

Tape 1

Interviewer: well you knew that ah you said you were aware about Germany and what they were doing did you know when you heard that that the United States was going to be involved?

Drake: I knew that when I heard the president talk about the fear you know what was that big statement he made?

Interviewer: We have nothing to fear but fear itself.

Drake: Yes.

Interviewer: Were you happy with the way FDR was handling things?

Drake: Absolutely

Interviewer: You love him did you you were voting at this time weren't you?

Drake: I was I was 20 years of at that time and I had surrendered to preach in August of 24.

Interviewer: Do you remember voting for Roosevelt?

Drake: We couldn't vote that time because you had to be 21. But I did vote for him.

Interviewer: When you turned 21?

Drake: Yea he was in there for three terms.

Interviewer: Okay and you said you started college while the war was going on in Europe.

Drake: I went I worked from sometimes in September till March and my and if I told you I didn't tell anybody I was a preacher until I talked to this one young man that did not claim to be a Christian the rest of them did and in my testimony and I told him not to tell please. And he didn't and when I went to work at night they another young man come in and he said we had these things that we fill our baskets to take down to the floor deliver to whichever department and he dropped the stuff he had in the basket and it fell all over the floor. And some of the boys said why don't you curse I'm not I don't because I'm a Christian and I have surrendered to be a Methodist preacher and Stone was near by and Stone out of excitement said goody goody goddy we've got two preachers in the place now and they wanted to know who the other one was and he said Tom Drake.

Interviewer: So you remember talking about the war in class and things in school?

Drake: We didn't talk so much about the war in class but we we had the Army Air Core program for and they took two of our residence halls and my roommate and I who was waiting tables and that's how I got my college I didn't owe them very much when I finished just a few dollars. But my wife went to school and then she went the next summer after I got through teaching school we moved in a one room rented room and we sent the furniture home and so I could start seminary in September of 47.

Interviewer: So you remember anything about rationing did it affect you a lot?

Drake: It did when I got a car I bought an ole 34 Chevrolet and I always said it was a push model but I spent a lot of money trying to get it rigged up to run and I got my drivers license and my wife got her drivers license and we would I had a church in Martin, Tennessee and I'd have a flat or two going and a flat or two coming home and I learned how to patch a tire because we never did have a car in our family. So I got pretty good about jacking that thing up and changing wheels and tires and I could only get one tire at a time and then on gas if I had a funeral or something and I did have a funeral. The second funeral that I had and the first after I started driving the car and I barley had enough gas to get there and back and I didn't appreciate all the beer trucks that was running and they weren't rationed. But all preachers didn't have any gas to waste with things that a preacher has to do in those churches and we had a revival and my roommate had a 35 Chevrolet and we stayed on the field and we had fellow that was in that was cutting trees and had a saw mill and he we drove by his house and he shared his gas with us so we could do the running on the field. And as an outcome his wife was the first one that I got to baptize in my ministry.

Interviewer: While you were you said you had signed up for the Selective Service to be drafted for so what happened that you did that you weren't able to go or?

Drake: I signed up and I told them the truth I signed up in Nashville because I was living in Nashville. But when they classified when my classification came out I got because I was on my way to college they knew that I got a class D. Now F was a different classification and the next year one of the boys that was a Minister student he came to Union but he was out of the Memphis area and he went into service. And a former pastor that I had when I was growing up he went in as a Chaplin Paul Travis he went in the Navy as a Chaplin.

Interviewer: So you because you were going to college and you classification.

Drake: Ministerial

Interviewer: Okay

Drake: But I felt like I was in the Army because we had to move out of our residence hall and my roommate and I moved up the street both of us worked in the dining hall and we had to be down there a little bit before 5 every morning and we'd feed the soldiers first. And then by the time we got cleaned up after that then we had the student body and as I said I put so many hours in that I didn't owe them very much and when the war was over my wife said she just as well go to school too so she started Union and got about two terms in and then we moved out on the church field at Beach Bluff. I was their first pastor but during the summer I came home the first summer and I was going to go back to McClellan's just to work that summer but they had already got someone to replace me I went to Cress that was next door on 5th Avenue and I worked. But the next summer our bible teacher said because there were some guys that were not preachers I don't know how they were maybe upper classmen but they got jobs for several jobs an hour and he said he thought that preachers ought to spend their time with their church and in the Lord's work. And so I took training in Nashville on 6th Avenue were our

