"INTERVIEW WITH CLAUDE EDWIN CHANDLER"

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for the

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Mr. Chandler was born in Cobb County and has spent most of his 97 years in Cherokee County. He grew up on a farm. He has taught school, run a business, helped found the Bank of Woodstock, served as the Woodstock mayor and the Cherokee County tax assessor, and held various other positions during his career.

S = Scott  
C = Chandler

S Mr. Chandler, why don't you tell us where you were born?

C Well, it was in Cobb County about a half mile over the line from Cherokee. The house is still standing, and it looks just as good today as it did when we left there.

S What road was it on?

C They call it the Kemp Road now. It didn't have a name back then. It was sometimes called Settler Road, but I think they call it the Kemp Road now. My father died one month to the day before I was 4 years old. He went to a doctor in Atlanta. He had what they called Bright's disease back then. I don't know what they call it now. But anyhow we went down to Atlanta. He carried Mother. I had just one brother, and Mother and Father carried us down there. I had an uncle in Atlanta who was a policeman there for years. We spent the night at his house. Father went to the doctor, and we spent the night at Uncle Ed's. Well, the next morning, Inard, the son of Uncle Ed, my cousin, and I went out the backdoor; and he said, "Your father died last night." We went home by railroad. I don't know if it was the next day or then, but I think it was the next day. What they called a hook and eye ran up here from Marietta. I don't know if you know, down here at 5 and 42 is called Bullock's Barn. He was a governor at Reconstruction.

S Right, Rufus Bullock.

C He built an immense barn there, and the train would stop there and on down just below Jamerson Road on the left. The Hoys lived in the house nearly in front of that little fruit stand where the train would stop. It stopped at Shallowford Road if anybody was there. It stopped at Blackwell, and then on to Oakhurst, and then to Marietta. Well, how Mother got word up here I don't know, because back then there wasn't any telephone. Somebody must've come up; because when we came up, we were met at Shallowford crossing. There weren't many buggies at that time, but we were fortunate enough to have one. Somebody had a buggy there to carry Mother, Brother Walter, and me to the cemetery. But you know that is all I remember. I know there was a crowd there and a
wagon, but I don't remember a thing that happened at the cemetery. When they were ready to put him away, that's funny, but I really don't remember anything about the funeral service at all.

S What year were you born?

C In 1883. Father was just in his early 30's when he passed away.

S What did your mother do after your father died?

C Mother taught school over at what they called Oakland. I believe it's where Blackwell and they called it Ebenezer Road go towards Sandy Plains. I don't know how many years she taught. I know we went to Marietta once. I don't know if we went every week or not, but she'd take butter and eggs. In the spring she'd take chickens and butter. I tell you, it shows you the difference in children. Today they go to the store and spend a dollar or two and not say anything about it. But if I got a nickel's worth of peppermint stick candy and a pack of chewing gum, I was doing fine. But we raised everything at home. We had an 80 acre farm. Back then they had tenants. They rented crops on the shares. In other words they were furnished the house and the stock and everything to work with. They got half the crop, and the owner got the other half.

S That gave your mother some income.

C Oh, yes. She got half of what they made. That made an income.

S What was your mother's name?

C Amanda McCleskey. Her mother died when she was just 2 or 3 months old, and her Grandmother and Grandfather Reed raised her. Over there where Kemp Road goes down in Trickum Road, there's a big lake. It was just a pond back then. They raised her there. Now Grandpa Reed, like most of the immigrants that settled in Georgia, first went to Virginia, then to South Carolina, and then over to Georgia. You know back then the early settlers would hunt a place where there was a spring to settle. They couldn't dig a well without anyone to help them. They built on the knoll above the spring where they could go and get water. A lot of them would build a little springhouse over that where they could cool the milk in the summer. Well, my mother didn't stay a widow long. I was 11 years old when she married again, and we moved to Cherokee about 2 miles east of here on Arnold. I don't know whether you're familiar with the road. Arnold goes out east a while, then turns to the left and goes up southeast.

S So then you moved to Cherokee County.

C We moved up here. I was 11 years old. We moved in January, 1894.

S What was the name of the man she married?
J. W. Edwards, John W. Edwards. He was a Civil War veteran. He lost an arm. By the way my Grandfather Chandler was a veteran in the Civil War. I never did ask my uncle whether he was killed or whether he died with a disease, but I imagine he was killed. I was in Charleston, South Carolina, a number of years ago; and I went to the Confederate Cemetery. His grave is just a few graves from Wade Hampton's monument.

