

**Oral History 4425 Adairsville Project**

**John Gray Trimble Interview**

**Conducted by Dr. Jennifer Dickey, Lesley Le Platte, and William Frye**

**Location: Home of John Gray and Patricia Anne Trimble, Adairsville, Georgia**

**October 12, 2018**

**Transcribed by William Frye and Lesley Le Platte**

**Frye:** So, I am William Frye

**Le Platte:** And I am Lesley Le Platte

**Frye:** And we are here with John Gray Trimble at his home in Adairsville on October 12, 2018. We're here with Dr. Dickey of KSU and we're going to ask a few questions here. So, will you please introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your background?

**J Trimble:** I've been trying to think about how I want to write up my obituary for about the last week and now.

**P Trimble:** John introduce yourself and tell them a little bit about your background.

**J Trimble:** Talk a little louder all of you. My hearing aids crapped out and I can't hear.

**Frye:** Just if you would introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about yourself.

**J Trimble:** Hi, my name is John Gray Trimble Jr. Of Adairsville, Georgia, Route 2. I was born really born in Gardener Springs, Georgia, which is in Gordon County, and I don't know what all y'all want to know. I can remember eating green apples over there and getting a real bad stomach ache, and we had no doctors around here, and they brought me to a halfway quack here in Adairsville, and I had a real bad stomach ache. I was four years old, and he lived right over here. What's the name of that street? It's right over here

next to the Baptist church. And he gave me some medicine, and I went home and got well, but it was rough times back in those days. My mother had an appendicitis and had to be operated, and they only had one doctor in Calhoun that had a rusty knife. They cut her open, and she has some adhesions from that. But she had been bitten by a cottonmouth moccasin when she was about eight. And what's the name of that area over there?

**P Trimble:** Union Grove

**J Trimble:** What?

**P Trimble:** Union Grove (3:12)

**J Trimble:** I can't hear you

**Dickey:** Union Grove

**J Trimble:** Union Grove

**Dickey:** Ok

**J Trimble:** Her mother ran out in the yard, caught a chicken and pulled it open, and put that on her leg and took her to Calhoun there was an old doctor up there named Dr. Star. You don't have to write all of this down, but I'm trying to give you some background of how bad it was. And she, I guess that pulled some of the puss out, the poison, and he cut her leg out, and even to the day she died, she had a scar halfway from her knee to her ankle on the inside of her leg from the doctor. He had to cut it open and scraped the bone. She was a tough woman, and I think she was part Cherokee, but I don't know, so that makes me a lesser-part Cherokee. But Anyway...

**Dickey:** What was your mother's name Mr. Trimble?

**J Trimble:** I don't know. They called her Josie, but her name was Sarah Anne Morrow Trimble. She got married when she was twelve years old to my daddy, who was one of the Trimbles from Trimble Hollow here. His grandfather was named Augustus Trimble. He came here about 1840, settled, had a land grant from Georgia. That was when they ran the Cherokee Indians out. My other great-grandfather settled here in Adairsville. His name was Colonel John Gray. One of his son's was the first editor of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, and they were good friends. But my grandfather Trimble—a, lot of people got 120 acres and that was it, and they could make do with it. So, he bought up all the 120 acres. He owned all the property from out here on the highway, all the way back. He owned about 1,100 acres. He was the largest landowner in this part of the country. And Colonel Gray, He was Colonel, because he was a Colonel in the Civil War. He is buried over in East View Cemetery. He was the one I was named after. My name is John Gray, his name was James Gray? Well, honey you've read all that stuff in that trunk that I did. You ought to retained some of it. (6:28)

**P Trimble:** I don't remember any of it. I just remember Colonel Gray.

**J Trimble:** Well, anyway, that's the reason I'd like to get in a car and show you these places I'm talking about. Anyways, if you look out there in the yard, there are two or three big rocks when you come in, they were the fireplace

hearths of the first cabin in Adairsville itself, and they were in the cabin that belonged to Colonel John Gray. He was the first white child in this whole area. He was six-foot five, and he was the biggest person around. I don't know where I got my small size, but I had a loud enough mouth. But if I could take you to the old hollow place that AC, Augustus Crawford Trimble, where he settled over here, there is a big spring behind it. I remember when I was young, seventeen years old, my mother and father would cut watercress. You know what watercress is? And barrel it up at the depot and ship it up to Chicago to the what kind of market they call it? And they would sell it up there and send them a check back, so that was, my mother and father made their living off of cutting watercress. This was after the...What did we have in 1929? (8:27)

**P Trimble:** Depression?

**J Trimble:** What?

**P Trimble:** Depression?

**Dickey:** The Stock Market crash and the Depression? (8:33)

**J Trimble:** And that's how they made their living back then. They would wear wading boots up to here. Big sharp knives, they'd cut that stuff into bunches tie it up, put it into baskets, and take it down, down here to the depot, and barrel it up. Put ice on it, salt, ship it to Chicago. But that was, my poor old granddaddy. He just farmed. It was tough for him back in those days. Before that they owned peach orchards all back over that way. They used

to ship out box cars of peaches. This was before the stock market crash. I had one picture of they were shipping out box cars of peaches out here, and that was the big way that people made their living, was peaches. And then it got to where you couldn't get the labor to pick the peaches, or to spray the trees, or whatever, so it kind of died out. (9:56)

**Frye:** Was that your... Which relative grew the peaches and the watercress? Was it your parents who grew the peaches and the watercress?