Baptist building was for the whole week of Vacation Bible School. And then I I didn't have a car at that time I go to Camden and I had even chalked level and Mount Nebo that's three Bible Schools I remember and I made a dollar a day. I if I went on the train I paid my way if I went on the bus I paid my way which was not very much but a dollar a day so I never could say that I made money while the war was going on. I got and then even after the war was going on on the summer that I had resigned Beach Bluff and I was at another church nine miles away and I signed up for Bible School in the association and we went it was a larger Madison County plus Chester County and out in the needy place in school houses abandoned school houses and one was out in the front yard and one was down at the city park. I had a helper with my wife was tired up in school and couldn't help me and some of those Bible Schools I held two Bible Schools I had one of my friends in Jackson and he had surrendered to preach in the summer before he came December the 8th he was Dr. Guy's nephew and he lived just a few miles from me but I never met him. And we got to going together on Bible Schools we'd have one in the morning and one in the afternoon at different places and a revival at night so we worked hard and those we got a dollar a day from our association not from the Tennessee Baptist. And then we didn't get anything I held the revival and I'd preach one place and he'd preach the other one we had two revivals going on at night in churches that had been vacated and they were willing for us to come in. I swallowed bugs they had the lights on and the windows was raised but I kept on preaching.

Interviewer: Well through all of that service and preaching and things what kind of experienced did you have with families that had soldiers in the field and wives and children did you have a lot of those in your congregations and you were preaching to?

Drake: I did I had like Richard Carmikel I had several there and at Beach Grove Church out from Dyersburg I had some service I had some boys that went into service. I started there in August and I had men that left for the service and I talked to this Chaplin I talked to some more of the Army boys that were there and they said you need it here and it's like we've got a job to do and they was fixing to be shipped overseas they were only there for five months at a time and then get another crew in. But I never had any criticism for not being in service because most of my roommates and most of my friends thought all long I was going to be a preacher. And we had class night on the night before we graduated and I had the class motto "Climb though the rocks be rugged" and Mildred Hyde had the prophesy and Mildred prophesied that I was going to be a Baptist preacher and I'd be pasturing the church at Cedar Hill and we rehearsed the night before and we had the history and all that stuff and I begged Mildred I said Mildred tell them I'm a bootlegger and I wanted to go in business really and operate a store. And but I told them I said you can tell them I'm going to be a bootlegger or I just decided to work on a farm or something just tell them anything but don't tell them I'm a Baptist preacher so I bet they were pretty well convinced that I was going to be a preacher anyway and the night I surrendered to preach some of my classmates came around of course they hugged me they said well we were right after all.

Interviewer: Well through your church you were in these churches with all of these families did y'all do anything for the families with men overseas did y'all do anything for them?

Drake: We is it the USO?

Interviewer: Yes sir.

Drake: Every church I had and the one at Bible Union this lady and husband had lost a son and she worked and the oldest daughter she graduated from high school while I was pastor they helped at the USO and the other churches some of the ladies worked. And we recognized the soldier boys before they went into overseas like my cousin was a Japanese prisoner for the whole war and he came home and he never was he'd have crying spells and what have you. And he finally married and had one daughter and they were living I believe at Spring Hill and he finally had to go into a nursing home and my two sisters and I wanted to go see him in the nursing home and we called to see if it would be alright for us to come because I guess some days he just would go completely off or something but they gave the okay his wife had checked and we went to see him spent a long time with him. And he was in a wheel chair and now he's he died about five or six years ago he my Uncle John his daddy they had four children and my brother Lewis was older than John Olli and then Mary my sister and then Dimple and then me and I was older than the second boy James and Dimple was about the same age as Bernice and then they had a daughter later on in life all that families dead now. But daddy and mother and sister two sisters died before John Olli did.

Interviewer: Is that your only family member that

Drake: No my brother-in-law Odell Inman was in the Marines he joined the Marines he graduated in 1937 I guess it was and he joined the Marines and he was in Ewagema, Saipan and there was another one and he never did get wounded and he made a lifetime commitment and after the war was over he had two expeditions with Admiral Bird to the North Pole and to the South Pole and he brought those he was in the he worked on tanks and we have a he took a lot of slides while he was over there and some of the slides my projector I got that but I never did work it. But I had a hand one we had a small projector and it's the most beautiful snow and ice and that blue water and we have pictures of him and the other guys standing outside of their tank what have you. And but he never did he was in four years after he got out he died in the 69 and he had we didn't know it we were home for Thanksgiving and he was sick and his daddy was in the nursing home had a stroke in Nashville and so we begged Odell we told him he ought to go to Camp Campbell and because we Grayson County not far from Camp Campbell and he promised us that he would go and the next morning we got a call we went back to our home out Buchanan and he that he had gotten up to go to the outside bathroom and he fell in the kitchen and vomited blood. And so he was in the veterans hospital and we went every I was pastor at Macedonia church out in Buchanan we went every weekend to see both my father-in-law and my brother-in-law and we were up there during Christmas and he asked I said he said when I get out of here I'm going to have to have he had all those tubes and everything running to him he said I'm going to have to have a pair of house shoes. So we got him a pair of house shoes and took them to him and we saw him next to the last day of the year we saw him and we talked to the doctor and he said one of the doctors they said we believe he is coming around and we went home and our kids started to school the next day they were getting ready on the last day of the year 68 they were getting ready to go to school and we got the call from our next door neighbor and Odell had was deceased. And he had a military funeral they was from I think from Campbell and maybe from Fort Know came down.