That's interesting. I know they grew a lot of corn and a lot of cotton around here. Did they grow anything else?

Nearly all back then raised their own wheat, and they would raise sorghum cane. You'd carry your corn to a mill to have it ground for your meal, and we had to drive to Roswell to grind our wheat into flour. We'd grind enough so that we wouldn't have to go but once during the season.

What did they get the sorghum from?

There were sorghum makers. They had a mill, and it had a beam to it and rollers. They'd hitch a mule to that, and it would go around and around. You'd feed that sorghum in there and get the juice out. Then you'd carry that to the man that made sorghum. He had a vat built on a furnace. We would raise enough so that we'd have our own syrup at home. Old fashioned sorghum was mighty good.

What was a corn shucking?

We'd gather corn, pile it up in the yard next to the barn, and then invite our neighbors to come in for a corn shucking. It was harder on the women than it was on the men because the women had to give their guests supper. They would go to shucking corn late in the evening; and when suppertime came, Mother would have a good dinner for them. Back then most folks would take a drink of toddy. We put a jug of whiskey on the ground under that pile of corn; and when they got nearly through shucking, they could take a drink. Nobody got drunk. They would just take a drink. Then they'd put the corn in the crib and put the shucks up in the barn before they left there. Nearly everybody would come. Different neighbors would all have corn shuckings. It would take one man a long time to get the corn shucked and ready to use.

How did you thresh wheat?

When we gathered the wheat, we'd bring it up and stack it and put a cloth over the top to keep it from getting wet. There was a Mr. Forrester who had a threshing crew. He'd come and thresh that wheat. We'd sack it and put it in the barn. Then when we wanted to grind it, we'd take it to a mill and have it ground into flour. Now we always fed the folks who shucked corn, but the thrashers were just at your house a short time. We never did have to feed the thrashers.

Did you have a variety of things to eat when you were growing up?
We never lacked for anything much taking care of us when we were little. We had an orchard. We had 2 kinds of grapes. What they called Concord was a colored and Elizabeth was a white grape. We had Shockley apples, Yale apples, and a horse apple. We had a good orchard. We had 2 kinds of cherries. We had a May and June cherry. We had a fig tree. You don't see any figs anymore. We also had Quincies. You don't see any more Quincy trees. We had peaches, pears, and raspberries. Mother also had sage and horseradish.

Did you have chestnuts?

Up in the mountains they raised a lot of chestnuts, and those mountaineers would take a wagonload of shelled chestnuts to Atlanta. They would sell that load to the merchants in the town there. Now there's not a chestnut tree that's living. By the way over at my school at Rocky Mount those woods surrounding there were full of chinquapin trees, and I don't think there is a one there now. I think they're gone like the chestnuts.

A chinquapin tree is a very tiny chestnut, about 8 to 10 feet tall.

They didn't grow up like a chestnut tree. They were just a bush. There was one on our farm, but it died.

Didn't the mountaineers have an unusual pronunciation for the word "onion"?

"Ang'-erns." A lot of folks called them "angerns." There were 2 old farmers from up above here who carried a load of vegetables, going house to house. A lady came out and got some stuff and said, "Do you have any onions (un'-yens)?" They said, "No, mam. We don't." Well, they drove on a little piece; and one of the men said to the other one, "Say, you know, I bet that woman meant angerns."

That's good. Could you say something about the kitchen when you were growing up?

Back then most kitchens were built about 20 feet from the big house. They don't do it anymore, and most of them are gone. We had a woodbox at the fireplace. When I was big enough, I had to fill it up with wood. I kept that filled up and kept a fire. The kitchen had a woodbox for the stove in there, and I remember I cut kindling and brought the wood in. Walter would help me. Now they have basements, but we had cellars back then. Mother would have a barrel of apples in the cellar, and they'd keep all winter.

Was it a dirt cellar?

Dirt cellar. Oh, yes! It was just dug out. It wasn't walled in.

What other chores did you have to do besides bringing in kindling?
Well, I milked the cow, fed the stock, and kept the kindling and wood cut. Now we had awfully good neighbors. I had a cousin that lived about a mile and a half away, and we would bring a bunch in the fall and cut wood enough to do Mother during the winter. But I'd have to fix the kindling and cut the stove wood, and back then they made soap at home. They had an ash hopper, and they'd take the ashes and fill that to make soap. It had a little trough under it. They poured water in that. A bucket caught the water from the ashes to make lye. Of course, they kept all of the old meat scraps; and they put that for the grease in there, boiled that, and made soap. That was the kind of soap we had.

