

Recollections of an Old Scrubwoman

Interviews with Bernice Higgs by Larry Redmond (LCR)

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LCR: We are on the air.

I guess the last time we talked, it's been a while, we had covered school days and early marriage. I guess when we left off, Granddaddy was getting a new job at the Royal Feed Mill, and I think you said that his daddy helped get him a job. Do you remember that? Did his daddy work there? What did he do, do you remember?

Ms. Higgs: Oh, I think he was just a foreman there.

LCR: Just a foreman?

Ms. Higgs: In those days, I don't imagine there was any more pay, you just didn't have to work as hard, and you could oversee certain things done.

LCR: But that's something. That's an accomplishment, in that day.

Ms. Higgs: Oh, yes. He knew a lot about the work, you know.

LCR: What did they do there?

Ms. Higgs: It was a mill that made feed for stock.

LCR: So I guess grain would come in, corn or whatever.

Ms. Higgs: Yes, it was a grain mill. I don't really know what they did in there. It was a great big place.

LCR: Big and dusty and hot.

With all kinds of weevils around the place.

Ms. Higgs: Oh, yes. They say that Mr. Will died of TB..
He died here in Cook County.

By that time, Vivian had come here, and all the rest of the Campbell brothers had come here. I think they had some kind of moving van business or something.

LCR: Yes, being the tax attorney that she is, she mentioned the business to me.

Ms. Higgs: Yes. She came here, and he had TB, and he was in the hospital there, in Memphis, and she stayed there all, I don't know how long he was there. I don't recall the time.

But anyway, his wife, in the meantime, she wouldn't have any part of it.

LCR: Because he was sick?

Ms. Higgs: Uh-huh. And Vivian came and got her father. He couldn't - because I used to go and get him. They allowed them out of the hospital, and he had no place to come except my house, and he would come over and I would fix dinner for him, and we'd always get somebody to take him back. He couldn't spend the night, that being contagious, and I had children.

LCR: I'm surprised they let them out at all.

Ms. Higgs: If he didn't have a certain - if he didn't have a temperature. And he was able to walk around, he wasn't in bed.

Finally he just, Josie wouldn't let him come back to her house, so Vivian came and got him and brought him here, and put him in Cook County. And he died out there. He probably stayed out there a couple of years, before he died.

LCR: So what did Granddaddy do, when he started there at the mill?

Ms. Higgs: I don't know. I don't know what they did there. If it had been the furniture factory I could tell you if he ran a rip saw or a plane, the finishing room or whatever, but I just wasn't familiar with what they did over there.

LCR: So were the two of you still together at that time?

Ms. Higgs: No. We went back together a couple of - at first I wasn't converted. And I thought, well, we had the children. After I was converted, I thought, then maybe the Lord would help me stay with him, because I wanted to stay with my children's father. All of - my mother and my sisters and all, they always stayed with their husbands. And I didn't know -

LCR: Didn't know no different. It was just the way it was.

Ms. Higgs: That's just the way it was. They just were there. Uncle George was just as much my uncle as Aunt Babe was, and it was just the way I thought it should be. Then we did go back together. But he would do all right for about 2-3 weeks. (Laughs)

He would have lost all his money and come home with nothing. Here we go again. And I just couldn't keep on doing that. There I was, I was working, and depending on him for certain things, rent and linens, and groceries, and paying the furniture bill and buying the children clothes, just doing the things that you do. And then when you planned the week, at the end of the week you planned that you'd do this or do that, and when you got home, then there he was, he hadn't shown up, and when he did show up, sometime around midnight, he didn't have anything.

LCR: Where were you working at that time? At the furniture factory, wasn't it?

Ms. Higgs: At that time, when he left the last time, I was working for Miss Halliday. Those were hard times then. We were making \$5 a week, 6 dollars, I was making \$8 a week, and I had to pay 98 cents for carfare, because carfare was 7 cents. I had it all figured out. 14 cents a day. And of course this woman I worked for, she wasn't one of these society women, and they never accepted her, because all they did was sit around and play mah-jong and have tea, and discuss how much everyone paid. She didn't know what the other women were paying.