Interviewer: Well a lot of the people that lived through WWII it was a rough time because of shortages and rationing and a lot of sacrifices they had to make. How would you, over all, how would you summarize your experience was it was good time for you or was it a hard time?

Drake: I wouldn't say it was a real hard time and it wasn't the best time in the world it because I was trying to go to school and earn a living and I surrendered I got married on December 18, 1944 and my wife in a few weeks after marriage she wanted to work and she got on at the Milan Arsenal and that was a big plant down there making shells and what have you so I felt like we were involved you know.

Interviewer: So you felt patriotic throughout

Drake: Absolutely there wasn't nothing going on like it has been going on during this Gulf War that we're in. You didn't hear anybody criticizing anything.

Interviewer: So the attitude wherever you were was always positive?

Drake: Positive

Interviewer: Good

Tape 2

Drake: I was not a veteran but when I started the union I'll give you history or the background.

Interviewer: Well first could I get you to state your full name and when you were born?

Drake: Charles Thomas Drake born July 17, 1921.

Interviewer: Okay and can I how was your family in Dickson the whole time?

Drake: No I was living in Cedar Hill, Tennessee 39 miles north of Nashville.

Interviewer: And what do you remember about the great depression?

Drake: I remember that we had the paper route in Greenbrier and when the depression came I was born in Greenbrier which was 24 miles north of Nashville and all of my mother's kind folks were in Greenbrier. And I started to school there and my dad was a railroad man worked on the railroad what they call the section cane. They kept the crossties changed and things repaired up and down and every once in a while there'd be a train wreck and they'd have to work almost around the clock to get that up and clean. But we moved down to Cedar Hill they called it Roland they cut Greenbrier section out and Greenbrier is real prosperous today but they cut that section out and daddy had more age in working on the railroad than somebody in Cedar Hill. And so we moved down to Cedar Hill we had an opportunity to live in the section houses which was about a couple of miles from town and a couple of miles from church and school and my daddy and mother chose to rent a place and I lived the first house on the street Railroad Street. And we were up and my wife after several years she lived the last house on the

street. And we they wanted we had the Banner route my older brother and I guess older sister had the Banner route in Greenbrier and we moved to Cedar Hill I don't know how long we were down there but not very long before the Tennessean came around and asked us if we would take the Tennessee route. The Tennessean only had mail order they mailed the Tennessean out twiced a cay to Cedar Hill and so it was in our family until I graduated from I was in the eleventh grade and after I finished the eleventh grade and that summer I told my folks I said I've been knocked out of playing basketball and football you didn't have any lights on the field and you had to play and I had to get home and deliver the newspaper. And I didn't have a bicycle to help me deliver them for I was in about the last part of the seventh grade I got a bicycle for Christmas. But I remember that everything was cheap and I had a family down below us he was a one legged man and he was working on WPA and they was always drawing getting commodities and they had six girls. And my sister and I would go down there and play with them and they were getting sugar sugar ration and of course there was four children in our family and we didn't get anymore sugar ration than anybody else we got just the amount. But my daddy got cut from 5 days a week to 3 days a week and his wage was \$2.62 an hour and you know what he did the other time to raise money for the family? They had a pole tax maybe you can tell me when the pole tax went off in Tennessee have you studied that in history?

Interviewer: I'm not sure.

Drake: I had forgotten but everybody I know the white people had to pay pole tax and daddy would go out on the county road walk out on the county road and roads out in the country and they would spread gravel and he would work the two days that week and then the threes days of next week to pay his. There were some people that would rather they would rather give daddy a dollar a day to work for them than to pay pole tax pay it to the pole tax. So daddy had that my older brother was seven years older than I and when he graduated from high school because we had delivered papers they promised that he would have a job you know up in Nashville circulation of course they did not fulfill that promise. And he worked on farms what have you for 75 cents a day in summer time outside delivering the paper I worked in the drug store 10 cents an hour. And on my juniors and senior year I worked I would come home I walked home from school to the drug store and work during the lunch hour while Dr. Ben Hawkins walked home to eat and then he'd come back and I'd rush back and maybe stop by and get me a bite at the house and walk on back to school. Some of those days were pretty rough raining, snowing and we didn't have any days off from school but I know this school board at county cut our school for elementary school one or two years that I remember down to 7 months and the high school was cut down to 8 months. But by the time I was in high school we went the full nine months 175 days.

Interviewer: Well in 1939 you were about 18 right?

Drake: I was 18 when I graduated then my birthday was July the 19th and back then you didn't start to school until you were 6 years old.

Interviewer: Oh okay in 1939 did you know about anything that was going on in Europe were you aware of that?

