

B O O K 2 8

Talmon Hegood

Oral History Project

I, Celeste Heywood, hereby direct that the interview recorded of my family's, ~~at~~ history, obtained through letters and interviews  
Date Location

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Elizabeth Balanoff  
Director, Oral History Project

x Celeste Heywood  
Signature of interviewee

J E F F

H E G W O O D

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" H E G W O O D "

Celeste Hegwood  
Oral History 343  
Mr. Fiddler  
12-31-75

What is your grandfather's and grandmother's father's and mother's name?

Grandfather's side

Grandmother's side

Jeff Hegwood

Jeff Dickson

Carla Plairs

Emma Dickson

\* What is your father's and mother's name?

Archie Hepood

Delitha Dickson

\* Did your parents get married right away or did they have a long courtship?

They got married right away in 1915.

\* Where did the marriage take place and in what county?

It took place in Sunflower Miss. also in the county of Sunflower.

Where did your parents live after getting married?

They lived with her parents.

\* How long did they stay in the house that you were born in?

About ten years.

\* What year and date were you born?

Oct.27, 1923

\* What is your full name?

Talmon Hegwood

\* Where were your father and mother born?

Father Birmingham, Alabama

Mother Shaw, Miss

Feb. 19, 1890

\* How many children did your parents have from this marriage? (name them)

There are thirteen in all.

Archis	Nancy	Eva
Talman	Molly	Lettie
Joedell	Clorthina	Olivia
Eddie	Delthia	
Randolph	Carrie	

\* Are all living today? Yes

\* Did you attend school as a young boy?

Yes, school was held in a church.

What school did you attend and how often did you go?

I attended school in Shaw Miss. But I didn't go very often because I had to help my father during the farming season. When farming started, school was stopped.

School was from Oct. to Xmas and then from Jan. to Apr.

\* What were your chores on the farm?

I had to milk the cows, cut hay , bail hay, and drive the tractor when I was old enough,

\* Did you and your father do any hunting or fishing and how was food provided for your family?

Yes we did some hunting and a lot of fishing-which provided some of the food that we didn't grow, And from the crops we grew we sold some and took the money and bought other things we needed. Like the farm we soon bought.

\* Do you recall anything about your grand parents?

YES, I remember my father. He was named Jeff Hegwood. When I was about five years old me and my father went to see his father who was a sick man and I help to turn him over in the bed. He died in Shaw, Miss. July, 8, 1928 and it was at his home. My mother's father had a big grocery store in the south. My mother had a sister that I remember very well name Emma. We called her Aunt Emmma, she used to live with us on my parent's farm. My own children got to see my mothers sister, but she is dead now, she died the year of 1967.

\* Did you go to High School at all? What was the name of it?

Yes, I went to High School Called Shaw High for about one year; then I left and went into the service.

\* What were your goals in life to be when you grew-up?

Just to own my own business and to make some money,

\* But what happened to change those goals?

The only thing that chanced or slowed my goals down was the fact that I lacked a good education. I only finished the eight grade, and that was going to school off and on, But I did manage to go to Tailoring school and finish it. Now I own my own tailor shop,

\* Did you go into the service and what did you do in the service?

Yes I was in the, service from 1942 to 1945, While I was in the service they were very prejudice. I had to work in the mess hall. I had a bad accident while in the service, My hands got burned with a solution called concetration lye, It left my hands all rough and scale-like. This condition of my hands was passed on to my daughter. Her hands are also rough and scale-like as though her hands had touched the solution,

\* What is the year and date that you got married?

September 17, 1945

\* What is your wife's name? Can you tell me a little about her?

My wife is named Ethel Mae Pearson. She lived in Greenville Miss. but she had an Aunt that lived in my home town which is Shaw, Miss, She came to Shaw to live with her Aunt and to help her around the house because her aunt didn't have any children of her own, She went to the same school that I went to.

\* What county is there a license?

Bovarie County

\* Where did you and she lived at after you all got married?

At my father's house, she moved in with us.