**J Trimble:** Well my parents did, and I guess my great-grandparents did the same thing. And then they grew cotton after that. I had a biopsy taken out of me last week, and I have to go on Wednesday and have surgery on it. I hope that they don't have to go too deep. (10:36)

**Le Platte:** And what was your occupation?

**J Trimble:** I didn't do nothing.

**Frye:** Well, what did you do instead of that?

**J Trimble:** Well—back up I got out of high school at Bellwood here. And that school doesn't exist any longer. It's now an elementary school, but it kind of consolidated with Calhoun High School. And I left Calhoun. In fact, Patsy went to Calhoun, too, with me. We grew up two miles apart, and she is younger than I am, but I knew her mother better than I did her. I used to walk about ten miles every week delivering Grit newspapers. Remember Grit newspaper? And I'd deliver one to her mother every other week. This little curly headed thing would come walking out on the deck looking at

me. And I said, "she's cute." (11:50)

**P Trimble:** Tell your story

**J Trimble:** I beg your pardon? She don't like when you tell stories on her. Anyways, where was I?

**P Trimble:** She asked what your occupation was? (12:06)

**Le Platte:** What did you do for work?

**J Trimble:** Oh, well I had a very educational background. I got out of Bellwood, Calhoun High School. Bellwood to Calhoun, and I went to Georgia Tech.

**P Trimble:** You went to the FBI first.

**J Trimble:** Did I go to the FBI before that?

**P Trimble:** Tell them about going to the FBI. Tell them. Tell them.

**J Trimble:** Well I thought I went to Georgia Tech before I went to the FBI. Anyways, I'm sitting in Calhoun High School in Study Hall. A senior in Calhoun High School principal came to the study hall room and said, "John, the FBI is here to see you." I said, "Ok." So, I went out to see, and they said you must come up to police headquarters with me up here, let me take your fingerprints and everything. And what happened, I had written them a letter a couple months before that and said, "Hey, I want to come to and work for you guys." And I sent them my name and everything. So, they came to get me, and I was the hit of the whole high school. The FBI's here talking to John. A couple weeks later I got on an Eastern Airlines plane in Atlanta, first big plane I'd ever been on, and flew to Washington. They

told me where to go to get a room in a boarding house and report the next day to, where did I report to? (13:51)

**P Trimble:** The FBI Building.

**J Trimble:** What's the first building down there? On Pennsylvania Avenue? The FBI headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue? Anyways...

**P Trimble:** The Hoover Building? (14:07)

**Dickey:** Yeah, what year was that?

**J Trimble:** That was 19... see I've lost half of my memory. Do you want to tell them about that?

**P Trimble:** It's 1952

**Dickey:** 1952

**P Trimble:** 1952

**J Trimble:** 52 (14:27)

**Dickey:** Ok.

**J Trimble:** Now, I fell out here. We've been out here three years. Her big old home, a big old two-story colonial home that was a plantation burned down. We were in it. So, she's running out of the house with the dog, with her nightgown on and the dog under her arm. The little white dog and running up and down the driveway. No neighbors, no neighbors. Up the street in the rain. I'm right behind her trying to catch her, the house is on fire and made out of old pine kindling basically. You could see it burning out in Atlanta. I couldn't catch her. A guy came by, I had on underwear and

socks, came by. He had called 911. They had called the firemen. The firemen can't do nothing. There's no water, no nothing. So, I couldn't get back in the house to save anything. So, billfolds burned up, social security cards burned up, everything from the drug store. I could not ever get a prescription filled, because I couldn't prove who I was. Phone is burned up, Car keys burned up. We were in real bad shape, and don't ever let it happen to you. (16:02)

**Dickey:** Was this the Trimble family home that AC had Built?

**J Trimble:** No, his son.

**Dickey:** Ok.

**J Trimble:** William Whiley built it in about 1865. AC built his over here in about, what was that date I gave you earlier 1840, or something like that?  
(16:22)

**Le Platte:** Yeah, 1840.

**J Trimble:** This was one of his sons, built this house and bought up all the land around. AC's house landed up being before the Civil War. William Whiley was after the, was after the Civil War. AC's house, Augustus Crawford was his name. What was the question? (16:56)

**Dickey:** So, this was the Trimble house? Did it get struck by lightning?

**J Trimble:** No! Patsy [Patricia] went to the kitchen to get a drink of water, a glass of milk or something and the goddamn house was on fire. (17:10)

**Dickey:** Just electrical fire?

**J Trimble:** We think it was electrical, we don't know.

**P Trimble:** It started in the laundry room.

**J Trimble:** Anyway, we got out with nothing. No clothes nothing. Car keys burned up. I couldn't even move the car or truck. All of our family history, I had in a big old trunk out front, about the size of that piece of furniture back there, and it had our whole family. See Trimble Hollow was where all the kin folks came by. Most of my family was military, and they'd come by about once a year and drop off stuff to store there. All them uniforms, swords, bayonets, guns, whatever, and everything burned up. All mine burned up, all theirs burned up. I had a World War II German P-32 Mauser. It was gone. I had in my library there with all the books, it had been there for a hundred years, all burned up. I had it under a table. I couldn't remember to go get it. I got it back there in that room burned up. All my pictures of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, and everybody on the wall burned up. My daddy brought back some Gestapo flags and whatever from the Second World War. He was in Germany in the Second World War, and they burned up. You bought me a gun cabinet, with all my rifles and shot guns in it, and they burned up. So, it was a really, really bad fire. Anyways, in 1865, WW built that house, and it would still be there today if it hadn't caught on fire. (19:58)

**Frye:** So, since we're on the topic of the...

**J Trimble:** I beg your pardon?

**Frye:** Since we're on the topic of the Trimble house, Can I ask you another question there? What memories do you have? Do you have any good memories about that house? When you're younger or anything?