LCR: And that was your first job as a cook?

Ms. Higgs: No, I had worked for the Morriszes before then. And then I went to the Hallidays.

LCR: Do you remember anything about the Morriszes?

Oh, well, yes, I didn't do much cooking. She did most of the cooking. I was a nurse then. I guess at the Hallidays, maybe that was the first straight-out cooking job that I had. I took charge of the kitchen. She had nothing to do with it, she just planned the meals and I took it from there. Whereas at the Morriszes, she did the cooking, and I did the cleaning and nursed little Mary.

LCR: I remember the last time we talked, you said you worked at the furniture factory.

Ms. Higgs: Yes, I worked at the furniture factory. Albert and I were together then. I worked at the furniture factory before he went to the Royal Feed Mill, he was at the Memphis Power and Light Company, and I worked at the furniture factory.

LCR: How did you happen to leave the furniture company? I was under the impression that it was considered a pretty decent job.

Ms. Higgs: Because I – they weren't paying but \$6.05 a week. That's why I left there.

LCR: To go to the Morriszes.

Ms. Higgs: I had been to the Morriszes before I went to the Memphis furniture factory.

LCR: I was thinking that all of the domestic work was in a line.

Ms. Higgs: Oh, no.

LCR: Then you went to the Memphis furniture company, and then from there?

Ms. Higgs: To the Hallidays.

LCR: Because of the more money they were paying.

What were they like? What did they do?

Ms. Higgs: They were hotel people. He was a hotel man. His father ran a hotel. Anytime you go to Memphis now, you visit the Peabody Hotel. His father was the President in the Peabody Hotel, and they had another hotel in Cairo, Illinois, called the Cairo House.

And I worked there for, oh, I guess nine years.

LCR: Uh-huh. That's a pretty substantial chunk.

Ms. Higgs: They had this little boy, they had two children, and this little boy, Wilkie, I nursed him and cooked and they had a chauffeur, Sam Hatton, so the two of us worked there. And she was from Santa Monica, California. She'd go to her mother's in the summertime. And Memphis was a place where – nobody that was anybody stayed in Memphis in the summertime. They went to the mountains or somewhere. The Hallidays had a house at the Cape. You hear tell of the Kennedys? That's where they went, places like that, in the summertime. And the children were out of school, and I couldn't afford, they'd only pay me half my salary. But you didn't know if you would even get a job in the summertime, because everybody, their houses would close up and they'd be gone. So what I would do, I went down to the hotel and worked. Then I was paid whatever they were paying down there, and half of my salary that I was getting at the house. That's how I was able to put my children's clothes on lay-away, coats and things, and keep my house going, keep my bills, keep my furniture. I never got set out on the streets any more. That was the end of that.

LCR: Was that the lady – you told me once about one lady you worked for that was a fanatic for having the house clean, used to clean the corners and stuff.

Ms. Higgs: In the interval there, I went home to Mississippi, for two years, and I worked for that woman in Mississippi. Miss Lowe. She was the one who was the fanatic, the one who said that Margaret King was as clean as she was.

LCR: Oh, I see. I didn't – you worked for that woman!

Ms. Higgs: Oh, yes! (Laughs) It was the talk of Benoit. It takes Vivian to tell you about it! That woman would take these cotton sheets, that they used to pick cotton, and you'd take your cotton sack and you'd weigh it up in the evening, and they had these cotton sheets, and Mrs. King had put them sheets in big black pots and she'd boil them until they were white as any percale sheets, and that's what she'd put around her stove when she cooked, so wouldn't any grease spots get on the floor. I remember, Mama used to talk about her. And then of course she would always, Vivian would tell you that Mama was the only person she would allow to put a baby in her bed, because Mama was sort of a fanatic too. She wouldn't have any dirty babies in her bed!