Was it harsh on your hands? Was it very rough soap?

No, it didn't seem to me. It was all right. It didn't have anything in it to make it rough. It just had the lye and enough grease to make it firm.

Did your mother make your clothes?

She did our own socks. She made our own little pants. She made all we wore. She had a sewing machine and made our own clothes. Of course, she had to buy the cloth. A lot of folks had looms and made their own cloth. A lady who lived pretty close to the school had a loom I've seen her making cloth on. My mother had a spinning wheel. She would make her own thread.

Did you have a big celebration at Christmas time?

Back then we had wood fires and a mantel piece, and most folks had one of these little glass lamps that burned kerosene. We happened to have a glass lamp with a chimney to it. I'd hang my stocking on one corner of the mantel and my brother on the other corner Christmas night. If we got a couple of oranges, a little stick candy, a little raisins, and a little chewing gum, we thought we had a big Santa Claus.

That was big back then. I guess that was about all anybody was getting.

That's right.

When did you start to school?

Now back then folks made a crop. Well, they just had school after you laid crops by, usually in July or August, till the crops got ready to gather. It didn't last but 2½ or 3 months. I lacked a few months being 6 years old before school was out that first term. I went to P. D. Whelan. I don't know whether you've heard of him or not.

I have. He was very famous.

I've understood that there was a street in New York named for P.D. I think he was a stowaway from England over here. He got on a ship, and it was way out before they found him. He landed in New York, and
finally landed down here in Georgia. He was my first teacher. As well as I can remember it was about a 20 by 30 feet board schoolhouse. You know, just plain. Have you been to the new school over at Rocky Mount?

S  No, I haven’t seen the school.

C  Well, it's built almost in a stone's throw of where I went to school. There is a Mr. Moseley who lived down there, and this old schoolhouse stood just about the edge of his front yard. They invited me down to the first Rocky Mountain Parent-Teacher meeting. It's still Rocky Mountain school. I considered it an honor to be down there where I went to school 91 years ago. I've got a great-grandson going to the same school. But there is quite a difference in the school now than the one I went to. We tooted water from the spring. We had one water bucket. We all drank out of the same dipper. It must have not been too unsanitary. I'm still living. I walked to school, carried a little tin pail with my dinner in it, and hung it up. Now all my great-grandson has got to do is go up to the road and meet a bus. He rides to school and gets a hot lunch for dinner. I walked and had a cold one for mine.

S  How far was the school away?

C  I walked about 2 or 2½ miles. I cut through the woods and field and only passed 2 houses going to school. There was a Mr. Jack Reeves who had a home, and he built another house a tenant lived in. I went down Trickum Road, and these 2 houses were the first I saw. I went up Trickum Road to the branch. I turned left there, and it's not over a quarter from Trickum Road to that road you take there on the left when you leave Trickum Road. I believe they call it Steinhauer Road now. Rocky Mount is west of the Kemp Cemetery, and Steinhauer Road is east of that. Rocky Mount is halfway between Trickum and the Steinhauer Road.

S  Did you have to buy your own books?