Drake: Absolutely we had an evangelist come from what is now New Orleans Baptist Seminary but it was Bible School back then and we old had two Baptist School Fort Worth Texas and Southern Seminary. We had an evangelist and he told us that Hitler would ultimately be defeated because he was killing all the Jews and he backed it up with scripture and we realized that Jews were being killed. And on one of my mission trips I went to Poland and had to come home on the count of an infected toenail but we went down and looked where they had destroyed all that downtown Warsaw and then it had been built back and then there was one big open area with a wall almost around that was a public gathering area brick all over and that had been some of the buildings when the war was over they made more of a park out of that. And I had I graduated in 1940 and two of the six boys in my graduating class joined the Army and I wanted to join the Army and they would have to sign for you then you know and my mother didn't want me to and I intended to go to business course and I had an appendicitis had surgery and in the big hospital at Springfield. And that fall I couldn't go and the next year I was really fighting the call to the ministry all along because I felt the call when I was 13 years of age but I never did tell anybody. But I had a hard time that summer because my high school Principal W.A. Shannon and he got to be country superintendant and then he got to be in the federal educational. But one day I was delivering papers to his house and he said he was a member of our church a deacon and he was from Greenbrier. And he said Thomas aren't you called to be a Baptist preacher and I said yes sir you were the first one I've ever admitted that to. When I graduated a little girl prophesied that we had a class night and she prophesied that I was going to be a Baptist preacher and pastor Cedar Hill Baptist Church that has not come true.

Interviewer: Right

Drake: But I went to I was out back and these two men from the business college Andrew Jackson Business College came and knocked on the door and I got to the dining room but didn't go in and I heard my mother say my so I don't think is interested in going to business school, God has called him to preach. I had never told and man I stopped and I stepped out that door as quick as I could and later on the summer we were in a revival and the man the pastor or our church Wayne Dehnoey and it was just a half time church. And he had invited a gentleman from our county that was in Southwestern Seminary and we had morning services and I had never gone to a morning service I felt like that they were just like for the old ladies and the children. But I went and then I said Brother Dehoney and he finally got to be Dr. Dehoney and he graduated from Vanderbilt and went to Southern Seminary and he got to be Southern Baptist President two terms. And I said I feel like I've been called to preach but I don't have money to start to school and all he said I wasn't you to go home and pray about it. And I went home and went to my bedroom especially at night and I would pray and of course I'd say yes I will do it and then he said I'm going to give an invitation sometime during the revival. We were having a union revival with the Methodist they had the largest church but we had the preacher and one musician and when the alter call was given folks said want the we just go down and make a profession of faith and if they wanted to go join the church that was alright. But then they one night they gave an alter call for those that wanted to join the particular church Methodist or Baptist and when I was baptized years before the Methodist took a group out to be baptized the same time we did in Sefa Fork Creek. And they baptized one and we baptized one so on Sunday morning of the last of the revival he gave the call if anyone felt like God had called them into special service will you please come forward. I held that bench I did not go

but what was so terrible to me those two fellows were invited to eat lunch with us and Brother Gordon Clinard he was leaving that afternoon to go back to Southwestern Seminary and we were at the table and I always like to serve and mother had coconut pie and I loved that but I was so afraid that he was going to say well Thomas I gave that invitation I thought you would come forward. And I excused myself for eating a piece of coconut pie but that night he concluded the revival at the Methodist Church and I went forward and that was August 24, 1941 and a few weeks I knew that I didn't have money to start college and I knew I wouldn't get any help from my parents on that part. And then I went to Nashville to visit an aunt and a cousin and I walked the streets of Nashville trying to find a job and I was just about ready to go home and catch the train we had two trains coming through in the morning going to Nashville on and then we had two trains at night. And I was just about ready to take that street car and go back to Cedar Hill but my first cousin who was older and had a son said seven boys walked off the storeroom stockroom of McClellan's and you may get a job there. So I went and they said I think you will hear from us and we didn't have a telephone couldn't afford one you know and they called I gave them the drug store where I was working and on Saturday and during the week mowing yards what have you other things. But during that they called me wanted me there on Monday morning and you know where First Baptist Church is in Nashville?

Interviewer: Yes sir.