LCR: Diapers oozing and carryin' on!

Ms. Higgs: I stayed there about two years and then I came back. Then I went to the Hallidays.

LCR: And from there, I guess it was from there to the Crumps
Nine years with the Hallidays. How long were you with the Crumps?

Ms. Higgs: Oh, I guess it was about six, seven years.

LCR: Boss Crump! The Boss of Shelby County.

Ms. Higgs: That's right, honey.

LCR: Was he mayor when you started working for him? Was he mayor of Memphis?

Ms. Higgs: Oh, no. I can remember when he was – being raised in Memphis, I always used to hear about Mayor Crump, when he was the mayor, and I guess me might have been the mayor when I was about 10 or 11.

LCR: Oh, so he'd been mayor for a long time.

Ms. Higgs: There was a song they used to sing: [Sings song: "We don't care what Mr. Crump don't low, we gonna bar'l house anyhow!"]

He cut out and cleaned up all the bar'l houses.

LCR: What's a bar'l house?

Ms. Higgs: Like a honky-tonk.

LCR: Taverns, with jukeboxes. Lounges.

Ms. Higgs: They were called saloons, you see.

And I suppose people must have been making corn whisky then, and bootlegging.
There was a lot of bootlegging.

LCR: Oh, this was during Prohibition. What year did you start working for him?

Ms. Higgs: Must have been, let me see, about 19 and 30, I suppose. Something like that. Because I know when Madeline was born, Mrs. Crump wanted to see my grandchildren, and I had Marie bring you all out there.

LCR: How did you know they needed a cook? How did you make that transition?

Ms. Higgs: It was a member of my church, Maggie Fite. She was cooking out there, and she was going to give it up, and she told me. So I went, and of course, Mrs. Crump was one of these kind of women, that she didn't like black people. And Clint said, you know when I first came, they told me, Mrs. Crump, she won't hire you, because she don't like black niggas. But she hired - he was so proficient and he came with such high recommendations that she hired him, and it was the same with me. She didn't have no, I never waited on – I didn't care anyway, I don't think it was the cause of that, but

whenever she had parties and luncheons or dinners there, I never served the table. Maggie and this other child, I guess Maggie was about the color of Vera. Both of us were about that color. And she liked that color. But she liked me because I could cook to suit her, honey, and she liked the way I would cook. Clint said she would come in and say, it's just a joy for me to walk into my kitchen. Because of the way I kept the kitchen.

Maggie could – she believed anything Maggie said. Maggie could go up there and we'd always say, the sun could be shining bright as day and then Maggie said, Mrs. Crump, it's fixing to rain. And Mrs. Crump would –

LCR: Mrs. Crump would get an umbrella!

Ms. Higgs: Yes! "Oh, no, Maggie said it was raining!" [Laughs]

She came down and she'd say, How do you keep this – I just can never get the ice tray out of the refrigerator. Maggie always used to do it. I'd say, I just defrost it once a week. And she said, Oh, Maggie used to defrost it once a week, and you must defrost it more than that!" Maggie could get away with murder! "Maggie said."

LCR: Wouldn't have dawned on her that maybe Maggie told her a lie, and didn't really defrost it but once a month.

Ms. Higgs: And you know how long it takes a refrigerator to defrost so you can get the trays out! Three hours!

LCR: Honey, it's got to be there for a while.

Ms. Higgs: Of course! You had to take an ice pick and kind of pick them out. You have to defrost a refrigerator every week. And of course Maggie could always get the ice trays out. I didn't say anything to her. I just said, I defrost it once a week, Mrs. Crump. I didn't have time to do it more than once a week, because I had niggers to cook for, besides these white folks. Two maids and a laundress and a chauffeur and two yard men – I had five of them to cook for.

LCR: Plus the white folks! You was in there working!