C  We had to buy our own books. There weren't many. Webster's Blue Back Spelling Books, McGuffey's Readers. They haven't made a better arithmetic than Sanford's Arithmetic. There were little things I remember about P. D. There weren't over 25 or 30 in school because houses were far apart. You know Trickum Road? Well, after you left Trickum Road coming down from Cherokee, you came to a house where the Hanes lived. The next was the Hardemans. You came plum on from the Hardemans down to Rubes Creek. There are only 2 houses on that road. After you crossed Rubes Creek you came to my grandfather's house—Grandfather Reed's house. It was on the right. Then next on the left there was an old couple, Uncle Hiram and Betsy Wolford. I remember he was palsied. When he would drink coffee, he had to take both hands to get it up. Mother and I and Brother used to go there visiting. It wasn't but a mile. It's funny how you remember things when you are little. They stick to your mind better than things that happened last week. Aunt Betsy and Mother were talking, and she looked down the
road. I remember exactly what she said. She said, "Lord, Mandy, look down the road. Look what a pretty critter in a vehicle is coming up the road." It was a horse and buggy; and back then, as I say, there were very few that owned buggies. Most of the vehicles were wagons. But we were fortunate enough to have a buggy. It was made in Marietta by Gramling. I don't know whether any of his folks in Cobb County remember or not, but I remember. It was built high--just a single seat. I remember my cousin, my uncle's boy, had come up one summer. He stayed with us a while, and he had met a girl. My stepfather let him have a buggy and a horse to go and take her to ride. Well, I was going to school over here. We would write compositions back there, so many a week, and read them Friday evening at the end of school. Well, this girl he went with had a composition. In her composition she told about going to ride with a young man in a buggy so hard that her head flapped. It made me so mad. I kept that buggy for a long time over at the farm. I wish we had hung it up and saved it. They could have put it up in the shelter where they kept the wagons. Later on we had a surrey, one of these with a top and open sides. Well, little things you remember. We kept a cow. I believe I told you that I did the milking. The pasture was a good little ways, and we took the cow to the pasture. One evening we went down and the cow wasn't there. I had been sick, but we looked for the cow. There was a big ditch that washed out down there. I leaned over. It was deep enough to see if the cow had fallen in there. Well, you know, I got overbalanced. I said I had been sick, and I fell on my head in that ditch. It must've knocked me senseless for a little bit because when I came to and got up, my brother was 100 yards up the hill. He was going to the house to tell Mother. That's maybe why I've got no sense today.

S Did you find the cow?

C Finally she came up.

S How long was the school day?

C I think about 8 hours.

S Were all the grades in the same room?

C There was no partition. We had blackboards, slates, and pencils.

S How did Mr. Whalen handle all the classes in the same room?

C There was plenty of room. There were just benches and a little desk--a little place to keep your books. But they were there from 6 to 20 years old.

S Did he teach the same lessons to everybody?

C He did the spelling lessons I know. I remember this. There was just one door, and it was on the east. P. D. had a chair. For heat we had a Franklin stove. I don't know whether you've seen one or not. It's a long stove. It's not a round stove; it's long. It burned 2 2/3 foot
length wood. That's what they heated the school room with. P. D.'s chair was back of that. Anyhow he sat there for that spelling. I remember him saying, "You big fry form a circle on the outside, and you little fry a circle on the inside." Well, I remember that. I know some of them were 18 or 20 because there was a Dobbs who came there and a Boring and a Gault. I know they had to be all of 18 years old.

S How many grades did you have?

C Grades? I don't know if there were any grades or not. I don't think so. We just had classes, so many reading classes, so many arithmetic.

S What did you do for entertainment?

C When I was young, of course, we had no radio or television. Square dances were about all the fun we could have. In the fall of the year, we'd have square dances in different places. I know we'd have music. We had a fiddler and a banjo. Our fiddler was a Negro, and he was a good one. We'd have a set go through, and then we'd pay the fiddler after every set was over. But that was the only place we had for our amusement or recreation. I'd go as much as 5 miles for a dance. Uncle Polk McCleskey lived way down on Trickum Road 5 miles from here. We'd go there, and they'd have them at different places. We weren't prepared to have one at our house. We didn't have room. But they'd have them at different places all through the fall and winter. We had a good time.

S Did you have many sports that you played--baseball or anything?

C We played baseball, and I was the pitcher here for our team.

S Was it a Woodstock town team?

C Woodstock School. We went to Holly Springs. We lost the game, but we had a good time playing baseball.

S Did you play any sports other than baseball?

C We played town ball. We'd have a pretty good little space marked off, about the length of my living room. There'd be a man standing on each side. Well, one would get in there, and they'd try to hit him. They'd throw the ball at him. If they hit him, he had to get out. A new one would get in. They'd throw that ball. You'd get as far from the person throwing it as you could. They'd throw it, and you'd dodge it. It was a lot of fun back then.

S I imagine so. What did you call that?

C Town ball. I don't know why they called it town ball because we played in the country.

S Tell me about the horse coming home without you.
I made a date with a young lady that was visiting my Uncle Sam McCleskey down in Cobb County about 5 miles from my home up here. I rode down in a horse and buggy. I had a new Barnesville buggy. I hitched the horse to the fence in front of the house. I went in to see her and stayed pretty late. When I went out to go home, the horse and buggy were gone. I borrowed a mule from my Uncle Sam McCleskey, but he didn't have a saddle. So I got on the mule and rode up to the next house which was on the way home to see if he had a saddle. He did, and he loaned me the saddle to ride home. I got home as quick as I could. My horse had come up Trickum Road, and he knew where to make a left turn. A few hundred yards up that road he had to make another turn on a road to the right. Then quite a little distance down he had to take another turn to the right. Then he hit the road that went right in front of the house. Then he turned in. When I got home, he was standing at the watering trough. My buggy hadn't been hit by anything. Now what about a horse trying to do it now with so many automobiles?