**J Trimble:** The first house or the second house? (20:17)

**Frye:** The First, the one that burned up, the Trimble house?

**J Trimble:** Both of them burned up.

**Frye:** The second one

**Dickey:** You see the first one burned up from a lightning strike, right?

**J Trimble:** No, I think the first one burned up from the people who owned the property there after three or four generations on it. I believe they set it on fire to get insurance money, but I can't prove that. But, anyway, they called me, and I was on the tub. Somebody came by and said, John your granddaddy's house is burning over yonder. So, I jumped in the car and drove over there, and they had a fire truck over there with a little water hose on it, spraying it. It looked like someone peeing on a damn car you know? That's all we can say. (21:14)

**Dickey:** Did you grow up in the second Trimble House?

**J Trimble:** No, I grew up in Gardner Springs 'till I was about four or five. School bus would come by and get me over there. Was that Mr. Hollard? Mr. Hollard was the bus driver. He used to drop me off there every night after school. He'd say, "John Gray what are you going to have for supper?" I'd say, "Country ham and red eye gravy and homemade biscuits." I had some

good bus drivers. I remember one episode there, or two episodes in a two-story white framed house. I had a goat. I guess my mother let the goat go in the house. The goat went up the back stairs. It was upstairs eating whatever it was eating up there before we got it out. I think its name was Bambi. I don't think it was Bambi. I think it was a goddamn goat. I'm not sure.

**Frye:** So, you lived in Gardener Springs until you were about four or five?  
(22.47)

**J Trimble:** Yes. Until my granddaddy built his house over here, and then I moved on down over to his place. He is still there now. A guy bought the property. That property belonged to my great aunt Gussie. What happened, they split the place up. Part of it stayed my great granddaddy's place, part of it stayed in the middle that my granddaddy got, and part of it belonged to Aunt Gussie. Well, I named my cat here, if you see her walking around here in a minute, her name is Gussie. I named her after my great aunt. She's some kind of a cat. I'm not sure what that thing is in Patsy's lap. But anyways, I remember running away when I was about five. I was pretty adventurous, I guess. I was about five, and I tied my stuff up in a handkerchief and put it on the end of a stick. I was walking up a country road running away. The mailman came by. His name was what? He lives right over here. (24:12)

**P Trimble:** I don't remember now.

**J Trimble:** Stegall. Mr. Stegall came by in his old A model or B model and picked me up and made me go back home. He took me back home. This hurt my feelings. I don't like mail people since then. That's about all I remember and eating green apples. (24:39)

**Frye:** So besides trying to run away and eating green apples, what other activities did you enjoy when you were a child here?

**J Trimble:** Well I remember the goat, and I can remember looking out of the upstairs window. My daddy and uncle were going to the creek. We had a creek and a swamp area over there. They were going to catch a turtle, going to make turtle soup. They came back with a big old snapping turtle. And like to never got that thing killed. Do you remember that? (25:20)

**P Trimble:** I remember that.

**J Trimble:** Do you remember me talking about it? That uncle is out in, he's still alive out in, way out west somewhere.

**Dickey:** When did you move into the house that burned?

**J Trimble:** Well, after I got out of Georgia Tech, I went to the Merchant Marine Academy on Long Island, where I was a naval cadet. Are you ready?

**Le Platte:** Yeah

**Dickey:** We're ready.

**J Trimble:** Ok, I went to the Merchant Marine Academy, and I left there to go into aviation cadets for the Air Force, where I could fly jets. In the meantime, I got an appointment with West Point. So, I said, "No, I'm going to go to

West Point and see them.” So, I went to West Point. That’s the United States Military academy. In West Point... Where in the world is that?

(26:56)

**Dickey:** West Point?

**P Trimble:** Yeah

**Dickey:** It’s in New York State.

**J Trimble:** Yeah, but I’m trying to think, I had an uncle, my brother-in-law was up there last week. And that makes, Harry went to West Point, James Harley went to West Point, I went to West Point, the three of us went to West Point. (27:20)

**P Trimble:** Uncle Richard didn't go? Uncle Richard?

**J Trimble:** No, Uncle Richard, he went to Yale. He went to Emory and then he went to Yale. He was the one headed since.

**Le Platte:** Are those your brothers or cousins or?

**J Trimble:** Those are cousins. One of them retired as a Lieutenant Colonel, He’s up in Memphis, and in the Air Force. He was flying jets all over the world and got shot down in Vietnam twice, and escaped. The first time through the jungle and everything, and the second time is when they had the armistice and he got out. You see that’s the reason I want to write a book and go back and get my memories a little straighter. (28:18)

**Le Platte:** So—

**J Trimble:** Another cousin, what’s his name? The one from Peachtree City? I was

worried about him last night? Not Peachtree City, Peachtree City where the Hurricane come? I think it blowed him away? What's his name?

**P Trimble:** Well you've got Leighton and Jimmy.

**J Trimble:** Louder

**P Trimble:** Leighton and Jimmy (28:43)

**J Trimble:** Leighton he was the one. He was in the Army. He was a retired Colonel from Fort Mac, and he had made 250 parachute jumps before he retired. I'd like to show you the old cemetery up here on the hill. You go into to town or come out. The Trimble Cemetery, we were the first ones buried there. It's got a wrought-iron fence up at the top and it's got our names on the gates, Trimble. I've been looking after it for twenty years. He got somebody to bring truckloads of gravel up there and put around the markers and everything. It looks real, real good. I can't walk up that hill now. (29:45)

**Dickey:** That's the Poplar Springs cemetery? Yes, I've been up there.

**J Trimble:** Have you been up there lately?

**Dickey:** About a year ago. I was up there.

**J Trimble:** Did you see the Trimble Cemetery on Top?

**Dickey:** I did. Yes Sir. (29:59)

**J Trimble:** The tall one was, the tall one, whatever that thing's called, that was AC Trimble. He was the one in the first Trimble house, and there was a marker down on the highway down above 140 in front of the Poplar Springs

Church. It was put there because of that house. I have another cousin over here, he wrote up a history. I gave it to *Calhoun Times*, and they printed it. We had a box at the University of Georgia that had all of this history and everything in it. All the original deeds had little gifts on the bottom of them. I'm trying to think, what I'm trying to say. At one time they called me up at the fairgrounds and gave me a coin, because I was a descendant of one of the only three, descendants left, of the original people where the land had never changed hands. I can't remember the name of it. Who was that lawyer, that jacked-leg lawyer? Lives over there past that Swain school? On the hill up there? You know I used to have beers with him all the time. You don't remember jack legs?