Ms. Higgs: Yeah. I never went beyond the breakfast room. I didn't mind, because I liked to cook, and cooking is my thing, and cooking is no chore for me. I know how to do it, and I know how to plan it, so it didn't bother me, and they did love – she loved lemon cream pies, lemon chiffon pies. Mr. Crump loved cherry pies. He used to always say, Ahh! When I get to heaven, I want you to make cherry pies for me? (Laughs)

You old codger!

LCR: He ain't even getting to heaven! (Laughs)

Ms. Higgs: The way you going!

LCR: It was Crump that you said had this fascination for black folks, too, I think, wasn't it? Used to try to keep abreast of everything that –

Ms. Higgs: Oh, yes. There was something about – he always liked – I'm going to do my job, he's going to have no problem out of me, and I don't need nobody to watch me, because I'm responsible to God first, so He sees me, and then I'm working for Him, and you just paying me. So He has told me, be of good measure, run over, shaken down and heaped up. So that's what I'd do.

He would talk to Maggie. Maggie, what's the colored people doing? And she'd always be telling. And I used to notice, he'd come in every Friday with a rolled packet under his arm, he'd go on up and I was kind of curious to see what he had rolled up there. And so I didn't clean up, up there, but Clint cleaned his room, he had the wastepaper basket. See, Clint couldn't read, and so he'd come downstairs, and he had this, Bernice, he'd say, I want you to look at something. What is this that this old devil got in here? It's in pieces, all cut up, what is that? What paper is that? It would be the Chicago Defender! And the Memphis World. Memphis World was a Memphis paper, a black paper. He'd have the Chicago Defender, the Memphis World and the Pittsburgh Courier. And sometimes he'd have the Amsterdam News.

LCR: Why do you suppose he had the newspapers?

Ms. Higgs: He'd read them! Because he wanted to see what the niggers were doing, and what they were saying.

LCR: But what difference did it make?

Ms. Higgs: I think it made a lot of difference to him. He just wanted to know. Like people are just interested in, they just want to know.

LCR: Did he read white newspapers?

Ms. Higgs: Oh, indeed so. He read those too. The Merchant, and the Memphis Press, and -

LCR: He just read them all, then.

But he didn't want anybody to know he was reading those nigger newspapers.

Ms. Higgs: Uh-huh. And so he would just cut them up as fine, and wrap them up and put them in – see, he knew Clint couldn't read, but Clint, he would look in there –

LCR: He didn't know that Clint was your buddy.

Ms. Higgs: He didn't know Clint would have sense enough to look in there, because he had it wrapped up in some more paper, you see. He just thought Clint would take the wastepaper basket and just empty it, so when I told him, he said, Clint said, Old bastard! – (laughs)

He was a doozie, that old man, I tell you.

LCR: I sure would like to know what was going on in his head.

Ms. Higgs: That was one we could never figure out. And he never liked you to, he never liked the way I talked anyway.

LCR: What was wrong with the way you talked?

Ms. Higgs: Because I didn't talk, I used halfway decent English. He didn't like that.

LCR: Too smart for him. One of those smart niggers.

Ms. Higgs: Mm-hmm.

There was something about me that fascinated him, because for no reason at all, he come up there one day and he was talking, and I was in Mrs. Crump's room, because I never went in his room, never, because he walked around there with his shorts on all the time, and no shirt on, just shorts, in his drawers all the time, and there was a big screened-in porch that opened off his room, and –

LCR: They had separate rooms.

Ms. Higgs: Because it was a big house. Yes, she slept in a bedroom on the other end of the house, and he slept - there was another bedroom, and a bath, and a bedroom, that was his room, and then this big screened-in porch, off his room, and then there was another bedroom between his room and that third room, down the hall.

LCR: Why do you suppose they didn't sleep together?

Ms. Higgs: Oh, I don't know, I suppose he just got old like that, Mr. Crump would be reading and doing something all night, and talking on the telephone, and she'd be in there in her room doing the same thing, and they never ate a meal downstairs. We had to take the trays up all the time. She ate dinner over there in his room, if he was home. And he was most likely at home, so she would eat over there, set up a table.