I don't think he could do it anymore.

He couldn't do it.

Did you call that a Barnesville buggy?

That's right. It was made in Barnesville, Georgia.

How far did you go with your education?

I went to Reinhardt. It was just a junior college. I was in one play up there. I was an Irishman. I had on a red wig, I reckon. It was a wig of some kind. That was at the end of commencement. Well, it was hot. It was in the summer. You know what? I pulled off my wig to cool. I had to go back and say something else, and I went without my wig. But they say it didn't make any difference. I remember that.

Where did you live when you attended Reinhardt?

I boarded at a place where there were 4 of us boys and 3 girls. There isn't much to tell about it. Dr. Rogers was the President of the college then. His daughter Lois was an English teacher. They had smallpox up there. I never did take that. But there were 2 girls who boarded at the same place that I did, and they took it home and gave it to their father. I stopped there as I came home one time; and the father said, "If I had 100 children, I'd never send another one back to Reinhardt." I had mumps while I was up there, and I came home. I just didn't go back. I know there was a young lady. I remember her name--Mamie Peebles. She wrote down there wanting me to come.

After you were at Reinhardt, is that when you taught for a year? Where was the school where you taught?

Little River Academy over here.
Was that a public or private school?

That was just a one-room school, but the masons had a room upstairs. It was 2 stories, but yet it was just a one-room school downstairs. I just taught there for one year. They wanted me to come back, but I just didn't like teaching school. So I decided to go into business. Do you know where the library up here is? Well, that store next to it is where I went into business. That was in the family; it is still in the family. So I started a little business here, and I ran that for about 20 years. Then I sold out.

What kind of business was it?

It was a grocery, and I had a few dry goods and shoes. We moved here in 1906 from the farm. You don't know the streets here. It was called Elm Street. You pass Priest, the furniture store, and go out by some big poplars and elms. That's where Mother and Brother died out there.

The house was on Elm Street?

Elm Street. There were just 3 houses on it at that time. There was a little house just back of Priest Furniture on Elm and then our house. Dr. Tom Vansant had built this side, and then this two-story house was ours.

Could you tell me a little more about your business?

I ran it for 20 years. Then I sold it to Albert Hendon. My brother farmed. I helped him out there 1 year. Anyhow I went back in business next to the old bank building. I had a general merchandise business there and sold to these tenants. We began selling in March, and they'd buy stuff to live on. You wouldn't expect any money until the cotton came in. During World War I cotton went up to 40 cents a pound. Well, after the war it went down to a dime. These folks had traded with us that year. They brought what they made in and put it on their debt. When they turned everything they had over to us, most of them considered that debt settled.

That year I guess it wasn't though.

I didn't know but about 2 that carried their bill somewhere else. Most of them were honest. They brought what they made, but they considered the debt settled. A few, 2 or 3, gave notice. Anyhow I got out.

Could you say a little bit about taking cotton to the cotton gin?

We'd pick our cotton; and when it got enough to make a bale, we'd take it to the gin. They'd gin it and put it in a bale. Then when they got ready to sell it, they'd put it on a wagon and bring it to market. Woodstock in the fall of the year was filled with wagons loaded with cotton that folks were bringing to sell.
S  Who graded it?

C  They'd put it up. There were 2 who bought cotton. They would get both to bid on it. One would make a bid, and they would go to the other and see if he would raise it. The one that bid the higher got the cotton.

S  At the cotton gin did they grade the quality of the cotton?

C  No. When you sold it, the buyer would cut that and take a sample out, look at it, grade it, and tell you how he graded it. Some would be a little dirty. It wouldn't be as nice and clean as the other. The merchants bought it and put it in the warehouse. Then when they got enough to make a car load, the cotton buyer would come and look at it, make a bid on it, and sell it. They'd load it in the car there for him and ship it where he wanted it.

S  Did they weigh it at the gin? Once they had put it in bales did they weigh the bales?