Drake: They had a stock room on the opposite side it was a custom building but a vacant lot and then a stockroom they were remodeling the two floor stockroom up at McClellan's and I walked down there and six more boys started to work at the same time. And there was two brick houses on down from the Baptist Church and one side boarded house and it said room and board and I walked across the street at lunch time and moved my few duds across there and I paid \$6 a week. As long as I was before they moved out of the stockroom I had seven departments and I was back I didn't tell any of these guys I was a preacher because sometimes they say oh a preacher they're lazy and all this. Well I held my end up and I was working there and they said I was working next bin I was in the glassware department I was putting up those glasses opening boxes and a fellow that we call Stonewall Jackson and I was talking to him and he was the only boy that professed not to be a Christian and I was talking to him and just low so the other guys couldn't hear me and he said you know what Tom you sound like a preacher. I said I am I don't pastor a church they elected me superintendent of Sunday School and I go home on the 8 o'clock train and then I walk over to the drugstore and try to help Dr. Ben out folks always hanging around almost to Sunday school time to come in and get a prescription filled or they want a milkshake or coke and would sell it. Anyway I got that job and when we got ready to move back to the storeroom we started working on Saturday afternoon and we moved all Saturday night and all Sunday there was one boy said he didn't believe in working on Sunday and he took off back to Kentucky. And the rest of us worked and it was about 4 o'clock that afternoon we didn't get a dime extra for that extra work we had a little time to eat probably on 8th Avenue there and what have you. And we started back to work there on Monday morning and then near Christmas time they were remodeling the downstairs and they had all the windows out and open there but they owned all of these rose bushes and they had them out on the sidewalk and them piled up in there where they would have window decoration. And they called me in and said we notice your work habits and we know by your recommendation, I didn't know that

anybody had recommended me, that you are honest and we'd like to for you to be night watcher here. And we want the black man to be on the floor to help us keep things clean so we can go on with redecorating down here. And I took it and they gave they raised me from \$17 a wee to 19. And I saved \$6 a week my mother and dad would take the money to the bank in Springfield. I saved \$94 and I was on Sunday morning December 7, 1941 I making my last round and fixing to leave and walk down to Union Station to catch a train home and I turned on the radio and I heard about Pearl Harbor. On a mission trip I went to South Korea and we came back through Hawaii and we made a tour out there and I got on one of those boats that was down there with many of the bodies still there they said in that hull of that ship. But it was awful and then I started to Union in March.

Interviewer: Which Union was this?

Drake: 42 March of 42 and I paid them the we had dinning hall style and room and everything was together and I paid them out of the \$94 for the three months I pad them \$85. And I didn't have vey much left you know and I did have a white shirt or two and enough I had my suit that I used in graduating from the college I mean from high school. And I started there and the next week after I started the treasurer of the school asked me if I wanted to set out some rose bushes over at his house and that was a dime an hour you know. And I dug up in the back yard and set out those rose bushes. And then the next week one of the boys had gotten called to a church that he'd have to do a ways on Sunday and he worked in the dinning hall and I got the job of working in the dinning hall waiting tables. And you know in oh I finished that quarter went home and started working at Crest because they didn't need me at McClellan's at that time and I worked at Crest next door to where I had been working. And I moved out with one of the friends that had come form East Nashville and he said my daddy had worked for refrigeration and ice cream company on Union Avenue I believe it was then. And he's in bad health and we need someone and I told my mother that I had seen him coming in and out as we were leaving last night and I thought that you would be a good boarder so I moved out with them. And he went to the Cumberland Presbyterian church on Wednesday night and when I was working for Crest I worked during the day and on Sunday morning he had a car and he would we would drive to Cedar Hill and we laughed and said he was a Baptist on Sunday and I was a Cumberland Presbyterian on Wednesday night. But we got the Army Air Core there for five months they took our resident hall which was called Adams Hall. And one in a while some wise guy would ask he would say answer the telephone the one telephone in the building and he'd call it Adams barn and some of them would say which one of the jack asses is this and what have you. But there was a young man one of those soldiers and he had this little time off and I was walking really back to class and he said I surrendered to the Methodist ministry but I found out some things I think that baptism comes after you are converted and Methodist let me get by with my folks having me sprinkled when I was a child and said I went to a Baptist Church and I united with it. And said something else I believe in once saved always saved and you Baptists believe that and Methodist and said I've been to a conference and said you'd be surprised how many Methodist believe that. They may not own up to it outside but they do and so when I got married in December of 44 I didn't owe the school anything they owed me and I moved into a apartment house it's apartments and when it was all and I was supposed to be the head knocker there to keep things to keep the halls sweep and what have you. And my wife to be was working in Elgin, Illinois as a filing clerk at the Elgin Watch Factory. And so

