

Mrs. Mamie Blue Adams**1989 April 18****Interviewed by Dr. Thomas J. Blumer**

Dr. Blumer: Ok well I have been doing this folk history. I've been doing it about five years. And one of the big problems is documenting people who didn't live very long. They didn't have children and there are very few people who can talk about such an individual. And your brother Clarence Blue is in that category. And I'd like to know, could you give me a biographical sketch Ms. Adams. When was he born?

Mrs. Adams: Lord, I I don't know my minds been...

Blumer: You don't need the date. I've got the dates.

Adams: He was born in April. I think it was in April.

Blumer: He was the son of who?

Adams: Fred Nelson Blue and Lucy Leola was his mother.

Blumer: Ok. And her last name was?

Adams: Watts.

Blumer: Oh ok. And was he the eldest or the youngest?

Adams: He was the youngest.

Blumer: So, you remember him when he was little?

Adams: Yes.

Blumer: Can you tell me some little episodes about him when he was a baby or a little boy?

Adams: Well, he was a big old healthy boy. He went to school. He loved to play ball and he was a momma's boy. When he was at the house, he always was right with momma. Wherever momma was, there he was. Kinda like how some of my boys is about me. He was a big healthy boy, like I said. He had big blue eyes and wavy hair. Then he went in service. I don't remember how old he was when he went in service. He was 19 in April and engaged to get married that Christmas to this girl in Virginia.

Blumer: Did you know her?

Adams: Yeah, she came down a lot of times. I haven't seen her in several years now.

Blumer: You mean she kept coming back?

Adams: Yeah, she would come occasionally.

Blumer: Oh, now you said he played ball? Tell me about his playing ball.

Adams: Well, you know they would just gang up and play ball. They played some at school, but they didn't have a team down there or nothing. They just played amongst each other.

Blumer: Was this the Indians?

Adams: Yep

Blumer: Where did he go to school?

Adams: He went down there at Northside school.

Blumer: Was he popular in school?

Adams: Yes, he was. Girls just swarmed after him. He was real good in school and all. They didn't have any problem out of him. He always was behaved. Not like a lot of children, causing disturbances and everything.

Blumer: So, what happened to him wasn't part of a pattern?

Adams: No.

Blumer: What do you think happened?

Adams: Well, I'll be honest with you, because I try to live a good life and I don't like to tell stories. Probably you already know it. They told it that he was fixing to rob something and got shot. That's all we know.

Blumer: Do you think he was really doing that?

Adams: Well, you know sometimes, I don't know. I have thought about it a lot of times. If he really did it or if there was more involved with it than him. We don't know.

Blumer: Now what happened? You just get a phone call?

Adams: Yeah. They called my mother and my daddy and told them that he had been killed. Which was on October the 17th before the second war broke out in December. That's when it happened.

Blumer: How did your mother react to that?

Adams: Oh, momma just went all to pieces. We had a time with her. And papa, he buried it. He just swallowed it; you know for about two years. When he did realize what was going on, it just showed up on him so bad. He had a time controlling it.

Blumer: How do you mean? He cried a lot?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: That was their only son.

Adams. Yep. Sure is. Yeah, they shipped his body here. They had guards stood around the clock until they buried him there at the house.

Blumer: Where was he buried?

Adams: He was buried down at the reservation. I was married and had two children at that time. I lived right on this street down on the lower end. Momma and daddy was on Jones Avenue right here on the low end.

Blumer: Why did he join the army?

Adams: I don't know.

Blumer: Just something to do.

Adams: Yeah. He weighed 198 pounds and he was big framed.

Blumer: Did he graduate from high school?

Adams: Mhmm.

Blumer: He did graduate from Northside?

Adams: Yeah. Sure did.

Blumer: Who were his best buddies down on the reservation?

Adams: Oh, I don't know.

Blumer: Did he stay on the reservation?

Adams: Yeah, he stayed some down there. I don't remember who his best buddies were.

Blumer: Now, you said the girls was just after him all the time.

Adams: Oh yeah.

Blumer: Can you remember an episode?

Adams: No, I don't know. They all tried to go with him. They was jealous of him.

Blumer: He was right handsome?

Adams: Yeah, he was a nice-looking boy.

Blumer: This is kinda a little of subject, but did you spend much time with the Watts family?

Adams: No.

Blumer: Were they all dead by the time you came along?

Adams: Well, no. My granddaddy lived for a good many years. I was a grown girl when he died. He died in the spring. On the first day of spring. He plowed part of that day and he come put the mule up at daddy's. I was dark and they lived over on the hill from us. He had to cross a little stream that run into the big branch. There was a big oak tree and a great big spring. The water was just like ice water, daddy would go down there and wash. He had went back that way, which was nearer for him. Just as he stepped across onto the other side, he fell right there and had a heart attack. Broke his nose. He fell flat on the ground. And his wife kept looking for him and watching for him. She seen him when she left our house. Finally, they come down to see if they could see him, and they found him lying there.