C  We weighed it when we bought it. They didn't weigh it at the gin. We had a scale in the warehouse that would be used when someone brought it up there.

S  What was the average weight of a bale?

C  Around 500 pounds—450, 475, or 500 pounds.

S  After you gave up your business what did you do?

C  I got a job with the Life of Georgia and worked for them for a number of years. I reported to Chattanooga and worked there for several years. One morning I got a phone call from the president. He wanted to know if I'd take charge at Knoxville. I told him I would. Well, he said, "Report there Monday morning." I was the manager there for a number of years. Then I retired, built this home, and came back in 1945. That was after the war and it was harder then to get things. I didn't build here until 1946. I know I had to go to Chattanooga to get some pipe to run from the house to take the water.

S  Did you build the house yourself?

C  No, it was built by a contractor. There is one thing I meant to tell you that happened when I was a child. I told you I had just one brother. Well, we had a neighbor lady, and 2 or 3 of her children came to see us one Sunday evening. We were playing down in front of the house, and we got thirsty. We came up to get some water. The man that lived on the place had cleaned out the well the day before. Back then they built old curbs to cover the wells. They built the curb kind of sloped, and it had a top that wasn't near as big. He had just put the top on and didn't nail it back. Well, I could turn the bucket over to get water and the others could; but poor Walter had to get up there. When he got up there, that thing slipped. He went down in that well, bucket, curb, and all, 60 feet deep. The Lord must have
provided because we were sparsely settled, but a man happened to come along in 10 minutes of that time. If he hadn't come along, I don't know what we'd have done. I don't know if it was that long or not, but he went down. I remember he had one little skinned place on a rib that was the only place he was hurt. I don't know; when that curb hit the water, it must've dug into the bank; and he had a place to sit on. Oscar Cross was the man that came by and went down and got him out. He told Walter, "I'll tie you where you won't fall." Walter said, "You don't have to tie me. I can hold to the rope." Well, he didn't. He brought him out. But that was a miracle that that man came along just at the time. I couldn't have been over 8 or 9, and Walter was 2 years younger. Just to show the difference, Walter could do nearly anything. He could do electrical work. He helped me in so many ways. He was here when this house was wired. He saw that there were enough outlets. There are several outlets in the living room, one in the dining room over to the right, and one to the left. Then in the kitchen you saw the safe back there where you turned the light on. Then there is one over there at the stove. And you can turn the bedroom light on as you go in one door and turn it off as you go out the other. I hadn't even thought about it. I have one light upstairs. So if you had to go, you would have a light in the attic and one at the door. You see that's a double socket there like the one outside.

S  What was a wagon yard?

C  Back in the late 19th century, when folks carried a load of vegetables or something to Atlanta, they went to a wagon yard. There weren't any automobiles back then, but they had a wagon yard. You could park your wagon and your mule, and they had troughs where you could water your stock or a place to feed it and spend the night. I was just about in my teens when they had an exposition in Atlanta, and President Cleveland was to be there. So my stepfather wanted to go and take me down there. So we went down. He was President; and he was in a parade; and we saw him.

S  The exposition of 1895 was a pretty big exposition wasn't it?

C  Yes, it was a big exposition. They had a good showing.

S  I understand that you also saw Franklin Roosevelt once.

C  When I was in Knoxville as manager for Life of Georgia, Mr. Roosevelt came down. He wanted to go to the Smoky Mountains. There was a bunch with him. He went down the street there. I got in an upstairs building where I could see him go by. I didn't go over to the meeting in the Smoky Mountains. That's the only 2 Presidents I've ever seen.

S  Were there many churches in this area when you were growing up?

C  No, way back then churches were far apart. My mother was a member of Sandy Plains Church before she came up here, while she lived in Cobb. We had some tenants on the place, a Mr. and Mrs. Newton. I don't know if
you've ever heard of a Mt. Beulah Church. Anyhow Mother would go in a one-horse wagon to take them to church. That's the reason they used to have camp meetings. They had a camp ground at Little River. Woodstock had a Methodist and a Baptist church. Bascomb was there. But anyhow I remember going to Mt. Beulah, and the preacher there would have a pitcher of water on the pulpit and would have to wet his throat every now and then. It would get dry. Mother was a Baptist. She was a member of Sandy Plains Church; then she joined Woodstock Baptist Church. But I never joined a church. I was converted at Sandy Plains when I couldn't have been 10 years, just before we came up here. Well, I just didn't go up that night. We moved, and I just never did go. But I carried my wife to church just as regularly, and I've supported the church. I know I have tried to live right. I've tried to wrong nobody. I've tried to treat everybody right.