and I had one church I had one that I started out making \$5 a week out from Jackson Poplar Corner Church. And I'd ride out on Sunday morning after my roommate gave up his church that was close to it and I did ride out with him and this Tom Meredith he was going to graduate and he had a fulltime church and he was going to seminary because he would be close to the Southern Seminary and he took me out. And explained he said this church Tom was closed for several years because one man said he was going to have his way or they wouldn't have a church. And said the people told him you can have your way we're not coming here anymore and two churches came out of that one closer to Jackson and it still a thriving church Poplar Heights and then Midway Church that was close to Bells. But I rode Jordy's bus which ran from Jackson to Dyersburg and I'd get off at White's Store and I'd walk on the gravel road and they started back because Tom led them in buying two hogs and fattening them out and they sold them and they gave me their little bank book and I'd go by on the second Sunday and Monday the fourth Monday and collect my \$5 and that helped along. And then I said I tried we had a revival and we had this lady named Mrs. Crow and I was so discouraged because I think they had 11 there the day they called me and I just went out and stood on the steps and I was about as green as they were I guess. And they called me and sometimes we'd have a good crowd on a bad Sunday Mrs. Crow would always be there and her and his wife. And we didn't have a Sunday School I would get up and preach she would play and sing. So I was I have to confess I was so discouraged I'd go by and visit people even that summer when school was out I'd go by and visit walk that distance and they all had the same story yes we are happy where we're at at Poplar Heights and our church is growing. They had about 300 in Sunday School then and so I was so discouraged and Mrs. Crow said please don't leave us until we have out summer revival and I got my roommate to lead the summer revival just in the mornings we didn't have revival at night. And I'd get letters from some of the members saying we love you and we love the church but I can't ride a horse on the way to church my husband will not bring me and during the revival we stayed with that lady and her family and she rode to church with us she and her daughter and I had never driven before. And my dad said we got the train to ride I had a free pass growing up and don't ever get in somebody else's car you may wreck it and you'll have something to pay for and you should if you wreck it and so I didn't. I know when I was a little boy we had concrete steps leading up to our street to the blacktop and then railroad then the downtown stores and I would walk up those steps and we were the first house and we everybody our telephone system was across the blacktop and they had an operator and he and his wife lived there and then the lady that operated during the day she lived down the road a little ways. And they had a board they plugged you in and I had a good time going over there they were my friends and I had this little girl friend out from Cedar Hill and I'd call her. Her dad operated a grocery store out in the grocery. And one day one Easter Sunday it was beautiful and three two other buddies and I we decided we'd go ride our bicycles and we rode our bicycle across Sepher Fork Creek. And they said we're going home Thomas and I said I think I'll go and look up Christine and so I did and went up there and they had a big Easter egg hunt beautiful Sunday. And then just about time I got ready to come home we had a storm and my folks never did let me live that one down. They didn't know where I was and they was fixing to call the Constable he couldn't have found me anyway and so the Darden's they had a son-in-law and his family from Springfield and they threw my bicycle in the back of their wagon and not wagon but truck and brought me home. And they said next time you want to go see that girl you let us know and but I had a good time we moved up on Hayes Avenue my roommate and I and we stayed there and the next summer I stayed there for the first six weeks. And then I did

Vacation I went to Nashville for the training for Vacation Bible School and we stayed a whole week. They paid our expenses and they gave us the literature and then I came back to Jackson and they signed me up around Camden and I held revivals Bible Schools around Camden at the first one was out Eva. You know where Eva, Tennessee is?

Interviewer: No sir.

Drake: It's out from Camden on the gravel road and right down from the church it was on the hill and right down the street was the Tennessee River. And they didn't have a musician and when God called me I was standing behind the door I guess on music I never have been able to carry a tune. But that Bible School they knew one song, A volunteer for Jesus a soldier true, others have enlisted why not you." And we had that to march in by sit down by to stand up by and to march out by. And the next church was Chalk Hill now Camden has a beautiful church and they put in they made a damned up river and that area a lot of Eva was flooded the lower part but the church was moved on. Then I went the next and the best way I had of traveling sometimes if I couldn't catch a bus going through I hitchhiked from Jackson to Camden. Then I had this church at Wantabe out from Camden another direction Nebo. And I went on Sunday night I got there I took the train and went to Nebo when I got there they wanted me to make my announcement and to say anything I wanted to say and I said we will start Bible School here in the morning. You see I'd have to I was always lucky in getting workers to help me teach and I'd always take the leading part of principal and them I taught the intermediate class. This old gentleman I never will forget he stood up and he said "I'm for the Bible School but I think the adults need a Bible School." And he was sincere bless his heart and I said sir you are welcome to come to this Bible School and come every day. We didn't have they didn't have Sunday School rooms so we moved our two or three benches home made benches outside, he was there every day. And then on Friday night I they wanted me to stay for commencement and we had a little commencement program and then I gave a short message and a young person came forward that was oh I guess 16 or 17 years of age. And they believed that in the MORMS meach. And they wanted to be for sure that person was saved and so they announced she announced that she was saved before she ever walked down that isle because she trusted Jesus in the service. And so they were thrilled about that and then the old gentleman had to get up again and he said, "I'll tell you I've been this Bible School the first one in my life and I learned more Bible this year than I've ever learned before." And but then while the soldiers was still there because we wasn't making very much I got a call out from Martin, Tennessee at Bible Union Church and they had services onced a month on Saturday afternoon after business meeting and then Sunday morning. All the churches in Weakley County but four but three didn't have training union or Sunday night services they'd all come to Bible Union for a singing and they'd move the benches around and have quartet singing. And while I was up there right before I got married I've always laughed and said don't get married and by an old beat up car and save time. I bought a 1934 Chevrolet all four tires, I remember this about the war, all four tires were bad and everything else happened to it and I got married and then my wife and I both got our drivers license. But going up there I'd have at least one or two flats and then coming back a flat and sometimes I didn't get back in those months before I married right at the we had moved back West Jackson Baptist Church which is the largest church. We had the largest Sunday School ahead of First Baptist they had all the money and that church is beautiful now and we've had the