\* How long? When did you all start a family?

I stayed long enough to have me a house built with a grocery store connected in front of it. All this was on my father's land, right in front of his house. Me and my wife we lived in the back of the store, we had about three rooms. What would of. been my large living room was the store. We had our first child Aug, 28, 1946 in Shaw, Miss. A boy named Bennett Hegwood.

\* Did your wife work?

Yes, in the store, that's all.

\* How did you support your new family?

Well- I got a small check from the army because of the accident, and then the store gave a little money or profit, and I also did some farming on my father's land for a living.

\* What kind of farming did you do?

Well I picked cotton. Took watermelon up to town and sold them, and other things that you do on a farm.

\* What year did you and your wife come to Chicago?

In 1946.

\* What year did you and your wife have the grocery store?

From 1945 to 1946 .

It was a wedding gift to my wife from me and my father. It was from my father because it was built on his land. But it was my money that it took to build it with, I had saved this money while I was in the service, I would send my allotment check home to my mother and she would put it in the bank for me.

\* What happened to the grocery store after you and your wife came to Chicago?

During the year of 1946 the store burned down, so my wife and I took the insurance money and the money we had saved up and with the help of my father we were able to make the move to Chicago. Even though I had to leave my wife there for a while because she was expecting again, our second child.

\* Where did you first stay in Chicago?

I first lived with my oldest brother on the West-side of Chicago. I soon moved out and into a place of my own, I had a job at a Meat Packing Co. It paid good money, 80 dollars a week. But the work was rough, cutting up large parts of meat. It was more of a butcher type job than a meat packer. I had saved some money so I sent for my wife and kids. I purchased a two-flat building which was located 1836 W. 13th St. which was very close to Jew-Town,

What did you do then as far as schooling, now that you were in Chicago?

Well, you see I had a nice job and two boys which was enough at the time so I decided to enroll in a trade school. I wanted to learn something to do so I could one day open up my own business. On the GI Bill I enrolled and finished the Mel Walker School for Tailoring in Oct. 1952.

\* What was your wife doing?

She had another baby in Nov. 22, 1951.

\* Then what happened?

Just because of the kids I didn't stop, I wanted something nice for them. I went to Guild Vocational Institute School of Tailoring, graduating in June 19 1953.

What did you do then?

Well after my wife finished a nursing program, she worked a while to help me save more money, I was then able to purchase another two-flat building in 1954. It was located on the westside 1831 So. Central Park Ave. I purchased it from Mr. & Mrs. Guzman. They moved to Cicero and we moved in. And that's where we lived from 1954 to 1968. Many things happened in those 15 years.

\* Can you explain what you mean about so much happened from 1954 to 1968?

To start with like I said, I had start<sup>ed</sup> buying a new building in 1954. My wife had<sup>to</sup> stop working after our third child, which was a girl born November 22, 1951.

Plus my two sons had to be raised properly . And I also had the other building that I had rented out to take care of.

I had a lot to worry about.

I bought me a nice Cadillac in '57 .

Things were going good for me in the ~~1950's~~, I can truly say the Lord ~~was~~ on my little family's side.

I had another addition to my family and this baby I can truly say was planned, born December 11, 1959.

I want to remind you that I still had the job that I had when I first came to Chicago at this Meat Packing House. All four of my brothers worked out there also.

Now everything started to look different to me around the 1960's.

This lovely neighbor that I had moved into begin to run down, my two sons begin to go a little wild, and it seemlike I could never get enough money saved as I had did before to move my family away from the westside all together . In 1961 the good job that I had was moving, and I mean a big move out of the state of Illinois, to a state back in the South, and Lord knows that I didn' t want to go back down South to live. I had my wife and children to look after and I only wanted nothing but the best for them. I wanted my sons to have the education that I didn't get because I had to help my father farm. I wanted my girls to grow up and be fine ladies, go to college and be teachers or a nurse like their mother. I wanted the world for my kids and the only way to do that was

to keep them in the nice neighborhoods away from other other people that didn't want anything for their children but what they had and that was nothing.