LCR: Interesting. What kind of table? A card table, or did he have a whole big table up there?

Ms. Higgs: Oh, no, they set up a card table and put the trays on that.

LCR: This man got servants and he's got a card table in his room that he eats on. Probably had the biggest and finest table in the world right down in the dining room.

Ms. Higgs: Oh, yes, honey, yes indeed. And all kinds of dishes, some of these gold dishes, you know, I wish I had one of those gold dishes in my hand when I dropped it that time.

LCR: What was that? Tell me about it.

Ms. Higgs: He always said, don't ever let the phone ring but one time. I don't care what you got in your hand, drop it and answer the phone.

LCR: (Laughs) And there you stood!

Ms. Higgs: And he came through the back that day, and we were sitting at the table eating, and he was standing in the breakfast room, in the kitchen, and the phone was on a stand, you know, sitting inside, you could just move it. And I just kept it sitting there between the doors, inside the breakfast room. And half the time I didn't answer, because I didn't have to answer because there was other niggers to answer it, but I just happened to be standing there, and he was standing in the breakfast room, he just had walked in, and I was standing there, and the kitchen floor was one of these tile floors like in the bathroom, ceramic tile, white tile, and so when the telephone rang, I had this glass in my hand, and I just dropped it, "Mr. Crump's residence – " (Laughs)

LCR: Good grief! [Laughs]

Ms. Higgs: I never cracked a smile, and he didn't either, he just stood there and looked at me. I don't know what was through his mind!

LCR: What in the world, weren't you scared he was going to fire you or something?

Ms. Higgs: I had done what he told me to do! He said, I don't care what you have in your hand when the telephone rings, drop it, don't let it ring but once!

LCR: That's what you did!

Ms. Higgs: That's what I did!

LCR: All over the floor! "Crump's residence!"

It was the newsboy down the street!

Ms. Higgs: Clint said, I almost got choking, I wanted to laugh, I was so –

He said, Are you crazy? And he was standing right there, and I just handed him the phone, didn't crack a smile, and neither did he, he just stood there – he was a tall man, you know –

LCR: I've seen a picture once. He was tall with white hair.

Ms. Higgs: He was standing there, and I just handed the phone to him, and he went and talked, and I just went right on out on the back porch and got the broom and the dustpan and went to sweeping up the glass. And afterward I said, I wish it had been one of those gold plates! (Laughs)

LCR: He would have fired you sure enough for that.

Ms. Higgs: He might have, I don't know.

LCR: After they picked him up off the floor! After he got his heart running again.

Ms. Higgs: So this time he called you up in his room, what did he call you up there for?

LCR: Well, it was about this Kefauver. He ran against Kefauver, and Kefauver won.

Ms. Higgs: Kefauver was a Senator, wasn't he?

LCR: Uh-huh. And that's the time somebody had come there during the night, and wrote on the white steps of his, Vote for Kefauver. The whole of Memphis, a lot of folks in Memphis had voted, and this man lost, so he talked, and he said, How much he had done for the colored people, people there in the LeMoyne Gardens, and I said, you know, Mr. Crump, I really don't know how they turned out or what they did, because you know I was out here. I was at work so I really don't know. He went on talking, and he gave me a raise. When I left there and came to New York, I was making \$20 a week.

LCR: That was big money!

Ms. Higgs: Yes, indeed. He gave me a raise.

LCR: That must have been before you dropped that glass!

Ms. Higgs: No, it wasn't, it was after I dropped it.

You know, it's a funny thing about white folks. If they can't figure you out, it sort of fascinates them about you. Something, they really want to, they really think they know you. I guess they think, but you can't generalize with no one ethnic group. They seem to think that you can generalize.

LCR: With black folks.

Ms. Higgs: Uh-huh. And they put us all in the same category. And when they get one, that really questions and – that's another thing – that reads, that sort of bothers them.

LCR: Why do you suppose that is?