Blumer: Now she was Gertrude? Gertrude Dunn?

Adams: Yeah

Blumer: Well now, your mother was the daughter of Jim Watts?

Adams: No, momma was an adopted child. She went by that name but that actually wasn't her name. They give her that name.

Blumer: Oh, and Jim Watts adopted her. Was she Indian?

Adams: No.

Blumer: Do you know who they got her from?

Adams: No.

Blumer: What was your momma like? She made pottery, didn't she?

Adams: Yes, she made some. I had my daddy, he was in the nursing home when he passed away. I lost my husband, it will be ten years in November coming. I had papa but I had to put him in the nursing home. They sent him to Charlotte to have heart surgery, so I had to put him in the nursing home. Well then, he died in August after that. But I had papa over 99% of the time after momma died. She been dead 12 years before he passed away. But he would always call me *Darla*. And if I'd do something, he'd call me momma, he said I looked like momma, act like momma, cook like momma, and I done things just like momma. That's her picture right here.

Blumer: Oh, in the pink?

Adams: No on the other side.

Blumer: You do look like her.

Adams: Everyone says I look like her. They say I look like her more than any of the other girls.

Blumer: Yeah, you look like twins.

Adams: Momma was nice looking. She didn't have finery clothes, but she always kept them clean and neat dressed. Kept her hair fixed all the time. In fact, there was some who would call her Sissy cause she was so cleanish like and fixed herself up.

Blumer: She was very particular. How did she meet your dad?

Adams: I don't know. I don't know how that happened.

Blumer: Now what happened to Leola? She died out west, didn't she?

Adams: It was her heart. She had other problems but then her heart...

Blumer: How come they were out west?

Adams: They just took a crazy notion that that was where they wanted to go. See, the little girl is out there now. Been out there for years. They wanted to go out there and live with them for the rest of their life. They wasn't out there I think a year before momma passed away. We all feel like if momma had never gone out there, she would have lived longer than she did. Papa stayed with me one month exactly after momma was buried. Then he had to go back because his plane ticket would run out. He went back and he was out there a couple of months. My sister called me and said the doctor had told her that he was going to have to leave from out there. The climate didn't suit him. He had emphysema. He lived a good many years after he got back here.

Blumer: What kind of work did he do?

Adams: He worked at the industrial mill for a long time. We both did. Then we went to the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing. He carried mail over there and worked out in the shipping department until he retired. But we farmed until I was probably about 15 years old when we left the country and moved to the industrial. Then we moved from there on Jones Avenue. I married then in '37.

Blumer: He was the son of...

Adams: Chief Sam T Blue.

Blumer: And who else? Who was his mother?

Adams: Not Louisa. Minnie.

Blumer: He never knew his momma?

Adams: No.

Blumer: She died when he was young.

Adams: When he was a baby.

Blumer: Did you spend much time with Betsy Bob Crawford?

Adams: No.

Blumer: Although she was kin to you. Through the Watts.

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: Well, what happened to Jim Watt's boys after Jim Watt's died? He left two babies, didn't he?

Adams: Well, the youngest one left. He was from here to yonder to here to yonder. The oldest one went out to Salt Lake. And he died out there and was buried. His wife ain't been too long passed away. They got children way out there.

Blumer: What happened to them right after Jim Watts died?

Adams: He had married again. And this woman had raised them until they got big enough to get out on their selves.

Blumer: Oh, I thought your mother took care of them?

Adams: No.

Blumer: Oh, I had always thought that. I talk to so many people I get it all mixed up. How about Debbie? You ever spend much time with her?

Adams: No. Never at all.

Blumer: Was your dad strict?

Adams: Pretty well.

Blumer: Can you give me some examples of how he managed his children and his family?

Adams: Well daddy was hard working, and raised everything we eat. Down there, we would get together and play as children. We had a certain time we could go and a certain time we had to be back home. After we moved down here and I started dating and the other girls was dating, he would always try to be sure he knew who we were going out with. We had to be in at a certain time. That was it. He didn't like for us to get out like children do now and go play ball on Sunday and run from here to yonder. We had to be in and be at home. He never did drink or anything like that and was always good to momma and to us. So, have to give him credit for that.

Blumer: He was just as strict with Clarence? Even though he was a boy?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: What did Clarence like to do best with his time when he wasn't in school?

Adams: Most of the time he would just stay around home.

Blumer: Did he work?

Adams: No, he didn't work any. That's when he went in service then. He would do yards and things like that, but as far as having a public job, he didn't get out much.

