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Interview with Dan Cape (FA 73)

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INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Interviewer: Amy Taylor
 Department of Modern Languages
 and Intercultural Studies
 Western Kentucky University
 Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

Interviewee: Dan Cape
 P. O. Box 2787
 Sanford, North Carolina 27331

Place of Interview: Brannen's Tobacco Warehouse No. 3
 Bowling Green, Kentucky

Equipment Used: Sony TCDMS cassette recorder

Cassette Tape: Sony HF60
 Normal Bias
 No noise reduction

Amount of Tape Used: Side One: All
 Side Two: 1/3

Brief Description: Mr. Cape talks about his career as a tobacco auctioneer, explains how tobacco is auctioned and used, and compares the burley and flucured tobacco markets.

Symbols: T: = Amy Taylor speaking
 C: = Dan Cape speaking

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BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE

- 004 T: Its November 19, 1990. I'm at Brannen's Warehouse Number Three in Bowling Green, Kentucky. I'm speaking to Mr. Dan Cape who is a tobacco auctioneer. And I'd like to know first how you got interested in tobacco auctioneering.
- C: Actually I guess it's a lot like many professions. I got into it rather by accident uh--I've been in the real estate brokerage business for several years and when business slowed down a little bit and interest rates were high I went to auction school to supplement the real estate income and to diversify what services we offered at our real estate brokerage firm, and that was in 1980. And I followed that up, uh, I'd heard about a tobacco auctioneering school and business was slow so I decided to go to that. So from those two schools, and I had some friends in the tobacco business I never been acquainted with tobacco nor the tobacco

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business, uh, I went down to the eastern part of North Carolina and consequently got the job and sold ten point three millions pounds of tobacco that year and I've been doing it since that time. Uh now I have moved on a little bit. My partner and I just opened our own warehouse in Sanford, North Carolina in the flu-cured tobacco market. Uh, and I've been selling flue-cured and burley since 1980.

32 T: How many millions of pounds do you normally sell in a year?

C: Other than this year, which is abnormal because I've started my own warehouse business and I stay there and run the business, but I've been selling approximately sixteen million pounds of flu-cured tobacco and about seven or eight pounds, seven to eight million pounds, of burley tobacco. But I've been averaging twenty to twenty-two million pounds a year.

T: Okay, uh, I'm interested to know how--who you actually worked for before you started your own business. Who hires you to come to auctioneer?

C: The auctioneer, and the ticket marker, and those folks who work on the same side of the row of tobacco as the tobacco warehouseman are hired normally by the warehouse. So I'm under contract here with the Brannen's to sell their tobacco for them and at whatever house they designate me to sell.

T: Have you sold for the Brannens before?

C: Yes, I have. This is my third year with the Brannens.

T: Do they normally arrange for your lodging when you come to town?

C: That's usually--as far as lodging and expenses and things, that's usually in the contract. But the way I'm contracted is that I'm basically here for a flat fee. I come for x amount of dollars per season and then I take care of my own expenses then.

T: Is that how things are commonly done in this business?

C: Normally. Normally. There are, of course, exceptions. I've had jobs where they've paid for the motel or whatever, and then so much per thousand pounds that are sold. Now flu-cured, uh most of the flu-cured tobacco raised in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Virginia, most of that you get paid per thousand if you're selling a lot of pounds. I usually sell, I said sixteen million pounds of flu-cured tobacco, and that's per thousand that we usually contract.

064 T: Okay. And here you're just "per job" or "per location?"

C: Right. Uh, this--just per season and I'm paid if it goes over x number million I sell--I get a surcharge off of that and that's something we work out. Of course, I work real closely and real well with the Brannens.

C: How many months out of the year do you auction tobacco?