**P Trimble:** I don't remember jack legs

**J Trimble:** She does, she just don't want to mention no names. (32:06)

**Dickey:** So, did you graduate from West Point?

**J Trimble:** No, Ma'am I was going to go in aviation cadets and fly jets, and then I ended up coming back, and I guess I got married. The first time.

**P Trimble:** And he went two years, I think.

**Dickey:** So, two years at West Point? (32:32)

**J Trimble:** Yeah.

**P Trimble:** He flunked out.

**J Trimble:** That was about all I could stand.

**P Trimble:** He flunked Calculus. (32:38)

**J Trimble:** No, I could have gone back, I got turned out. What do you call it? I had a failing grade, in any subject. And you see I had a failing grade in math. So, they were going to send me to a tutor in New York City, and get me a job at Mama Mia's pizza place down there. I figure I already had two years, who in the hell could stand three more years up there? But I wish I had now. I wish I had. I dream about the place at night. I've got all kinds of weird dreams. Every time I get a new pillow, my wife throws them away. She says that they stink. (33:34)

**Frye:** So, you left West Point, and came back here and got married?

**Le Platte:** You came back to Georgia?

**J Trimble:** Not really. I had one more stop. Me and a buddy of mine got on a Trailways bus and got all the newspapers we could and figured out where we'd like to go. He wanted to go to Washington State, and become a lumber jack. I said nah, that's too much hard work for me. So, anyways, I guess I got a *Los Angeles Times*. I decided I wanted to be a policeman. So, I went to Los Angeles to get on the police force. So, I got accepted and everything. But I had to come back here and lose some weight. I wasn't heavy, they just wanted me to come back and exercise more to lose a little weight and come back out there. In the meanwhile, I got married here, and didn't go back out there. I was going to be, you remember those policemen on the motor cycles out there riding up and down the highway? I was going to be one of those guys. So, I came back here and got married, and

before long had three kids and went to work for IBM. IBM didn't pay nothing, still don't pay nothing. So, I came back here and spent forty years with IBM. Then my house burned down.

**Dickey:** What did you do for IBM? (35:26)

**J Trimble:** I was kind of a personnel person. I was a person that made people happy, I never did nothing. They moved me around, I was in Atlanta, then I went to Memphis, went back to Tampa, went to New York. All over the places where they needed somebody. So, I left. They wanted me, have you ever heard of somebody named Jeff Foxworthy? Jeff Foxworthy?

**Dickey:** Yes (36:01)

**J Trimble:** I worked with his daddy for thirty years. He got killed over in Alabama. He was going around a curve, taking an old used truck back to a Ford dealer, ran head on to one on these water trucks that carries the big barrels of water. Didn't have a seat belt on, broke his damn neck. Killed him. Best friend I ever had in my life. Unbelievable. I dream about him every once in a while. He was a tough son of a bitch. I mean tough. We'd go to these dives down there in Tampa. I went to work for him in Tampa. Where was I? Anyways, wherever I was. I went to work in Tampa. We'd go eat lunch and he'd pick out the ugliest, roughest looking dives there was in that area. Pull his tie off throw his tie down. Pull his coat off throw it in the back seat walk in that place like a goddamn cocky rooster and ain't nobody mess with him. He had two odd teeth. He looked like a wolf. I'd maybe

throw my hat in the back seat, and maybe my jacket. I'd go in with him. Nobody messed with us. We had a company golf tournament. I didn't even know he had any golf clubs. I played like every week somewhere. We were going to get in the golf tournament. I went to pick him up. He'd come and picked me up and had his golf cart full of beer and whiskey, and everything else, and going to go play. He reached in the back of his old Chrysler pulled out a set of old golf clubs, had rust on them. Beat some of the rust off, put them in the back of the golf club, and went and won the damn tournament scratch. He just scratched. He couldn't stand to lose. He married this sweetheart from Hollywood. Greg what was her name? Greg what was her last name? I went to the wake and saw her mother. Her mother was one of these Hollywood mothers, and whatever, but she thought I was somebody. We got along real good. But Jeff was, he was ok.

(39:07)

**Frye:** So after you came back here to Adairsville, you said you spent 40 years here at IBM?

**J Trimble:** Yeah.

**Frye:** So, after you came back here to Adairsville you said you spent forty years here at IBM. What can you tell me about any events or festivals or anything that happened in Adairsville that you can remember?

**J Trimble:** I remember my aunt Ruby [Pause]

**Dickey:** Those forty years you were moving around a lot of different places, right?

**J Trimble:** Well I was with IBM.

**Dickey:** Right. When did you come back to Adairsville to live?

**J Trimble:** I guess I came back then but I was only here from dark in the morning to dark at night and had a wife and three or four kids at Trimble Hollow.

**P Trimble:** But you came back about in the early eighties, didn't you? From Tampa?

**J Trimble:** Yeah, I came back here, but actually I lived here, but I came back to Chattanooga, and I was going to go up there and help a guy out for six months, and I stayed five years.

