coot, do you remember about what time the first church came in here? What was the meeting that you went to?

BUCKELS: Well, it was some of these tent meetings would be the first ones here. There was a Preacher Young that used to come here and he had a meeting then upstairs at the Parson's Store. We used to meet up there.

BOWLIN: That was here in Lucien?

BUCKELS: Yes.

BOWLIN: Did you ever have any colored people to come to the church?

BUCKELS: I don't remember whether we did or not. I think the colored people had them a church down here; called it St. Luke, you know, at McCall. I think that was their place of meeting at that time.

BOWLIN: Do you remember when the first church house was built?

BUCKELS: No, I can't give no dates. I remember it being built,
but back to the date I can't.

BOWLIN: Now, what about law and order here around Lucien and in Franklin County?

BUCKELS: What?

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BOWLIN: What about law and order in Franklin County along about

that time?

BUCKELS: Well, it was supposed to have been a civilized place, but a lot of us done things we ought not to have done.

BOWLIN: Do you remember who the first sheriff was?

BUCKELS: They did not have no sheriff here.

BOWLIN: Who was the first law officer?

BUCKELS: My daddy was the first mayor when it was incorporated.

BOWLIN: What was his name?

BUCKELS: Charles P. Buckels.

BOWLIN: Charles P. Buckels.

(End of Interview)

(Transcribed by Austin D. Bowlin)

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Transcriber's Notes

 1 Kennolia was the name of the school.

²July 14, 1903 - Mrs. Buckels' correction.

³March 9, 1905 - Mrs. Buckels' correction.

⁴February 28, 1907 - Mrs. Buckels' correction.

⁵Old box factory.