T: Basically, flu-cured tobacco starts--where in my area where I sell in the middle part of North Carolina--it starts the latter part of July. Basically we sell August, September, and October--so three months of flu-cured and then the burley market usually opens the Monday before Thanksgiving and we'll sell three or four, the weeks before Christmas, and then take about three weeks off before Christmas time and come back around the fifth of January and we'll sell for about three more weeks here. The other burley markets close early, like Ashville will probably sell one week after Christmas and areas, uh, over near Harrodsburg [Kentucky], Lexington [Kentucky], Paris [Kentucky] area--over in that area--they'll probably go into, you know, February. But usually this market will close the third week in January.

083 T: What do you do in your off months?

C: Actually, I have none, Amy. I'm in the real estate business I sell real--real estate at auction [train whistle] and I'm heavy in the farm equipment business at auction in North Carolina. Course running our own warehouse, now, business is a business in itself cause down there during the winter we have nothing but in the warehouse and we store boats and campers and industrial components, and fertilizer, and those things in our warehouse, [forklift driving through warehouse] so I'm busy year round.

T: Okay. Did you auction realty before you auctioned tobacco? Or was it the other way around?

C: Uh, about the same time.

093 T: Are there different auctioneering techniques versus tobacco versus property?

C: Yes, The different techniques will usually differ very much from one item or one type sale to another. Uh, if you go to a real estate sale you're dealing with, uh, usually a lot of dollars, uh, and you have to be very careful that everyone in the audience, the buying audience, understands your chant. And my chant will be very much slower in a real estate sale that it would be at a tobacco sale. And, of course, you have those personal property sales such as

antiques or estates and then farm equipment. Most of your farm equipment buyers--they're kind of in the middle. They go to auctions all the time and they're familiar with the chant. And that's a different chant, too. It's a little faster than real estate, but a lot slower than tobacco. The very unique thing about being a tobacco auctioneer and being on the tobacco market, uh, and that unique chant that tobacco auctioneers seem to acquire by one means or another is that it's a fast chant. Usually a pound of tobacco is sold every six seconds, uh-

T: You mean one of these stacks here, about five feet-

C: Right. This, uh, these, these piles or stacks here can weigh from seven hundred pounds and in flu-cured they usually weigh up to two hundred seventy-five. But we're dealing with people who are familiar with the tobacco auction system. The buyers that I'm selling to, uh, when I'm selling tobacco, are profession buyers, just as I'm a professional tobacco auctioneer. So they understand very well what I'm doing, and I understand what they're doing. So it--it--you know an outsider comes in and witnesses a tobacco sale it takes a while just to figure out what in the world is going on 'cause everything happens so fast. But its--I've seen times where we sell twenty-five to twenty six hundred piles of tobacco in a day, and that's in flu-cured. Usually, normally here I won't sell much over--I think about thirteen hundred is the most I would sell here in one day--piles.

124 T: Other than the--the pace of your chant, do you have a different chanting mechanism? Do you use different words in tobacco versus property auctions?

C: You--you do, there are always filler words and of course each auctioneer has his own unique style. Uh, but if you're selling property, its very much slower and you might ask "Will you give," wherein selling tobacco you might say, uh, you just use filler words. Its just something that you acquire over a period of time and its--I'll, I would probably not say the same thing going down each row. If, If I sold a row twice--a row of tobacco--I wouldn't say the same things.

136 T: Do feel you've picked up most of what you do during your chant in auctioneering school where you went, or from your peers?

C: Some of both. You learn different ways to count in auction school. Uh, but I think over the years by listening to other auctioneers, my peers, I've picked up some of their little idiosyncracies and I'm sure all new auctioneers do of

1 A B

older auctioneers. And I've seen some things that other auctioneers would do or say that I didn't particularly like. Uh, I always, uh, felt that in selling personal property or real estate, uh, (C: clears throat) excuse me, I would never say, "Who will give x number of dollars," I say, "Will you-." I like for it to be on a one-to-one, personal basis. That's one of my little pet peeves that I've acquired. But, uh, you learn from others and see the things that they do that you like and the things they do that you don't like.

150 T: That's interesting. I've noticed that as the people move down the aisles, you are in the lead, and then you'll have the people representing the various companies following behind you.