Here I was out of a job and I couldn't go to any of my brothers and ask for a loan to help me get another two flat to move too. I just couldn't get or keep enough of money to try and keep me ahead of my bills.

I finally got to stay home with my sons for about one year and a half, and I mean that when they were not in school they came home and did everything that I did. We first started by delivering telephone books and got the money for it, to help with my bills. One Saturday morning we got up early, my sons and I, and went to the old building and did a lot of painting, fixing the plumbing and a little of the wiring in that old two-flat building. I was able to divide one of the flats up into two and rent it out for about \$55.00 a month. I had a old pick-up truck also, and I used it to get me extra money by moving people to new apartments.

While all this went on I took sick, I had to have a eye operation; now where was I going to get the money to pay this hospital bill from!

I went to a Hines Hospital for Veterans located in Hines, Illinois for my eye operation. During this time my wife was expecting again and here I was not only out of a job but in the hospital as well. I had a very good Doctor and he knew how upset I was about my eye operation and I told him that I was out of a job also. He help<sup>ed</sup> me to get a job at the hospital in janitor section. I like the job because, I knew my way around the hospital. I had to wear a patch on my eye.

\* Daddy you mean all of this was going on in your life?

Yes, and I am still not finished, After I got over my eye operation and had me a new job and was able to support my family again . My wife had another baby that I had told you about while I was in the hospital. This time it was a boy born Jan, 1, 1962 named Joseph Hegwood , With the new baby in the house I was able to adjust to him-, he was really a comfort to me because my two older boys had begin to run with the wrong crowd. And I know that it would take a while to get them back in order again. I was very glad to be back home with my family from the hospital.

\* What about your girls, didn't they give any trouble?

No, not to me. If either was trouble it was to their mother, at this time. The oldest was about ten years old. Just a good hollering and the showing of the belt brought her to tears.

\* What next Dad?

I want to get back to what I was telling you. My own father died Dec. 17, 1963 and I was heart broken as if I didn't have enough troubles already.

So the day I first heard the news my oldest son and daughter and my baby-sister, named Lettie, we all drove down south in my 57, Cadillac. My wife and the rest of my family were to come later on the train. I just couldn't wait, I had to leave out right away to see my Father, It was a big snow storm in 1963 on our way down there. My baby-sister and my oldest son help me with the driving. My daughter she kept me company when it was my turn to drive.

\* Now its 1964 what could go too much more wrong now Daddy?

First, I want to say that it started off ok, then things got rough.

\* Please go on Daddy.

Well, your mother lost her father this year, it was in May, the 12 or 14 of the month , He died of a heart-attack at home in his bed. He used to live right down-stairs from us. I really loved and respected my father-in-law, he was a good man, and my wife adored her father. I couldn't bear to see her hurt.

The aunt that my wife used to live with in Shaw, Miss. was his only sister and my wife was named after her, He was a good father to my wife and a very good grandfather to my children.

Well my vacation was coming up soon in June and I was a little worried about my own mother-remember I had lost my father also that past year, 1963. And I decided to take my wife and about three of my children with us to the South to visit my mother and put a grave-stone on my father's grave. I decided to leave as soon as school was out, that would be June 25, 1964, Me and my wife left about two days later , which put it on the 27<sup>th</sup> of that month.

My car skidded off the highway into a ditch and I lost my wife, the mother of my children , I couldn't do anything but call on the Lord and ask him what am I to do now.

All of this happened in Cairo, Illinois.

My wife died instantly, holding her last baby in her arms. in a sheltering position only a mother have for her child, Please let's stop here.

\* Daddy let's go on started where you want to talk about.  
Maybe when you meet Miss Duker .

Ok, Celestine but not your mother any more I don't want to discuss it any more; that is a very sad part in my life. I knew my second wife before your mother got killed and we were good friends. I just started to courting her and at that time I was seeing a lot of ladies , because you must remember I had a very young baby on my hands to take care of plus my two girls to look after. I guess you can say that my two sons were grown; at least they thought they were if they weren't.