Ms. Higgs: I don't know. I really don't. But I've found that all white people that I have worked for, they all naturally, in all the places I have worked, they all have books, they have plenty of books in their house, that's one thing. And books fascinate me. Mrs. Crump had this

book, There's a Lion in the Street, and I said, let me read it. So she told me, you can read that book, but when you read it, don't bring it back, and don't tell anybody that you got it out of this house.

And after I read the book, and I realized that, I don't remember who wrote the book, but the main character in that book was so much like Mr. Crump, that it wasn't even funny.

LCR: What was the name of it again? There's a Lion in the Street?

Ms. Higgs: So when she gave it to me, I brought it downstairs. She just gave me a bag to put it in, because I was upstairs, in her bedroom, and nobody ever, the rest of them didn't see me, didn't see it, I just took it on home, and I read it. She and I never discussed it, never said anything about it.

LCR: I wonder if the book was written about him, if the character was –

Ms. Higgs: I have often thought about that after I read it. That person, did he know him, because he was so much like him, that kind of domineering kind of person, that everybody had to be subservient to him. He never called, I don't ever remember him calling a person, from the Attorney General on down to Senator McKellar, now he's dead, but he was the Senator. He never called him Senator McKellar, he just called him, everybody he called by their first name, everybody. But everybody had to call him Mr. Crump.

And same with this character in this book.

LCR: How do you get a Senator to call you Mr. Crump, if you're calling him Ed?

Ms. Higgs: I don't know, but they did, honey. The Attorney General, and everybody that ever came in that house, everybody you'd hear him talking to on the telephone. You'd never hear him calling nobody Mr. nobody. It was Mr. Crump, Mr. Crump.

LCR: Made 'em toe the line.

Ms. Higgs: Yes, siree. He did that.

Long ago, I would have thought they would have done something with his house.

LCR: Like made it a monument or something.

Ms. Higgs: But they didn't. He's standing out there in Overton Park, if you ever go to Memphis, just big as life, great big monument, lights turned on, him with that walking cane. He had three or four of them.

LCR: What did he need a cane for?

Ms. Higgs: Well, it was just one of his trademarks, he just – you know, a long time ago, men used to carry eyeglasses and walking canes.

LCR: Even though there was nothing wrong with their legs. Just carry them.

Ms. Higgs: And they had gold handles, and –

LCR: I've seen them. I guess in Britain, maybe they still carry them. I don't know where I got that idea that –

Ms. Higgs: Lord Chamberlain, and well, Mr. Crump had his. Not a thing wrong with his legs, though, it was just one of the things that he did, he just carried a cane all the time.

LCR: I think this picture I saw him in, he had a frumpy-looking hat on too.

Ms. Higgs: Yes, one of them wide hats. (Laughs)

LCR: What kind of dresser was he?

Ms. Higgs: Oh, he was, he was a neat dresser.

LCR: Because I got the idea that he was kind of a frumpy dresser, too.

Ms. Higgs: Oh, no. Stiff as a ramrod, straight as an arrow, nothing frumpy about him.

LCR: What kind of name is Crump?

Ms. Higgs: I don't know.

LCR: You ever hear anything about where his ancestors came from?

Ms. Higgs: No, I don't know, he just came from Mississippi. He might be some Irish or somewhere, I don't know. Just poor – he was a nothing. He his family had no social background. Mrs. Crump was the one. She was a McClain before she was married to him. There's a street in Memphis named for her family, McClain Boulevard.

I guess he must have been a handsome man, and he just swept her off her feet. So she got married, and he'd always give her an allowance, how much to run the house on, and she would be so mad, I don't know how much, \$25-30 he made out there for her, she'd didn't find it that big, because - she was kind of plump, "Here. Take this and I don't care what you do with it, I'm the one that's got the money in this family!"

LCR: You give me this little pittance to run the house on!

And she'd been rich all her life.

Ms. Higgs: You can do whatever you do with it.