C: No, they're across from me.

T: Oh, they're across from you.

C: Yes.

T: Who are the people that are on the same side as you, following you?

C: Well, there's one person who's usually in front and that is the sales starter. The sales starter will look at the pile of tobacco and I'm looking across the row at the buyers. (T: Okay.) The sales starter will look across, uh, look down at the pile of tobacco and judge what it should bring based on what the market is doing. Then that, the sales starter will usually give me a starting number and from that time I start crying my bid when the sales starter gives me the number 'cause I have not looked at the tobacco. I don't necessarily have to be a very good judge of tobacco as long as I know what I'm doing as an auctioneer. The person in front will tell me what to start it at.

T: Do you look at the card with the grade?

C: Uh, depends on how the tobacco's selling. Tobacco's selling real well so you don't need to look at the [forklift driving through warehouse] support price. You look across the way and sell it. Uh, and those other folks behind me, uh, usually behind you is the person backing the seller, or buying for the warehouse. Uh, in this case its usually Bob Brannen who is there buying. He is the warehouseman here. And behind him will be a ticket marker. That's the person who writes down how much that pile brings and the company that it was sold to, and then the company will put a grade so they'll know where to disperse the tobacco to. And the ticket marker will write that down and put the ticket back

on the pile of tobacco. [forklift driving through warehouse; five second pause]

172 T: By the ticket, do you mean the logo that has their company name on it? Is that what you're referring to?

C: No. Uh, a ticket is basically--it's just a little warehouse slip that's in quadruple copies and, well, this ticket is put on the pile of tobacco when it's weighed in at the warehouse, at the scales. When the farmer brings it in its weighed and the date that it's weighed is put on it, uh, in most cases, the number of pounds, who it belongs to, and then its assigned a bill number and then the piles, I don't know how many piles they put on a bill, probably about eighteen, uh, and the number of bales in this case [Mr. Cape points towards the ticket on the tobacco pile on which the microphone is sitting, five second pause] and then the ticket stays with that pile of tobacco until it gets to the destination of the company.

T: Okay. Okay, so the starter starts it off, then you go with the bid. Then across from you are all the people representing - uh, are they the major tobacco companies?

186 C: Well, you, it would probably be hard for a novice to understand what the companies are. Course, we have Philip Morris is usually this time, uh, the top buyer as far as numbers of pounds. You have R. J. Reynolds represented, Export Leaf, which is a division of Brown and Williamson, American Tobacco Company, uh, Dibrell Tobacco Company, Austin Tobacco Company, Standard Tobacco Company, uh, Thorpe Greenville Tobacco Company, uh, A. C. Monk Tobacco Company. So we have [forklift driving through warehouse] some domestics and we have some independents also, and these companies contract with, uh, different users of tobacco, and I'm speaking of manufacturers, they contract to buy for them.

T: It appears when the people are bidding, that they're all bidding at the same time. How do you know who to give the bid to.

200 C: Uh, that's a school in itself, knowing who to give the pile to. There are certain, I guess established ways. There are no books about who gets what pile when. But basically, we have nine buyers on this market and when you see all the hands in air or the eyes looking at you, looking at you, or being looked at by a buyer, uh, is a bid. A buyer might put the hands up, motion with the fingers, they might look at you, the buyer might wiggle their brow, or wink or whatever. Usually when you work with a buyer a little while, uh, like opening day, after opening day you usually find out their

methods. But most of them are bidding with their hands today. On dark days its pretty well something they have to do, especially if a person has a little dark tint to their glasses and you can't see their eyes, they'll bid with their hands. And then knowing what to do with the numbers up and down is something that you have to do. It's just like the chant: Uh, I can't think about what I'm saying; I can't think really about whose holding what hand. It has to go in and be sorted out in my mind and come back out just that fast. So if you get to that point where you have to think about all that, you're lost as a tobacco auctioneer. It's not an easy job to do. The chant is the easiest part.

