

## Mary Thompson talks about company support for the churches in mill villages.

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Carl and Mary Thompson interviewed by James Leloudis, Charlotte, NC, July 9, 1979. Interview #H-182 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

### Audio

### File:

**Duration:** 2:16

### Transcript:

#### *Audio Transcript*

Mary Thompson

In fact, they helped keep up the churches.

Jim Leloudis

What did they do to help the churches?

Mary Thompson

They paid their money into the churches, and then if they needed painting or any work done, they'd send people out from the mill to have it fixed. The church didn't have to pay to have it painted or repaired or anything; the mill company seen that the churches was kept up.

Jim Leloudis

Did they ever have much say in who would be the minister or what he would preach?

Mary Thompson

No, they didn't have anything to say in that. It was voted through the church. No, they didn't try to dictate to the churches at all. But I don't know what church they went to. I really hadn't ever thought nothing about it. I don't even know whether they went to a church or not. But I do know that they did keep up our church. Over here at our church, Highland Park, Johnson in Highland Park give thousands of dollars to our church and the Presbyterian Church, give land for both churches, and the Methodist church up yonder. And they helped do repair work and all, too. See, the mill villages always did help keep up the churches that was on the mill villages so that the people would have churches to go to.

Jim Leloudis

Why do you think the companies were so eager to support the churches?

Mary Thompson

I think it was because they knowed they'd be better workers and better people if they had churches.

Jim Leloudis

How so, better workers?

Mary Thompson

Because people that's living right is not out getting into trouble. And if you go to church and read the Bible, you know that you're supposed to work. And I really think they knew that people would be better workers and better people, wouldn't have the trouble with them. I don't know; I never heard them say so. I really don't know, but I imagine that was it. But they even used to have a schoolhouse down here at Highland Park. We had a schoolhouse at Poe Mill, too.

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