\* What year did you married your second wife?

October 17, 1965

\* Was it a big wedding?

Yes

Who told your children about your getting married again?  
I did I told them that she was a very nice woman and that I needed her to help me to raise the other three children that I had to raised. She met my children in October of 1964; they knew her very well before we told them that we wanted to get married.

Where did you all live after you got married to her?

In the same house as my first wife lived with the children.

\* Did you and your second wife have any children?

No, she can't have any ever.

\* Did your second wife work?

Yes, she owns a Beauty Shop

After I remarried for the second time I begin to find a little peace within myself I knew that the hardest part of the task was over for me. My new wife and three children tried to comfort and enjoyed our new family. We just wanted to put a little happiness into our home once again. We all needed each other.

\* When did you all move from the westside?

In May of 1968 our new address WAS 856 w, 87<sup>th</sup> street Chicago, Ill. This time I was able to open up me a Cleaners & Tailor Shop and next door to it is my wife's Beauty Shop... this is all located on the Southside.

\* All you talk about is your three children, what about your two sons did they move to the new house with you? No, because my oldest son Bennett went in the service the year of 1967, he had just graduated from High School in 1966, My other son Talmon whom is named after me graduated in 1968 left to go to school in Carbondale, Ill. S I U

\* Can you list the name and birth dates of your children , in order?

Yes, but I have to think about it first.

Bennett Hegwood	Aug, 28, 1946	Shaw, Miss.
Talmon Hegwood Jr.	March 14, 1947	Chicago, Ill.
Celeste Hegwood	Nov. 22, 1951.	Chicago, Ill.
Lee Ethel Hegwood	Dec. 11, 1959	Chicago, Ill.
Joseph Hegwood	Jan. 1, 1962	Chicago, Ill.

\* How are things going for you now in the 70's?

In 1970 my oldest daughter graduated from High School and she had to go to her Senior Prom that was very exciting for me. And she got a job. Wouldn't go to College like I had ask her to do. Now there is only two children left at home with me and my wife because you know when they get a job they want to move out next. And my own mother is still living thank God- for that, She had an eye operation last year but other than that she is doing just fine and she has a telephone now.

Sources of Information-

1. Letters
2. Personal Interview
3. Research -Library 5737 So. Cottage Grove Chicago, Ill.
4. Tape-recorder
5. My own memory-bank
6. My Father's oldest brother
7. Talk to other people about it,
- 8 . Take a trip to Mississippi

**Celeste Hegwood**

1 MY NAME  
BORN 11-22-51  
Where County Col  
Died Ill.  
Where

**Talmans Hegwood**

2 MY FATHER  
BORN 10-28-  
Where MISSISSIPPI  
Died  
Where

**Archie Hegwood**

4 My GRANDFATHER  
BORN  
Where  
Died: Mar 10-63  
Where MISSISSIPPI

**De L**

5 g GRAND mother  
BORN  
Where  
Died

**Arther D. PEARSON**

6 g GRAND father  
BORN  
Where  
Died: 5-7-64  
Where Chicago Ill.

**Berdie**

7 My GRAND mother  
BORN  
Where  
Died - -67  
Where Illinois

**Ethel MAE PEARSON**

3 My mother  
BORN MISSISSIPPI  
Where: 5-7-27  
Died: 12-29-64  
Where: Chicago Ill.

8 My g GRAND father  
BORN  
Died  
Where

9 g GRAND mother

10 g GRAND father

11 g GRAND mother

12 My g GRAND father

13 My g GRAND mother

14 My g GRAND father

15 My g GRAND mother

16 My g g GRAND father  
17 g g GRAND mother

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26 My g g GRAND father

27 My g g GRAND mother

28 My g g GRAND father

29 My g g GRAND mother

30 My g g GRAND father

31 My g g GRAND mother

g = great grand father  
g g = great great grand father