216 T: And the hardest part being deciding who it goes to?

C: Right. And in what order the companies are lined up and what percentage they're buying. There's just so many things that determines who would get a specific pile of tobacco. All of those individuals who are buying--as I said, there are nine on this market--they know what pile they are supposed to get. But they have to keep up with that. But I have to keep up with all nine. And that's the hardest part.

T: What determines the order the buyers stand in?

C: Basically the order that they stand in or walk in down, down the rows, is determined by, determined by how much tobacco they've bought, percentage wise, on the market for the last three years.

T: So there's a hierarchy that they just work out among themselves?

C: Well, they don't usually work it out. It's usually determined by whoever has first sale on opening day, who'll get the arrangement and the order squared away in the begging. It will stay that way for the season.

T: So it's squared away with the warehouse owner? Or who is it squared away with?

C: Usually with the warehouse owner in the beginning at first sale of opening day of the season. If there is a difference or a change in buyer line-up, it will be at that time.

231 T: I've noticed that some of the tobacco is arranged in bales, some are in hands, and some are in sheets or piles. Does that affect the price that that tobacco brings?

C: Not normally. Of course, the old style from years ago, even before my time, was to tie in hands all tobacco: flu-cured and burley, and I don't know about the other types--like

Maryland and Pennsylvania tobacco, I'm not familiar with those--but, uh, it was all tied and put on tobacco baskets. Uh, and now flu-cured, you see all sheets; there's no tied or bales in flu-cured tobacco. The norm at this time for burley tobacco is to be baled. You still see some of the older farmers still like to see the tied tobacco and they'll take the time to do that. Uh, and you see some sheets, but basically tied tobacco, baled tobacco is the preferred way by the companies, now even though, I don't see any difference in price for that tobacco. Baled is the way the company is set up to haul and to, to get it into the plant. Uh, they're processing is based on bales for the burley tobacco.

245 T: How does the grading process differ from burley and flu-cured? Are there different grades?

C: Uh, when we say grades, we get into so many technical things. As far as the grade, that the farmer grades at the stripping barn in burley, uh, there's usually three grades in burley. Some people are getting away from that and that's going to really hurt the tobacco farmer, I think, in the long run, 'cause a lot of them are distributing it and putting in just mixed tobacco in one pile. But, uh, the farmer in burley uses strips of tobacco and puts it into three grades: The lower stalk, mid-stalk, and then what they call the "reds," or the leaf tobacco. Uh, and then the grading process, as far as what type of, uh, support grade is on it, uh, there are government graders that come in. They are hired, and uh, by the government. It's controlled by the government. The farmer in the assessment fee pays for those graders. He pays the government. Uh, he reimburses the government for the salaries and expenses of the graders. Uh, and those government graders come in and do put a grade on the tobacco: what quality it is, and where it came from on the stalk, and the color. And then the company when it's bought, the company puts a grade on it, uh, so they will know where it goes in their processing plant, or plants, or which destination. Some might go to Richmond, some might--Virginia, some might go to Wilson, North Carolina. Uh, so it just depends on what grade they put it in, what the tobacco is and where it will go when it leaves the warehouse floor.

263 T: You mentioned some burley tobacco farmers are not separating different parts of the plant into those grades.

C: That's correct.

T: And you said that's going to hurt--the farmer

C: In the long run it will. Uh, the companies who have foreign orders--now domestics doesn't matter, that domestics is tobacco that's bought, uh, purposely for use in the United States. Uh, there's so many foreign buyers, or foreign customers that these individual companies have that want only leaf from only the middle of the stalk or the lower stalk. When the farmer strips it all, and puts it all in one bale, then those people we export tobacco to, do not want it that way. So--

T: So, it limits their market?