**P Trimble:** But you were living in Gordon County.

**Le Platte:** Were you living in Georgia and commuting to Chattanooga?

**J Trimble:** I was living in Georgia but I was...one of the things that Chattanooga—or Memphis rather it was Memphis that I had to look after was about fifty rental cars and fifty condos...this was just the sideline, but I lived in one of the condos free, IBM paid for it. And I'd drive back home here on...when did I drive back here, on Sunday night?

**P Trimble:** You came back here on Friday night, and you drove back on Sunday.

**J Trimble:** Friday night and I drove back to Memphis on Saturday morning. So I commuted from here to Memphis and back and it was pretty tough.

**P Trimble:** But John can you tell them something about all this stuff in Adairsville that you attended. Like you were in the Lions Club and all these festivals and you went to church down-town all those years.

**J Trimble:** We bought two little storefronts down in Adairsville. One is where the

bank is now, and one is...I sold the little one to the dentist, first dentist we ever had. Well, he hurt his back playing golf and had to quit dentisting. Next door sold it to, what's the doctors name? He lives over here in front of the schoolhouse. His little wife went to Georgia, pretty little thing. Put a powder puff on her face there...can't remember. Probably run into her down at Sans Souci. She's a sweetheart. [Pause] Then there came a thunderstorm and the ceiling started falling, and I sold it to an out of the way church people who tore it up.

**Dickey:** Was this on the public square?

**Le Platte:** By the train depot?

**J Trimble:** Ma'am?

**Le Platte:** Was that in the public square by the train depot?

**J Trimble:** Do you know where the little thing is in the middle there? In the public square. It's right across from it in the main—see I could take you down there and show you. My first wife opened a—there's no place to eat down there, so she being an Adairsville woman, she knew everybody. What do you call those little slop down places?

**P Trimble:** Just a little soup shop. It was just a little restaurant, a little cafe.

**J Trimble:** Yeah. And I'd come home from Atlanta at night and sweep and mop the floor. Because she'd open it at about eleven o'clock and close about three in the afternoon and everybody knew her because her daddy was the undertaker and she was real likable and...

**P Trimble:** She was a Barton

**Dickey:** Yeah, I was going to say what was her name?

**P Trimble:** Sydney.

**J Trimble:** Sydney Barton.

**Dickey:** Okay. So that was the funereal home that was up on the hill behind the public square.

**J Trimble:** That's her daddy.

**P Trimble:** That's where she was raised.

**J Trimble:** Her nephew owns it now, but he lives down on Hall Station Road doing...and his mother helps run it now—Ovelle—and she was a boss down at Sans Souci for years. And then before that, Sydney's mother was kind of the leader down there for years, and they know a lot more about it than I do. I have names that come back to you Mr. Vercuchin owned a grocery store over on Main Street there, and he's no longer there. And I, when I was about five years old, went and stole a green bean and my granddaddy saw me got mad and made me—said you take that over to Mr. Vercuchin and tell him what you did. So I took it over there and got blessed out for stealing a green bean. [P Trimble's phone rings]

**J Trimble:** Tell your daughter I said hi.

**Le Platte:** Do your kids still live in Adairsville?

**J Trimble:** No that was two grand kids there that just—both of them just graduated from college last year. They would like to come and build a house back out

at the home place, and they don't realize what it takes to build a house out in the country. We got a well out there, it's on one side of where the old house burned down. Got a septic tank on the other side. You got to get somebody to take care of that. Build a house. Get your guns ready. When the night riders come out at night—my mother lived out there for seven years while I was in Washington and I'd come back—had a screen porch on the side. Every time I'd come back there was two or three more holes in it where she'd taken her thirty-two [Revolver] or thirty-eight—be somebody up on the road creating havoc or they coming down the driveway, and she'd let down on them, and be more holes in the screen.

**Dickey:** Where is this place where the house was?

**J Trimble:** If you get on [Highway] 75, go north, it's right past the next bridge, you go under the next bridge look to the right over at all those trees and everything, you see the chimney sticking up. Now the first house is on this side of that bridge when you turn up here on seventy five, and you go north, you get about halfway to the next bridge, another chimney sticking up over here. That was AC's [Augustus Trimble] house. This was WW's [William Wiley] house.

**Dickey:** Is that north of highway 140?

**P Trimble:** Yeah, up on the hill. There was seven houses on the—

**J Trimble:** They should go get in my truck I'll take you up there.

**P Trimble:** Wasn't there about seven houses up there on the Trimble place?

**J Trimble:** All of them were rental houses, yeah. And they all burned down. Got caught up in brush fires or whatever.

**Le Platte:** So about how—you guys still own that land? And how many acres of that land is it about now?

**J Trimble:** I own some of it.

**P Trimble:** You own thirty-three now. We own thirty-three acres.

**J Trimble:** There's about thirty-eight acres that we own. I sold twenty-five acres to a—I don't know what to call some of these places without hurting somebody's feelings. What can I call that damn church?

**P Trimble:** It's a cult—what you always call it.

**J Trimble:** I sold twenty-five acres to a damn cult, and they sold it to, I don't know what these women are they supposed to be running it now, and they opened like an orphan's home up there. And they got these kids down in Atlanta that the State of Georgia is paying 'em, and they would come running down that hill at night with knives and whatever, they never bothered me—there was a guy on our side porch crying one day, remember that?

**P Trimble:** He sold it to a church—a cult—twenty-five acres [Laughing] and that's a story in itself.

**J Trimble:** I bought eighty-five acres from—what's that place up there where trucks stop, not the truck stop. What's the place where trucks park on the side of the road up there? Here is a brew house. Here is a wheat house. You come

up there and here is where people park all these trucks.