I did all the grocery shopping. She wanted him to make a memorandum or whatever, of how much she paid me, and all that, the groceries, whatever. And that made her not about to do it.

LCR: She was about to keep on spending the way she'd always done.

Ms. Higgs: Yes, indeed. She did, too.

LCR: Don't blame her. She got it. Can't take it with her.

Ms. Higgs: Yes. And it was a big wholesale house, William R. Moore, that was her family, owned that, wholesale dry goods place. So what she going to do with that \$30?

LCR: Before we leave Crump, there's one little episode that I want you to tell me about.

At this restaurant. Because the impression I get from this story is that the black folks that worked for Crump had a little bit of pull, that they had a little bit of authority rubbed off on them because they worked for Crump.

Ms. Higgs: Oh, indeed so. They did.

Just like you, over there at that hospital. You were – I went over there during visiting hours, and niggers couldn't go in the hospital, but when you were over there, I went by there to see you, and I told her, told the nurse, because she was a little taken aback when I walked in there and I said, I just want to, I work for Mrs. Crump and I want to – oh, Lord, she jumped to sky high, and then Mrs. Crump, she sent a vase of flowers and that bed board, to write on or draw on or whatever. And then Marie went over there, and they had to ask, Marie said she started to go visiting, and the nurse asked her, you don't mind, if you could come, don't come so early before visiting hours, because the rest of them, they would be wondering why they can't come. So Marie said she told her, all right, she wouldn't come at that time.

And it was just like that when Clint, at the restaurant, he'd got that place over there.

Ms. Higgs: It was on Beale Street, wasn't it?

Ms. Higgs: No, it was at Mississippi Walk. Right where it is right now. And he said they used to come in and eat, and walk out, and they'd tell them how much they owed, and you know they'd – what you mean? This is what we're supposed to do, you're supposed to give us our breakfast for protection. The police would come in there raising sand.

And Mr. Crump had, he had a Chrysler. That was the car that we did the running around in. And they saw this car parked out there, and Mr. Crump had some special number. And these policemen, they recognized it. They said, Whose car is that out there? And somebody said, that's Clint's car, that's Mr. Crump's chauffeur's car. So this is his place?

After that, whenever they came in there, shelling out their money!

And I told you, I never used mine, just this one time, because they had a way of, I don't care how long you've been in line, they wait on all the whites before they wait on you. And I had gotten something there, at Lowenstein's.

LCR: What was that, a department store?

Ms. Higgs: Uh-huh. And so she, this white woman was behind me, and I had been standing there, so she was going to wait on her. I said, I was here before. So she said, well, you just wait. That's all right, I said, I was getting this for the lady for who I worked, Mrs. Crump, so I'll just tell her that I couldn't get waited on. Boy, you might have seen her throwing that stuff down! She threw it down just like it was burning. Mrs. Crump was sitting out there on Peabody, she wasn't nowhere near. (Laughs)

LCR: But she didn't know that!

Ms. Higgs: That's why I said it! I said, I'll just tell Mrs. Crump that I couldn't get waited on, because she's down there waiting for me, and I've been here so long.

LCR: No better for her!

Ms. Higgs: That's the way it goes!

LCR: So when did you leave the Crumps?

Ms. Higgs: I left the Crumps, getting away from John Henry, and then I went to New York.

LCR: Well, I guess next time we'll have to talk some about Big Daddy.

Ms. Higgs: Oh, please, I don't even want to talk about that nigger!

LCR: Come on, now, you can't do that! No, no, that's going to be the good part.

Ms. Higgs: Forget it! (Laughs)

Listen here, don't forget to get those C's ...

LCR: I got them already. I got them. You have to talk into the speaker.

Ms. Higgs: Don't forget to bring them, now. Because you'll be forgetting them and –

LCR: Yeah, having them over here ain't going to do nothing for your cold.

Ms. Higgs: That's just like, to buy them and then they ain't here.

LCR: Thanks a lot, and I'll talk to you later. Bye-bye.