C: It, it limits the buyers market. But what's happening right now, is this year and last year, there's been a shortage of burley tobacco. And the buying companies, the domestics, would buy it no matter if it was mixed or stripped and graded separately. Uh, and then the farmer says, "Well if I can save four cents or three cents a pound, then I'm just going to put mine altogether and not spend the time to grade it out." But what's going to happen when the burley market comes back, and there is an abundance again of burley tobacco, which there will be in time, and then in time another shortage, I'm sure, but uh, the companies are just buying it anyway now and it's probably the wrong thing to do in the long run for the farmer. But it--it will pay for the farmer in the long run to spend that extra money. If all the farmers would get together and say, "We're going to do it right," and then you keep on doing it right, that would be a big plus in the long run for the farmers.

T: It's a little hard to get independent farmers together. [laughter]

C: It is. It is, as you know [smiles]

283 T: Uh, what--how is burley used in--is it used for cigarettes? Is it used for chewing tobacco?

C: Most burley, as I understand it--I'm not [short pause] very well familiar with the manufacturing process of tobacco--different types of tobacco, but uh, basically, uh cigarettes are made from a blend of burley, flu-cured, and Maryland tobacco. Now Maryland tobacco is a very red tobacco and it's used as the burning agent in the cigarette. And then the blend does contain burley and flu-cured. And most of the chewing tobacco, as I understand, is made from dark fire tobacco, which I know nothing about. It's a process that's done through heating and other things I'm not too familiar with. I don't know what all they put on that, but that's mostly used for, uh, chewing tobacco.

T: Do you auction the Maryland tobacco?

- C: No, I don't. It's a very short market, it's usually in the springtime and I have many other things to do. So, I've never gone to the Maryland area. Umm, spring is a very good real estate time.
- 296 T: Uh, what has changed? What have been the major changes in tobacco auctioneering in the tobacco industry?
- C: I don't know that there have been a great deal of changes. Uh, I know that the reserves that are kept on hand by the different farmer, farmer, uh, supported cooperatives, like the pool here, and stabilization corporation in flu-cured. This uh--the farmer pays an assessment fee to support, uh, to put a support price on tobacco. Let's say this pile, one pile might be graded, I'm not sure what the figures are this year, today's opening day and I haven't got familiar with them yet, but uh, but uh, say a B38 is supported at a dollar sixty-eight. Then that pile must bring at least a dollar sixty-nine or pool would pay sixty-eight for it. So the companies have to bid more than the support price. And uh, I think that pool that the farmer has sponsored uh, has little or no tobacco in it now. And when I started, it had a lot tobacco, a lot of tobacco--the same thing with flu-cured. So, now with the--even though there's been a lesser demand for tobacco in the United States, we're finding that the foreign markets, uh, the exports that we make of tobacco has increased. And that's another reason for the stripping. They want a different, a particular type tobacco that's from the lower, middle, or upper stalk. And when your domestic usage is declining and your exports is increasing, its time to do what they want. And I think in the long run, that's what I was talking about--grading it in three grades.
- 315 T: When you're auctioning and it doesn't go, what, a dollar over that support price, (C: Oh, yes.) it automatically go to the pool?
- C: If it does not go for a dollar over the support price it does go to the pool.
- T: And so has much tobacco been going to the pool today?
- C: None. Not one pile. The companies have bought all of it. And as I recall last year, the pool did not get a pile from any of the Brannen warehouses where I was selling.
- T: So that's good for the farmers?
- C: Very good for the farmers. It makes the cost of interest and their assessment fees--it makes them lower. So it's good for the farmer when the company is buying tobacco rather than going to the pool.

T: The assessment fees are paid to cooperatives?

C: Yes. To the--

T: By all farmers? Or just farmers who have tobacco going to pool?

C: It's paid by all farmers. There's an assessment fee for that, there's an assessment fee for the grading that's deducted at the warehouse. The warehouses, uh, is saddled with that responsibility of collecting those funds from the farmer, and deducting that from their net checks, and then the warehouse, the individual warehouses sends those fees to the proper place.

T: How many houses do you go to in a day?