Blumer: Well, there wasn't too many jobs was there?

Adams: No. You didn't hear of young children working much then.

Blumer: Well, how old was Clarence when he died?

Adams: He was 19 in April. And this happened in October.

Blumer: Oh, I see. Was he in the Marine Corp?

Adams: Yes.

Blumer: Did he come home on leave?

Adams: Yea. This happened up there in Newport, Virginia.

Blumer: Oh ok. Well, I bet he looked good there in that uniform.

Adams: Oh golly, he was nice looking. I should have got out my pictures, so I could show you his picture. But I would have to dig like I don't know what to get them out now.

Blumer: Maybe, you could get me a nice one and have it copied. I'll pay for it.

Adams: I might could.

Blumer: Yeah, sometime when you are thinking of it. I'll write you. Take it to the drugstore. Pick out a nice one where I could see his face. I don't know if I would ever use it but just to have it. See that's the problem, there really is not much to a nineteen-year-old. Unless you can remember something that he did? Did he ever cut up?

Adams: No.

Blumer: He was just very good. I can't understand how he got mixed up in that?

Adams: I don't either.

Blumer: That must just eat away at your mom and dad.

Adams: Oh god, it did momma. Daddy too even though he did try. It just got the upper hands of him after so long.

Blumer: I guess that's about the worse thing a parent can do, is lose a child.

Adams: Yea. Especially in a tragedy.

Blumer: Yeah, something so senseless. Were you at home when the phone call came?

Adams: No. I was at work.

Blumer: Now your mom sold pottery. What kind did she make? Was she pretty good at it?

Adams: Yeah. She made most all any kind they make. And she sewed a lot.

Blumer: Oh really. What did she sew?

Adams: She would go downtown to Belk's basement, and they would sell what they call 5-pound bundles from the bleachery. And they would have not quite a yard. She would take the scraps and match them up together and sometimes there would be enough of one color. She would make little dresses for about a one, two, or three-year-old. She made a lot of aprons you know. Things like that.

Blumer: Did she sell them?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: Do you have some of her handy work?

Adams: No, I think the last apron I had, I wore it out.

Blumer: Would you call her a professional?

Adams: Yeah. She made all our clothes too. Until we got big enough to work and buy other things. Daddy would go to town, and we laugh about it, he would buy whole boats of cloth and every one of us would have a dress alike.

Blumer: Oh really? I bet you hated that.

Adams: Yeah, we did.

Blumer: You say a bale of cotton?

Adams: Yeah. He'd buy cloth and other things to. He'd take it home and momma would sit down and cut out and make us a dress.

Blumer: But all the same. I know as girls that just aggravated you.

Adams: Usually what we would do is part of us would wear a different dress. One that we had before this one. And the next Sunday, we would wear ours and they would wear there other.

Blumer: Where did your daddy farm?

Adams: Down at the reservation where we lived at.

Blumer: Oh, did you have River Bottoms? How much land do you think you had?

Adams: Yeah. I don't know. We had too much I know that.

Blumer: Did you have to work?

Adams: Yeah, he would take us out early in the morning. Then about ten o'clock he would stop off because he didn't want us to work when its real hot. Well, I couldn't take it. I can't take the hot. Then over in the evening late we would go back to work until it got dark. And when we picked cotton. He would get in the middle two rows. And put me on one side and my sister on the other. And he would tell us, y'all better be down there when I get to the end of my rows with him picking too. We would pick a bale of cotton in two days.

Blumer: Well, where would Clarence be?

Adams: Well, he was little then. Too little to work. There for a while he had never been born.

Blumer: Well, when Clarence got old enough did he pick?

Adams: No because we wasn't living on the farm then.

Blumer: Oh, by that time you had moved up here.

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: You had River Bottoms and some up at the top?

Adams: Yeah. All around the house. I seen daddy have cotton grow all the up to my shoulders.

Blumer: I didn't know it could grow that high.

Adams: Yeah

Blumer: Well, where was the house that you grew up in?

Adams: Do you know where the old house is that Granddaddy Blue used to live in?

Blumer: The one that Leola is in.

Adams: No. Do you know where the old church used to be?

Blumer: Yeah.

Adams: Well right across the road is a house. That's where Aunt Lula Beck lives now. That's where. Over across from there, we went down a little grade and up a little grade and we lived up at the top of the hill.

Blumer: Behind Lula's house?

Adams: No, it's yonder way.

Blumer: Across the road?

Adams: Yeah. The house is torn down now. There is no house there at all.

Blumer: Can you describe the house? How many rooms?

Adams: We had four rooms.

Blumer: So, it was comfortable?

Adams: Yeah. We had a big dining room and kitchen. He had a place at the end of the dining room that he was going to add an upstairs to. But never did it done.