**P Trimble:** You're talking about the rest stop.

**J Trimble:** Okay. I bought eighty-five acres out behind the rest area, and then I turned around, and I sold that eighty-five, and I sold that twenty-five, and I'm not sure what else I've sold to the guy that's the director over at the—what's the name of that place over off of the highway?

**P Trimble:** The Seventh Day Adventists.

**J Trimble:** Can't hear you.

**Le Platte:** The Seventh Day Adventist Church?

**Frye:** The Seventh Day Adventist.

**J Trimble:** Yes, that Cumberland Academy. The guy that runs Cumberland Academy. You sure ya'll don't want to take a ride?

**Dickey:** Well, maybe we will do that later when we have more time and you can take us and show us some of these places.

**J Trimble:** Alright.

**Frye:** I'm curious about what you can tell me about Poplar Springs Church. I know your family helped found that.

**J Trimble:** I think they gave them the land for it. And then some woman came by—there was an old church there before this one—some crazy woman came down on 75 and burned it down. I was in Washington for seven years. Wasn't even around, and that land belonged to me before they built the damn church there. Belonged to my granddaddy. Let them have the land to

build the church on. My mother wouldn't—she should have torn them up. I think I own the land where McDonald's is now, but I didn't get nothing out of none of it. And the lawyers all want to get their share of whatever now they're wanting to—a few months ago they wanted to buy the cemetery and the land around the church there they wanted to buy it, and they wanted the money, and they was—I don't know what they were going to do with it. Who was going to come in there and build a restaurant there?

**P Trimble:** We thought Chick-fil-a at one time.

**J Trimble:** What?

**P Trimble:** Chick-fil-a.

**J Trimble:** But they never did. Have ya'll heard of Vic Beasley?

**Dickey:** Yes, sir.

**J Trimble:** He's a football player for the—he's one of the football players for the Falcons.

**Le Platte:** Yes

**J Trimble:** He's from Adairsville. If you're in here in town or leaving town you'll see a sign that says home of Vic Beasley. They never put a sign up for me, home of John Trimble. [Laughter] We got the little Trimble Hollow sign up there, but that will be all I want. Anyway, I was told that the cemetery was in bad shape, except for where I keep my little bit up there fairly straight. Vic Beasley's mother got Vic to clean it up about two years ago—bush hogged it. I can't get anything out of city hall. I don't like anybody down

there except the mayor. I used to know everybody down there. I don't like that little Pam Morrow or whatever her little name is that little what's her name?

**Dickey:** Pam Madison.

**J Trimble:** Madison. I never even got to meet her or go down there to meet her. She's never there. So she is the important person.

**Dickey:** So what was the Beasleys' connection to that cemetery?

**J Trimble:** Nothing, except that his mother got him to go clean it up.

**Dickey:** Okay. So, they don't have family buried there?

**J Trimble:** No. If you look at the cemetery, the right-hand side facing it from the highway is where all the black people were buried. They keep theirs up. From the top of the hill where the Trimbles' were over here, it got growed up all they way back to [Highway] 140 or whatever. But she got—I think she got Vic to get some of the boys to go bush hog it, or weed eat it, or whatever. Now I've got a cousin in—where's Jim Harley live?

**P Trimble:** Elizabethtown.

**J Trimble:** Elizabethtown, E-Town. He bought one of these things that will cut down trees and bushes and everything and brought it down here and cleaned up around the top a little bit. But they had stumps from the last tornado hurricane and rocks and everything He couldn't get in there and there was also some black peoples graves in there, and he couldn't cut the marble up and everything. He did a good job. Between he and Vic, they got it cleaned

up pretty good. Did Michael meet him somewhere? Vic? And told him who he was and told him about Trimble Hollow, and Vic says, yeah. I know where Trimble Hollow is. So you just shake your head and not a damn word comes you, you just shake your damned head. [Laughing]

**Le Platte:** You talked about segregation in the cemetery. Can you tell us more about race relations in Adairsville?

**J Trimble:** Segregation? Is that what you said?

**Le Platte:** Yes.

**J Trimble:** I couldn't tell. I don't know that we had segregation here. I don't remember it.

**Dickey:** Yes, Adairsville was segregated. The schools were segregated until the mid 1960's.

**J Trimble:** I don't remember. What about Calhoun?

**P Trimble:** They were all segregated until about 1963. Your mother was the first person I ever saw and I grew up in a house that was—my daddy wasn't actually prejudiced but my mother was—

**J Trimble:** What about my mother?

**P Trimble:** His mother was the first white person I ever saw or heard of taking some of the black children out of the community and taking them to school in Calhoun. She had them in the car, and she took them to school, and she also went to the bank.

**J Trimble:** Took them to vote, too.

**P Trimble:** Went to the bank and helped get a loan to help build a house. That was his mother.

**J Trimble:** That's the reason I don't have any problem with it.

**P Trimble:** He just never thought—but I could never understand myself why the neighbors, the black family, they were friends of mine, why they couldn't get on the school bus and go to school with me. I mean I thought that was bad but—still think it.

**J Trimble:** We used to have a bus came by Adairsville and Calhoun, it was called the Blue Goose. It was the forerunner of, what are these bus lines now? And you could get on at Calhoun and ride to Rome. I don't know why we went to Rome once or twice, but a buddy and I got on the Blue Goose, and we were the only two white kids, so we went to the back of the bus and sat down, and the bus driver stopped the bus, and there some couple of black kids, they were there, and he made them get up and leave because us white kids was playing in the back of the bus, and I couldn't understand that. But I was about eight years old.