C: Normally here in burley, I would sell three. I just work for the Brannens. Uh, some auctioneers sell the total market in flu-cured. And I usually sell all of the market. I go with that--those, that particular group of buyers that I'm assigned with that year. I worked for them all day every day, uh, during the season. But uh, here with the Brannen's, uh, they want me just to work for them so I'll work only for them.

333 T: How many warehouses do the Brannen's have?

C: Three. There are five houses in town, and the Brannen's have three of them.

T: Which do you think you enjoy the most, property sales or tobacco sales, for auctioning?

C: As far as the pure enjoyment, I think there's, from what I've done there's been nothing that is as much fun as tobacco to sell. You deal with those buyers everyday and it gets to be a fun thing. We're serious about it because the farmer needs all the money he can get for his crop. When you're selling, uh, a hundred-thousand dollar piece of property, you don't have time to converse a lot with those in the buying audience. It--it's strictly down to business. Whereas dealing with a professional tobacco buyer everyday as an auctioneer is a lot of fun. We see them in the afternoons and then we socialize with them in the evenings and have dinner with them in the evenings. So, you know, we become friends, uh, but when the sale starts it's all back to business, and--and I want every dime that I can get for the pile of tobacco, for the farmer. That's what I'm here for: to make sure that it brings what it should bring. And that's the warehouseman's job. And the warehouseman hires me to do that. That's very important to me.

345 T: You've been coming to Bowling Green for three years now?

C: This is my third season here.

T: Do you start to develop a relationship with the farmers in the farming community (C: clears throat) from some extent?

C: Uh, yes you do. When you see the same farmers year after year. Of course they're so many, you don't get to speak to everybody everyday because you don't see them. And sometimes you walk into a warehouse like we've just done at this warehouse and I walk in and say hello to a few folks, and it's time to start the sale. And then at the end of the sale I have to run somewhere else to another warehouse. But uh, yes you do learn who some of the farmers are and get to talk with them. And uh, at the end of the last sale during the day I will stay around the warehouse and talk to some of the farmers because it's in their best interest that I get to know them and the buyers and know what's going on in the market. And to do that, you need to talk to both sides.

354 T: Do the buyers change very much? Do you run into the same buyers as you go throughout your circuit, selling?

C: Uh, yes we do. We have, uh, on this particular group of buyers that we have this year uh, we have three or four that are new to the market for this year. Uh, three or four that have gone somewhere else, and some are the same here, like five are the same--like five or six are the same that we had last year. But of the new folks that we have, uh, I knew all of them but one, I had seen somewhere else, or had worked with them at one time or another for a long period, or short period or whatever--I knew who they were. And so, that makes it a lot easier. They know you and they know what type job you do. Uh, but the companies are very aggressive in their buying and they want it all to be sold exactly right, to the right person, for the right money. And you get to be known as a good auctioneer or an auctioneer that's not good.

T: Do you consider yourself to be known as a good auctioneer, then?

C: Oh, I'm just--I'm just crazy. [laughter] And I might sell tobacco and talk to them and tell them a story going down the row, so, it, uh--I will probably never have the voice of a championship auctioneer. Course, I can't do a lot about that. I do the best I can with those things I was born with. But as far as the technical ability of selling tobacco, I think I do a good job of that. I'm very uh, I'm very much aware when I make a mistake. Usually when I make a mistake--which I do every day--uh, I'll know it as soon as

I do it. It's just because I thought one thing for some reason and something else came out of my mouth automatically. And I know instantly and I can change it, you know, right there.