S Were there many doctors available when you were growing up?

C Back when we came up here there was a Dr. Roberts who lived on a farm adjoining ours, and there was a Dr. Will Dean here in town. His father was a preacher. Dr. Will Dean and Dr. Roberts were the only 2 doctors in this settlement. Later on a Dr. Freeman came up here and stayed a while. He started a little drugstore up here next door to where I went in business in the old bank building the second door down from where the library is now. Dr. Freeman stayed here 2 or 3 years, and he left for some reason. Then Dr. Vansant came here, and he practiced medicine here until he died. Thomas J. Vansant. You would get sick and call, and he'd come to your home night or day. He'd hitch up his horse and come to see you. Now you can't get a doctor to come to your house. You've got to go to them or get an ambulance to go. But he was a good man. My brother got sick, and Dr. Vansant waited on him. He had to have an operation, and that Dr. Vansant carried him to Atlanta himself and put him in the hospital. Who would do it now? Nobody.

S Nobody that I know of.

C Nobody, but anyhow he went to see him while he was down there. Then my mother was fixin' to retire one night over at the old home. Going around the bed she fell and broke her hip. She lay in the bed and didn't say anything until the next morning. We called Dr. Vansant out here, and we carried her to Marietta. There was a Dr. Gober, the same name as my wife's father's was. He didn't operate himself. He got a doctor from Atlanta. I can't remember his name, but anyhow they went there and set her hip. She had to lay in the hospital there for a couple of weeks, I guess. She finally came home. We brought a nurse to stay with her. Brother had a cook for Mother and him. I know it was Thanksgiving. She died just a few days after Thanksgiving Day. She was in her 93rd year when she passed away.

S Have people changed in the last 80 years or so?

C Haven't they though?
What are some of the ways in which they've changed?

When I was a boy and a man was making a crop himself, and he got sick and couldn't work that crop, the neighbors would come in and plow it, hoe it, and fix it for him. Who would do it now?

Probably nobody.

But they would bring their plow and work it for him. They don't do it now.

Why do you think people were more willing to help their neighbors?

That's a hard question to answer. They weren't so thickly settled, and they knew each other personally. It made a difference. Now you take folks that live 200 yards from me down there. I never see them and don't know anything about them. But folks have been mighty good to me. I know there were 3 different church groups that came and sang last Christmas. I know there was one bunch from Little River. I had them form a circle around me like P. D. made us. I certainly enjoyed it. It was cold, but I had plenty of room for them all to come in. I wish you could have seen what different churches sent me in the way of food, fruit, and stuff like that. They've been mighty good to me--mighty good.

Let's change to a little different topic. Weren't you the tax assessor for a while?

I served as tax assessor for several years.

Could you talk a little bit about how you went about assessing people's property?

Well, we just appraised different folk's property, put a price on it, and then the tax collector would take that. Ever what the tax mills were set, he'd collect.

Did you have to travel?

No, you just stayed at the office. The names of all the taxpayers were on the digest. We'd take that digest and get the names from that. We assessors would know if there were any additions or buildings made where you'd increase the tax.

Did you take people's word for what their property was worth?

We didn't have the folks to go out and look at it. We just took the names and saw what they gave last year. If there had been any additions, we could find it out and assess them according to the value.

Was your office in the courthouse?

In the courthouse, yes.
So you had to go to Canton?

Had to go to Canton. My stepfather was tax collector. There were 16 districts in the county. We would go to the nearest one and come back in a day. But these way off, we'd have to spend the night at different folks' houses. I know up at Waleska we stayed with a Mr. Mitchell. I don't remember all. Places like Ballground we'd spend the night. You know, back then not a one would charge a dime for it. With a horse and buggy you couldn't make that trip in a day. They don't do that anymore. You have to go to the courthouse to return your taxes. Back then you went to every district. You would have a certain place. You'd tell them. You let them know what day you would be in a certain place in a certain district, and they could come in and give in the taxes.

So your stepfather was actually collecting the money?

Oh, yes. He was the elected tax collector.

That must have been a little bit dangerous to have all that money.

Well, we'd turn it in to the bank every day.

Did you have some kind of little safe that you kept it in?