convention there three about six years ago. But they Dr. Guy said I don't think your right for the preacher boys to get out and get a job during the summer when we need Bible School folks and what have you. So I listened to him and his song leader who got to be state music director for Tennessee he had a three room house three rooms and then they had a big room across the hall for the RAs and Boy Scouts and he got up on Sunday morning Sunday night and said he had some preacher boys that needed a place to stay and so two moved in the front room, my roommate and I moved in the middle room, and then the kitchen was used by two more boys. We had a nice bathroom and they didn't charge us anything and he got mattresses and bed steads and we moved over there and we stayed there until I got married in December. And my wife went to work at Milan Arsenal as a filing clerk there. And she had a big time she met a lady form McEwen that and years later when I came to be pastor their they renewed acquaintance but anyway those two ladies every day that they would go out at lunch and watch the black folks load the freight cars for the ammuniton and all. And they would those black folks would a dance and singing in that box car and so Shirley and this other lady always enjoyed that. And when the war was over she had worked several weeks afterward and she came home and she said, I have something funny to tell you said our dear black folks that we had such a good time with said they were just about in tears because they had been annihilated. And she said what do you mean they said they didn't need us anymore and they had been annihilated." And so in a few weeks I said well now you're annihilated and she started to Union and wanted to she got a few hours there and then I finally went to I got to be pastor I started two churches in Jackson in Madison County and Beach Bluff was only 14 miles form our school. And I don't know why they didn't have a Baptist Church there when you come to the end of East Chester there's two roads and the one was 14 miles to McEwen to Beach Bluff and the other was 13 and my old 34 Chevrolet the roads their' blacktop now and they one of them was blacktopped after moved out there. But nearly every weekend in the summer in the spring especially the roads would just give way there's no bottom to them and we said we'd go through Well's Bottom and I'd lose a muffler and go on and then I'd go on to Beach Bluff. And then I finished school I finished my school because of the spring quarter I entered and the six weeks that I had gone one summer I was through in February. And that's when we moved out to Beach Bluff three rooms on one side and a hallway and a room and a little area on back and the fellow that took my place and old fellow at Bible Union Church he had a wife and a son and they had a roll-a-way bed and we let him use that hallway and his mother and dad and then they had a little kitchen area. We didn't have we had gas cooking stove natural gas in and when we moved out there we bought an oil circulated heater and filled it up for heat. And we had an outdoor bathroom and we had a well a board well and it was right on the line between that house and the next house so we had a good time being neighbors drawing water out of that well. But I was their first pastor now when we when I left before I left we started a building fund they had moved in an old store building with a side shed and we started out they wanted me to come out there to preach and I was going to Salsbery just supplying that's in West Tennessee out in Bonneville and they asked me so I went on the fifth Sunday and when I went out there on that fifth Sunday they had this little house way back in the field we had to climb a barbed wire fence to get over. But they had the best singing and the spirit and so we went out they had lunch with a family they didn't even pay me and so the next week about the middle of the week here came one of the deacons and said, "here's your five dollars for preaching and said I think we're going to call you said I'm just pretty sure they're going to call you Sunday to be our pastor." Well I had this job I was going there twiced a month they were giving me \$25

a Sunday for supply and it was a nice church and they had an upstairs where the Masons met. And so that Sunday I guess the Lord must have been working in this situation the fellow got up and said, "You know it's always surprising to me when a preacher leaves they say the Lords called them but them to a better church bigger, more pay more room what have you." And he just went on and went on. (Tape ended)