**P Trimble:** Yeah. Another thing that maybe I get him to talking when he went to school in Calhoun and he played football or in the band or whatever he—he had to catch the Greyhound bus at night when he'd get through and come home. And they'd let him off down there, and he'd walk home so there is a lot of stuff—

**J Trimble:** Honey, I'm sorry but I don't know what you're talking about.

**P Trimble:** I was telling them about you having to catch the Greyhound bus from Calhoun home.

**J Trimble:** Yeah it didn't even make it all the way home. They'd go to the old uh—we had a what was really an airport landing strip about a mile up the road. Well, I'd had to pay fifteen more cents to ride the Greyhound bus at night down to the next stop, and I didn't have fifteen cents, so I walked home in the mud and the rain and everything else across this hundred-acre muddy field and I didn't think it was bad. I guess I was tough.

**P Trimble:** When we were growing up, and I was amazed. We thought the Trimble family was just—I mean I was intimidated by them.

**Dickey:** They had been here a long time.

**P Trimble:** They had been there a long time. They were military. And when John Gray went to West Point, I thought, oh my God! When he went to the FBI, I couldn't believe it, and so—

**Le Platte:** And what was your maiden name?

**P Trimble:** My name was Owen, O-W-E-N, Patricia Anne, and I was a neighbor—I just thought they had a bunch of money—they had a bunch of land—it wasn't cash—it was land what they had. And he went—I was intimidated by the fact that he was the brightest child that ever went through Bellwood, and then he went to the FBI, and those things were big for me. His mother wanted to know when I was fifteen, she said, why don't you write Jon Gray? Well, I was scared to death. He was at West Point. I

couldn't do that. [Laughing] But—

**J Trimble:** You missed out on a lot honey.

**P Trimble:** He married Sydney Barton, and they had four children—four good children--and she was sick, and he worked at—they left here and went to Portsmouth, Virginia. Stayed there five years. Went to Washington Stayed there five years. and then went to Tampa. Stayed there five years. And then he worked at Memphis. But Sydney was sick. She had some kind of heart disease, and she died. And my husband after thirty-five years, he died, so we just got together.

**Dickey:** When did the two of you get married?

**J Trimble:** Oh, about fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years ago.

**P Trimble:** In November of 2001, because during 9/11, I was supposed to go to Washington, because I worked for HUD [Housing and Urban Development]. So I didn't go. They canceled everything. But we got married in 2001, November the—

**J Trimble:** That's a good way to remember it, isn't it?

**P Trimble:** Yeah, that's the way I remember.

**J Trimble:** She was getting ready to go to Washington when the plane landed in the Pentagon and I called her on the phone, and I said don't you go, because I was moving her furniture out of her house into my house. And that was when I was stronger.

**P Trimble:** Yeah, he used to do all this stuff and take the trash out, and he can't do it

anymore. But he lost a son. Ya'll know that, don't you?

**Dickey:** No.

**Le Platte:** No.

**P Trimble:** He lost a son three years ago to cancer—liver cancer. So he lost his home—everything he had, everything I had, everything. And then he lost a son a year later so he's had a—he's had some—

**J Trimble:** That's the reason I can't remember nothing.

**P Trimble:** He tells the doctor he says—I'm okay from here down, but he said from here up—he knows he doesn't think real good now.

**J Trimble:** You were asking me some questions a minute ago, and I couldn't remember what you said.

**Le Platte:** How are you guys involved in Adairsville community in present day?

**P Trimble:** We don't do—

**J Trimble:** If I've been involved in anything let her know.

**P Trimble:** You've not been able in the last four or five years since the house, but we went to church downtown in that little church.

**Frye:** At Poplar Springs?

**P Trimble:** No, this one downtown. The Methodist the first—

**Dickey:** The Methodist church that is right next to the police department.

**J Trimble:** Right, next to the cops. [Pause] I got the church painted the last time, and what was the—the Lions Club was right behind the church, and I was the president of the Lions club for a period of time.

**P Trimble:** He taught Sunday school—

**J Trimble:** Taught Sunday school.

**P Trimble:** Can you imagine he—

**J Trimble:** I climbed up in the attic to put in light bulbs in the ceiling. I was chairman of the—what do you call those people that's in charge of the church and everything?

**Frye:** Committee.

**P Trimble:** Deacons. No—

**J Trimble:** Deacons. Is it Deacons?

**P Trimble:** No, you were chairman of the committees—some of the committees.

**Frye:** Yeah, there are a lot of committees in the First Methodist church.

**J Trimble:** None of these deacons wanted to do anything I had to do everything. And we pressure washed the little life center, and that nearly killed me, because nobody else would do anything. And we planted trees out front, and nobody else would help me water them. And I cut the grass out there—I was looking at the church grounds and everything and the Sans Souci Club used to be her library, and I'd would go down there—there goes our four o'clock school bus.

**P Trimble:** We grew up in Gordon, but we used Adairsville, but the little library down here—daddy let me drive when I was twelve. I'd come down here and go to the library

**Dickey:** In the Sans Souci Club.

**P Trimble:** Yes in the Sans Souci Club. I loved that library, and he did too. You went over there and—so you could come downtown and shop downtown, and he ran the movie projector at the movies down there.

**J Trimble:** Yeah, I was the motion picture man.

**Dickey:** Where was the movie theatre?

**J Trimble:** You're facing the church—here is the railroad track—give me a pad of paper and I'll draw it. [Draws map]

**Frye:** So was Trimble Hollow AC's [Augustus Trimble] or WW's [William Wiley] house?

**P Trimble:** WW's. AC bought the land and built that other house, WW built that house [Trimble Hollow].

**J Trimble:** It's not very good. There's the railroad, there's US 41—Old US 41.

**Dickey:** So, the theater was down here on Gilmer street right there.

**J Trimble:** And there's city hall, and there's where the dentist's and doctor's offices were.

**Dickey:** In the building that's the old bank building?

**J Trimble:** Yes right next to it. I'm not sure if it's the same ones or not, but it's right next to it. My uh—great aunt her name was Aunt Joe Gray she was Colonel Gray's daughter, she was the first post-mistress in Adairsville—Aunt Joe Gray—and I was afraid to go to the post office when I was four or five years old, I was afraid she'd get me. [Laughs]

**Frye:** Well, so we don't take up too much of your time, we're going to go ahead

and close. Is there anything you want to add about your family, or your life, or the town of Adairsville?