Yes, my stepfather had a safe. He did run a store, and he had a safe. It stayed in the store until a few years ago. Somebody came in there and wanted to use that safe for an office. They took it out and hauled it off.

In addition to tax assessor, what offices have you held?

I've been on the grand jury numbers of times. I was foreman one time. I served on the board of tax assessors for several years, and I was mayor of the town one time. The only thing I've got to show for it is a cement bridge on Arnold's Mill Road. You know when you go out of town, you come to a branch with a cement bridge over it? I had that bridge built. Use to when folks came to town, all you saw was buggies and wagons. The horses would drink out of that branch. We had a well up here right in front of the second store from the drugstore. They had a trough there, where you could draw water and water the stock. Well, that bridge will be there.

When were you mayor?

In 1928, the year Highway 5 was paved. There were several oaks right next to the stores. They had to come down. I know I went up to my store one night and sat there. I just hated to see it, but they came down. I had to have them taken down because if they had stayed there, the leaves would have cluttered up everything. You couldn't have kept things cleaned. But up to that time just a gravel road passed through town here.

How many years were you mayor?
I was just mayor one term. Back then the depot used to be on the west side of the railroad, and Mr. Johnson ran a store. The railroad track ran across the street to the back of that store. Back then all his stuff was shipped by freight, and he would put it on there and push it. That was before trucks. A little freight would stop here. I know I would have bread shipped from Atlanta. It would come up by the basket. It was a nickel a loaf. Bananas were a nickel a piece, and sardines were a dime. You know what you pay now? Sixty-nine cents. I don't like that Maine sardine. I like that Norway. Folks would come in with wagons full of cotton. They would come in with a little lunch. Someone would take a dime box of sardines. Others would take a little piece of cheese and some crackers and a drink of some kind.

I understand that you helped found the Bank of Woodstock.

The president of the bank now, Smith Johnston, says I'm the only living original stockholder. I was director of the bank for several years.

Do you remember about when it was founded?

It was in 1905.

I understand that you've been a mason for a long time too.

I was a joiner. There used to be a lodge of the Woodmen of the World. I belonged to that. Then the Masonic Blue Lodge. I had to go to the chapter and then to the shrine. Did I say Odd Fellow too?

No, you didn't mention that.

Woodmen of the World, Odd Fellow, the Blue Lodge Masons, the chapter and the shrine.

About how long have you been a shriner?

About 65 years. I was in my late 20's or maybe 30 years old at the time.

Why don't you tell me about being on the governor's staff?

I was on Governor Maddox and Carter's staff. The certificate is hanging on my living room wall for Maddox. I got one for Carter, but I never did frame that. I was on 2 governor's staff.

What was your official title?

The certificate says, "The Honorable C. E. Chandler, Lieutenant Colonel, Aide-de-Camp, Governor's Staff."

I'm out of questions.

Well, good.

Thank you very much for the interview. It has been most interesting.
FAMILY TREE

William Lee Chandler  (1st husband)  Mary Amanda McCleskey  John William Edwards  (2nd husband)

Laura Maye Dobbs  Married 1909
b. 3/28/90
d. 4/10/10

Claude Edwin  Maude Gober  Married 1921
b. 9/17/83

Walter

Martha Evelyn  Thomas T. Hardman  (Eva)

Laurelle  Lloyd H. Hampton
b. 9/3/25

Laura Maye  Wylie P. Dobbs, Jr.
b. 3/21/10  b. 3/29/09

Billy Theron Morrell
b. 1/1/34

Marilyn
b. 7/21/35

Amanda Claire  Ralph Lester Granger
b. 1/13/41  b. 6/20/39

Laurie Lyn
b. 6/16/66

Ralph Lester, Jr.
b. 1/31/72

Jonathan David
b. 7/12/76
A wedding present to Chandler's mother from her grandfather, Joel Reed, the house still stands and is approximately 100 years old. When the family moved to Cherokee County in 1894, the house and 80 acres were sold for $800.
The home of Chandler's great-grandfather, Joel Reed, the house still stands and is located on Trickum Road in Cobb County. Reed came from South Carolina. His first house was a log cabin built near a spring just below this house.
Top: When Amanda married J. W. Edwards, she moved along with Claude and Walter to this farmhouse in Cherokee County. The baby is Eva. Bottom: After leaving the farm, the family moved during the early 1900's to this house in Woodstock.
ROCKY MOUNT SCHOOL

When he was 5 years old, Claude Chandler attended school in this building.