Blumer: Can he do carpentry?

Adams: Yeah. He done some carpenter work.

Blumer: I guess all the men back then could do that.

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: So, he had all this. Clarence never worked in the fields?

Adams: No.

Blumer: Well, he got lucky. Did he spend much time down at the... Somebody said he was a good swimmer?

Adams: Yeah. He went swimming a lot.

Blumer: Would you say most of his friends were Indians or whites?

Adams: I would say most are from up here. Since he grew up here in town.

Blumer: Yeah. Probably boys he knew from school.

Blumer: OK. Now there was three girls.

Adams: Five girls.

Blumer: Can you name them in order of birth?

Adams: Mine is Adams.

Blumer: And you're the eldest?

Adams: I'm the oldest, yeah. And Lucille, then Lilly, then Mary Jane, and then Margaret. We call her Margie. And then brother.

Blumer: You called him brother?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: You didn't call him Clarence? Why did you call him brother?

Adams: We just did. Then I went and named my second boy, my third child, I named him Clarence. After my brother.

Blumer: Well now, where is Lucille?

Adams: Lucille passed away a year ago. September past.

Blumer: Down here?

Adams: She lived out here next to red river. She died one morning, and her husband died the next morning.

Blumer: Did he know she died?

Adams: I don't think they ever did tell him.

Blumer: They were both sick?

Adams: Yeah. He was in Charlotte in the hospital, and she was in the hospital here.

Blumer: What did she die from?

Adams: Hers was a lot of that emphysema. And she smoked herself to death.

Blumer: What was her married name? Who did she marry?

Adams: Walter McGee.

Blumer: Oh ok. I have heard that name.

Adams: Yeah. Carl McGee.

Blumer: Are they down on the reservation?

Adams: They lived out here on Red River.

Blumer: Oh ok. I have heard the name somewhere. Now how about Lily? Where is she?

Adams: In Salt Lake City, Utah.

Blumer: What is her full name?

Adams: Lilly Hunter.

Blumer: How did she end up out there in Salt Lake?

Adams: I don't know what their idea was.

Blumer: Is her husband from here?

Adams: Yeah, he is from Monroe.

Blumer: Oh, I see. And they just went out there.

Adams: Yeah, they had two children. They grown now and married.

Blumer: Then there is Mary Jane.

Adams: She lives up above Newport.

Blumer: In South Carolina?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: What is her married name?

Adams: Well, she has been married twice. She married a Rogers. That who she had her children all by. And then she married an Elkins. And of course, they ain't living together. He left her for another woman. So, she is by herself.

Blumer: But there are some Rogers children?

Adams: Yeah, she had six boys and two girls. Either six or eight boys.

Blumer: Golly, that's a nice big family.

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: And then there is Margaret, who married Beck?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: Your daddy must have had to really work hard to keep up all those children.

Adams: He did. He worked hard. My daddy and I were like that. I could sit down and talk to my daddy and ask him different things and tell him different things. Momma was always busy, and she would say I have to take time later. I don't know I just got like that about my daddy. And my husband was about as bad about daddy. And my daddy was the same about him.

Blumer: Oh really. He really liked your husband?

Adams: Yes sir, he did. He was good to daddy. When I had to do things and go to work, someone had to stay with him there. And we would divide up going to church. I'd go to Sunday school, and he sang in the choir. He sang bass. Had a wonderful bass voice. I would go back to the house, because we didn't live but a little piece from the church, and he would get ready and go on. And I would be there and have

dinner ready when he come back. Then if we went to night service. One would go one time and the other would go the next.

Blumer: Was he pretty strict about church?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: they are both Mormon.

Adams: No, my husband wasn't. We are Baptist. Me and him was.

Blumer: Oh, so you left the Mormon church?

Adams: Well, I have always heard this. A house that is divided don't always work. There would be faults in it and troubles. Misunderstandings. And he was happy, and I didn't see anything wrong with it. I would just go on with him. And all my children...

Blumer: There is not that much difference between the Mormon and the Baptist?

Adams: I don't see much difference. Some of my people really give me trouble about it. Some say if I die I am going to hell. But I ain't letting that worry me.

Blumer: Who said that?

Adams: Some of my kin people.

Blumer: You don't know who?

Adams: Oh, I know who but I ain't calling no names. But I didn't let that bother me. Cause there is not but one God.

Blumer: That's true. People are pretty funny about that sort of thing. Did you know... Now your father had one sister, didn't he?

Adams: Yeah.

Blumer: Did you know her?

Adams: Yeah, I remember when she died. I was too little. I can't remember everything. That is who my sister Lilly is named after.

Blumer: Oh, I see. That's Lilly Blackwelder.

Adams: No, Lilly Blankenship.