

Escaping the floodwaters

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In this excerpt from an oral history interview, Elberta Hudson describes her reluctance to leave her home in White Stocking, North Carolina when a nearby creek was flooding the area during Hurricane Floyd. She continues on to relate her family's experiences once they realized they had to leave.

Audio

File:

Duration: 2:47

Transcript:

Elberta Hudson: And so while we was helping people earlier in the neighborhood get out and stuff, we was thinking we were okay. My husband had already parked his truck to the graveyard. And the van, we had a van and a Lincoln, and so we had it in the yard. I don't know, maybe about 5:30 my husband went out and he said, "The water is in the yard." And I said, "What do you mean, the water is in the yard?" And he said, "The water is in the yard. I'm going to move the vehicles." So he moved the vehicles and nobody else was around then.

And I didn't want to leave. I had gotten stubborn. You know, there was a time when I wanted to leave, but at that point I didn't want to leave. My mother, she was visiting from Maryland, [discussion away from Elberta with interviewer] and she was upset because I didn't want to leave and everybody else was leaving. But anyway, finally when my husband came back in he said, "We got to go because the water is coming in fast." By that time I went out and the water was up, I guess a little down below our knees. And all of us was still in the house. I had my mother and my four kids and me and him. I didn't know what I was going to do, because I know basically everybody that had their own boats were going, and we didn't have one.

Charles Thompson: Before you go on, you said four kids. How old were they? That's an important point.

Elberta Hudson: One, I had a one-year old. He just had turned one. And I have a seven-year old, eleven-year old, and a fifteen-year old.

Charles Thompson: And they were all in the house with you?

Elberta Hudson: They were all in the house. And I didn't know where we were going to go, because we didn't have boats. We helped the neighbors with their boats, but we didn't have one. But by the time we got outside I heard voices, and a rescue team was there with flashlights. And I know it wasn't nothing but the Lord again, you know, because they were just there. I don't know where they came from, but they was just there. And they were coming around the bend with flashlights. I guess they was going to see was anybody else still back there. So it was my family and another family that came out. There was more people back there, but they refused to leave their homes. But my family and another family -

and when we left out of there my husband's pickup truck, the water was all the way up in his cab. But he drove it through there. Even the man in the Army truck - he said they had a hard time getting the Army truck, so he didn't advise my husband to drive this pickup truck through there. But he said it was the Lord's truck. [EH laughs.] He's got The Lord's Prayer on the back of it. And it was the only vehicle that we saved. He drove it out behind the Army truck.

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