372 T: You can re-bid the pile? Is that what you mean (C: Oh, that's a--) by correcting it?

C: As far as rebidding a pile, that's a technical question whether or not, you know, the company will let you do that. Technically when the pile is knocked it belongs to the company. But uh-

T: By "knocked" you mean "given to"--

C: Saying, see, we don't say "sold." We don't have time to say "sold" as you hear in the advertisements. We don't say "sold" on a pile of tobacco. Uh, but when the tobacco is we call it "knocked" to a company and their name has been put on that ticket for that pile, its--technically, its theirs. Uh, if there's nothing wrong with it. But if I, if I think another buyer would give a bit more for it, I'll just say, "Wait a minute. You know, I made a mistake. Let's get more for this tobacco because the farmer needs the money." So, and this's going to happen in a day's time when you sell even thirteen hundred piles, like we do, a day here. You're going to make a mistake if you do something thirteen hundred times during the day. You're going to--you're going to, for one reason or another, you'll make a mistake. There're a lot of people who don't admit that. But, I will in a minute. I feel very good about my, uh, technical qualities of selling tobacco.

383 T: Do you ever compete in, uh, auctioneering contests, like sometimes at state fairs, county fairs?

C: Uh, not at the fairs. They don't have it right in our area. Uh, at one time in Danville, Virginia, there was an auctioneering contest. There's still a contest there. It was--at one time sponsored by R. J. Reynolds and then by the festival, or fall festival, in Danville, Virginia. Uh, and I have competed in that. I Never won anything from it. You know, I haven't been a regular contestant. Those people who have been going for the last seven or eight years, when it started, seem to do better if they go every year. Uh, but myself, if I have a big real estate sale on that weekend, I can't run to Danville and be in a contest. I need to be home taking care of business. That's, you know, my business, and the farmer I represent, uh, the seller I represent when I'm selling realty property they become more important to me than whether or not I'm engaged in entering a championship auctioneering contest.

392 T: The piles here in this warehouse where we're standing now--
uh, how many piles would you say are here? How many
poundage--?

C: Uh, I really don't know. Now, if you look at the floor
bill, and see what each farmer has and add them all up, umm,
you would know that. But, basically, I don't know. I know
that we sold approximately two-hundred and eighty-five piles
in here because that's what the schedule reads.

T: Okay. Do you know how many different farmers that
represents?

C: Ummm, no I don't. I don't know how big the farmer's were.
There's a lot of small farmers in the area and there're a
lot of larger farmers. It's just really hard to say, for
me. I know that our warehouse that we have in, in North
Carolina, we have about sixty-five farmers that sell with
us. But I really don't know here, how many (T: Okay.) but
I'm sure a lot more than that--because of the size of the
acreage. Like in North Carolina, it's much smaller than it
is here.

T: Well, I'm getting near the end of the tape. Is there
anything else you'd like to add about your auctioneering
career?

C: Uh, not really. I'll just mention that I mentioned a few
minutes ago--Danville, Virginia, that's where it all
started. That's where they had the first tobacco auction.
Uh, the tobacco auction system, uh, over the years has
prevailed. It's been tried by different folks to change it
to a contract between the farmer and the company, but uh,
day in and day out it's been proven time and time again that
the warehouse auction system of selling the farmers' tobacco
is the best way of marketing that tobacco for the top price
for the farmer. And that's what we're here for.

C: Great. Well, thank you for your time and I hope you have a-

T: Thank you. I've enjoyed talking to you.

C: You have a good day auctioning and enjoy your stay in
Bowling Green.

T: Thank you. I'm going over to number six and sell another
sale.

C: Okay. Good luck there.

T: Thank you.

C: Thank you.

408 END OF SIDE ONE AND END OF INTERVIEW

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BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

002 T: This is Amy Taylor. It's November 19, 1990. I'm at Brannen's Warehouse Number Six in Bowling Green, Kentucky. What follows this introduction will be excerpts from Dan Cape's auctioneering techniques as he's auctioning off burley tobacco, here in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

010 [Dan Cape auctioneering tobacco. Other voices are those of the starter, buyers, and ticket markers, as well as voices picked up from the general spectators. The tape was paused during breaks in the auction when tobacco needed to be inspected by the buyers, or when confusion arose over who had been knocked the bid. Mr. Cape's auctioneering was collected from four different rows of tobacco, although not separated on the tape.]

116 END OF AUCTIONING