**J Trimble:** No, I can't remember nothing.

**Frye:** Well then—

**Le Platte:** Thank you so much for taking your time

**J Trimble:** I'd be glad to tell you anything if I knew it. I remember—what's that street that goes past the new funeral home it goes to [Highway] 41.

**Dickey:** Summer Street.

**J Trimble:** It's probably Summer Street. Out about half way to the end out there at about the third house back this way, that's where the barber shop was in the old days. It was a one-stool barber shop, and I just remembered now, that's where I got my second or third haircut out there. Can't remember his name, and I don't know where ever I got a first one. Something happened to my head. [Laughs] I don't know what happened to my I head I got to go get my hair worked on though.

**Frye:** Well, thank you, mister Trimble.

**Dickey:** Thank you.

**Le Platte:** Thank you so much.

**J Trimble:** You can come back anytime. You know where I live. I'm not gonna run away.

## INDEX

- Adairsville, GA 2, 4, 19-22, 28-29
  - City Hall, 26, 34
  - Downtown, 32-33
  - Mayor, 26
  - Public Square, 20
- Adairsville, GA streets and roads
  - Gilmer Street, 34
  - Hall Station Road, 22
  - Main Street, 22
  - Summer Street, 35
- Atlanta, 7-8, 18, 21, 24
- Atlanta Journal Constitution, 4
- Aunt Gussie, 12
  
- Barton, Sydney (first wife)
  - Operating downtown Adairsville cafe, 21
  - Children with, 30
- Beasley, Vic, 26-27
- Bellwood, 6-7, 30
- Blue Goose bus, 29
  
- Calhoun, 2-3, 6-7, 14, 28-29
- Calhoun High School, 6-7
- Calhoun Times, 15
- Cherokee, 3-4
- Civil War, 4, 9
  
- Depot, 5, 21
  
- East View Cemetery, 4
  
- FBI 7, 30
  
- Gardner Springs, 11
- Georgia Tech 7, 13
- Gray (Colonel), 4, 34
- Grit newspaper, 6
  
- Harley, James (cousin), 14
- Harry (cousin), 14

Highway 140, 15, 23, 27

Highway 75, 23, 25

Hollard, Mr., 11

IBM, 17, 19-20

Jimmy (cousin), 14

Leighton (Colonel, cousin), 14-15

Lions Club 20, 32

Merchant Marine Academy, 13

Mother (Sarah Anne Morrow, Josie), 2-3, 5-6, 19, 22-23, 26-28, 30

Defending house from night riders, 23

Driving black children to school, 28

Ovelle, 22

Poplar Springs cemetery, 15

Poplar Springs church, 25, 32

Richard (uncle), 14

Rome, 29

Sans Souci, 21-22, 33

Segregation, 28

Star (Doctor), 3

Stegall, Mr., 12

Trimble, Augustus Crawford (AC, great grandfather), 9, 15, 23, 34

Settlement in Adairsville, 4-5

Burning of home, 11

Trimble Cemetery, 14, 26-27

Trimble Hollow, 3, 10, 19, 26-27, 34

Trimble, John Gray Jr.

Childhood memories in Gardner Springs, 2, 6

Early memories of Patsy (wife), 6

Early memory of a barber shop on Summer Street, 35

Education at Bellwood, 6, 11

Education at Calhoun High, 6

Education at Georgia Tech, 7, 13

Joining the FBI, 7, 30

Attending Westpoint 13-14, 16-17

Memories of mother, 2-3

Memories of parents, 5-6

- Describing first wife's family, 22
- Riding on a segregated bus, 29
- Running downtown movie projector, 33-34
- Selling land to a cult, 24-25
- Stealing a green bean, 22
- Story of running away, 12
- Story of WW's house burning, 8-11
- Son dies from cancer, 31-32
- Trimble Hollow as family heritage center, 10
- Walking home from school, 29
- Working at church, 32-33
- Working for IBM 19-20
- Trimble, Patsy (Patricia Anne Owen, wife), 6, 9, 12, 30
  
- Union Grove 3
- University of Georgia, 15
  
- Vercuchin, Mr., 22
  
- Watercress, 5-6
- West Point, 13-14, 16-17, 30
- Whiley, William (WW, great grandfather), 23, 34
  - Settlement in Adairsville,
  - Burning of home, 8-10
- World War II, 10

## **Biography**

John Gray Trimble is the descendant of two of Adairsville's first residents. His two great-grandfathers John Gray and Augustus Trimble were among the first residents of Adairsville. John Gray was born in Gardner Springs, GA. John went to Calhoun Highschool. After leaving Calhoun High School John went to work for the FBI. John also attended West Point for a few years before leaving for Los Angeles in attempts to become a police officer. After LA, John came back to Georgia and married his first wife Sydney Barton. John worked for IBM for forty years. John now lives in Adairsville with his second wife Patricia Owens.

## **Abstract**

To better understand Adairsville's history Undergraduate students conducted Oral History Interviews with significant residents of Adairsville. John Gray Trimble is the descendant of two of Adairsville's first residents. His two great-grandfathers John Gray and Augustus Trimble were among the first residents of Adairsville. John Gray is a current resident of Adairsville. He family has a lasting legacy of military service. His family is also responsible for the Poplar Springs cemetery in Adairsville.