Tape 3

Drake: And there I was praying and I had told my wife as we was going down there I said I think we ought to go to Beach Bluff and give it a try and she said I'm with you whatever you say we'll do. And I preached but I said that service I said I probably will be down here one more time the third Sunday but I said I'm not going to a church that's paying more there just started they have 14 members they have a man a deacon and his wife and grown son that graduated from high school and then they have the one daughter that is in high school and they have the one son and then a neighbor Mrs. Roberson and I said then they have some children older children and I said I may not be back. Well you ought to heard them they said we was just going to ask you if you would come down and teach school here and we'd go fulltime furnish you a place to live and what have you. I said, "Whatever the Lord had laid out for me to do I'll do it." And so when I got back that day they called me and told me that they had called me and was going to pay me \$35 and it would be 25 that was for halftime and West Jackson Church was going to give then \$10 on my salary. And so we went to Beach Bluff and we moved out there in the spring after right before I graduated and my wife finished up here teaching and then I taught school there the next year so that I would I was not certified but I had an AB degree. And I taught 5 subjects and coached basketball men's basketball and then at the I didn't intend to go to the seminary. Then I said if the Lord wants me to go to seminary I would like to go to Southwester. Well all the doors for Southwestern was closed and I taught school and I had a discipline problems with on e of the boys that was the deacons son and he would say in class I'd ask something or ask the class and he would say, "My daddy my mother said you ought not be teaching school you ought to be out here on the field visiting and all." And his daddy had this farm and he got a job with Walton Construction Company and he was gone all the week and he was making a lot more than I was teaching school. But that kid kept on and about six weeks before school was out he come up with that one day and I got enough of it and that's the only child and I've substituted in many schools since then and I had a paddle and he got out in the floor and I said if you'll just bend over I'll use this paddle and it will be over with. And he decided he'd just lay down there and kick and when he did I got a hold of one leg and I gave him and when I got home, I had a telephone then, and his mother called me. And then the daddy on Sunday night he wanted to fight and I said I'm not going to pass a lick and I said what he said and I said the class can witness and tell you I said he's done that all year long and I said if I had said that when I was growing up my daddy would beat me in an inch of my life and the teacher wouldn't have to ware me out. And so I went on and sated but in the meantime I decided to go to Southern Seminary and my high school principal that had taught me in the 7th the last part of the 7th and 8th and in the 12th grade and he had taught my wife in the 9th through the

12th, she was four years behind me four year younger three years behind me. And he said Shirley if you know your capable and said we don't have fully trained teachers in all of our schools but when schools get ready to start and we have a vacancy we will call you. You can come home live with your folks and Thomas can go to Southern Seminary and I had a call to pastor a church that my brother-in-law and sister was a member of that was a large church tornado blew it down after we had done some dear work on it, it was over 100 years old. They called me and they paid the other preacher \$540 a year they called me half time for \$600 and then I went to I come back for the revival and they would it was the beginning of my test week. And I told them at school I had to review in New Testament on a Monday and they gave a test on Tuesday and I stayed Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and we were having school six days a week then my first year. And I came back caught the bus back to seminary my pastor at Cedar Hill and his wife were in school and so I had they come through Springfield and my wife would bring me back to Springfield after services Sunday night then she'd go on home and finally before the school was out she started teaching at Orlinda the 3rd grade. And the 3rd grade teacher in Adams which was only four miles away wanted she left Adams to go into the county department as a secretary I think and he called my wife and said I want you down Adams be closer to you and so she taught the 3rd grade the rest of that year. And the next year this teacher decided she'd come back and she wanted the 3rd grade back and he said Shirley 1st grade is open and I know you can handle it and Shirley said Mr. Shannon I need the job but I think you ought to have your best teachers in the 1st grade. And she had the principal and the assistant principal of Bell high sons in that 1st grade. And she said okay I'll try it and if I can't do I want fill bad at all if you relieve me I'll just try to get a job somewhere else doing something else. And so I come home and had the car and we had a 41 Chevrolet by that time and so I and the first day I was in seminary I had gotten there the day before and I had a roommate from Virgin and he later got to be training union director for the state of Virginia and he was in my room. Two of his buddies that were in second year came and talked to him and they said what teachers do you have for New Testament? And he said I have Dr. McDial who do you have I said I have the Doctor that wrote the Greek grammar and what have you Dr. Davis. Said if I were you I would get over there because I learned this last year he'll give you he'll have a testimony meeting and he'll call on different ones and we had ole Josephus to read the study between the testament old and new plus the New Testament. And I went over there and got the assignment off of the blackboard and that was the only class I studied for because the other teachers didn't do that. We got there and he was in room D I guess about 300 students was in that room and he asked a question, a Bible question, and I had majored in Bible in Union University and he they said Dr. Davis we didn't know that we had a class today. We'll study and we'll study from now on but we didn't prepare and he said I'll just go on down we'll find somebody and he said Charles Thomas Drake from Union Univeristy Jackson Tennessee Mr. Drake. And man I was scared to death I stood up and asked him and said young man you studied didn't you? I said yes sir and he gave me 100 for the recitation that one time I didn't have to recite the rest of the 11 weeks. And we had this fellow from Maryville who was working on his doctors degree and he was the assistant teacher and he'd keep the roll and collected paper probably grades them and when I walked out he said Thomas I'm proud of you ole Tennessean and said you know what he gave you? I said I don't know I was scared to death he said he gave you 100. And when I got my 11 week grades I had A+ in New Testament and A+ in Old Testament and A+ in Greek.

Interviewer: Mr. Drake I am out of tape.